

**Learning German in English speaking tertiary contexts:
Identity, social strategies and language use**

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All my life I have been trying to improve my German.

At last my German is better

—but now I am old and ill and don't have long to live.

Soon I will be dead,

with better German.

Lydia Davis

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Abstract

The social context in which a language is learnt plays a primary role in determining the possibilities for learning that language. This study takes English-speaking tertiary contexts as its focus, looking at German learning in a foreign language environment in Australia, as well as in a second language environment in Germany. Anglophone learners are the focus in both contexts as it is not only the language being learnt, but also the languages in which one is already competent, that influence how one interacts in social settings. Individuals' identity is seen as socially constructed through interaction, and changeable across situations. Language and identity are intertwined with and inseparable from one another. Identity is constructed through the use of language, and choosing a particular language forms a primary tool for self-presentation in interaction. This study uses data gathered as part of an action research project, interviews and questionnaires to look at factors related to the construction of identity which influence learners' choices to engage with German as a foreign language. It further investigates the effect of teaching social language learning strategies within foreign language classrooms, identifying strategies that help learners to use the German in a personally meaningful way. The results of this study suggest that incorporating social language learning strategies into classroom teaching practices can help learners to take a more autonomous and engaged approach to their out of class learning.

Thesis declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Deviating from many other forms of learning that adult learners in particular engage in, language learning entails vulnerability. Identity, a sense of self, personal histories, knowledge, social status, the social groups one affiliates with, all of these things are communicated through language. These elements of one's identity are not merely communicated in the meanings contained in one's utterances, but by the specific words with which one chooses to communicate those meanings, and furthermore by the accents and intonations through which those words are uttered. Language learning is most certainly an opportunity for personal growth and the development of a new form of self expression. However, the decision to learn a second or additional language (L2) necessitates a significant loss of the ability to choose words, phrases and ways of speaking. The self presented to others in an L2 often becomes vulnerable, highly compromised, particularly for learners at the beginner or intermediate levels of language learning.

The process of language study is like no other. To learn another language is to redefine yourself publicly, socially, and personally. No other topic of education so deeply affects the individual's own self-presentation in society (Pellegrino Aveni 2005, p. 7).

As Valerie Pellegrino Aveni emphasises, language learning is an act that is always connected to identity construction. This assertion has been reiterated by many language learning researchers across a range of contexts (e.g. Allen 2011; Kayi-Aydar 2014; Menard-Warwick 2011; Norton 2000, 2013; Norton Peirce 1995; Teng 2018; Toohey & Norton 2010), and is investigated in depth in Chapter 2 of the study presented here.

Previous researchers have identified that learners' wish to present the self in a desirable way, to build meaningful social relationships, and to participate in familiar discourses, can lead to them choosing not to use the L2 in certain circumstances, despite being highly motivated learners. Does the essentially personal dimension of language learning mean that L2 learning is doomed to be largely incompatible with academic study? After all, academic knowledge asserts its emphasis on factuality and remaining impervious to subjective emotions and feelings, the very elements that have shown themselves to be so intricately connected to language learning. A dialectic presents itself in determining how to approach language learning

in academic contexts to benefit the learner in terms of gaining academic, that is formal, knowledge of the L2 in question, it also aims to promote a connection with the L2 on a personal level. This connection between language and identity, the ability to truly express the self, one's ideas, humour, personality and way of being through language, encompasses an element of learning that goes beyond the learning of linguistic facts.

Language learning involves the 'whole person' and, as such, learning an additional language becomes a part of learners' lives beyond the classroom (Benson 2019). This study investigates the potential benefits of the use of social language learning strategies as a way for learners to autonomously make language learning a part of their lives and identities both inside and beyond the classroom. Social language learning strategies in short are those strategies which help learners to engage with the L2 in a meaningful way. They encompass strategies for both receptive and productive language use. Social strategies are those which involve finding opportunities to access and engage with the L2, as well as assisting in using the language once those opportunities have been taken up. Social strategies place an emphasis on locating and engaging with personally meaningful content. These strategies and the theoretical framework supporting their potentials for inclusion in classroom teaching are set out in [Chapter 3](#).

The development of such strategies is all the more important when we consider the negative emotions that are often associated with the learning of L2 grammar, and sometimes also with its teaching. As Leo van Lier aptly observes:

Among language learners (and many of their teachers) the pedagogical apparatus of grammar teaching is usually regarded at best a necessary evil and at worst a constant torture. Others delight in it, perhaps in the same way they delight in difficult Sudoku puzzles or constructing suspension bridges out of chopsticks and blades of grass. [...] [F]or most learners grammar is a never-ending struggle, endured because received wisdom has it that it is 'good for you' (van Lier 2011, p. 9-10).

In its consideration of social language learning strategies and more broadly of the language learning process itself, this study problematises some of the more traditional approaches to language teaching that are taken up in arguably a majority of academic language learning contexts. This includes the focus on teaching within a paradigm that puts forward the standard language (e.g. *Hochdeutsch* in the context of German) as the 'correct' version of language, thereby implying that other dialects and variations are 'incorrect' or 'improper' forms of language. [Chapter 2](#) of this study problematises the notion of the native speaker and the largely unachievable native speaker standards that language courses typically encourage students to

aspire to. This is not to say that a strong command of grammar is not paramount to language competency, but rather that there are alternative approaches to teaching, using and conceptualising grammar which encourage language use and which do not cause learners to feel anxious about the inevitable errors that they will make in their use of the L2. Adopting an understanding of grammar less tied to correctness and standard language has the potential to empower learners to use the L2 in order to express their personalities, ideas and identities without fears of failure. This way of seeing grammar places emphasis on communication of meaning, whilst still paying attention to the forms one requires in order to convey meaning clearly. This study sees social strategies as having the potential to allow learners to engage with the language in a way that corresponds to this meaning centred view of grammar, whilst still participating in grammar focused language courses as they may currently be taught.

The social environment in which language learning takes place has a significant influence on the process of language learning. Recent research (e.g. Lanvers, Thompson & East 2021; Liddicoat 2021; Mason & Hajek 2021; Mitchell & Tracy-Ventura 2021; Mitchell, Tracy-Ventura & McManus 2017) has brought into focus the influence that the knowledge of English, and of the status of English as a global language, has for Anglophones engaging in foreign and second language learning. Recognising the need for further investigation into this increasingly prevalent phenomenon of second or foreign language learning in environments where English is a shared language, this study takes a group of Anglophone learners of German at an Australian university as its focal point. Through a mixed methods approach, this research project investigates the connections between learners' development of L2 identities and their use of social language learning strategies.

Teaching methodology that facilitates out of class meaning focused, naturalistic learning is brought to the forefront within this study, which centres on a teaching experiment designed to gauge the benefits that might be derived from the explicit teaching of social language learning strategies. As part of this experiment, learners were divided into two groups, one group receiving social strategy instruction and the other not receiving this teaching intervention. This study looks at students' responses to the teaching intervention in terms of their reported use of strategies throughout the semester, as well as their beliefs about language learning and about learner autonomy. This data is investigated through pre and post experiment questionnaires

and through post strategy teaching interviews. The outcomes of these elements of this research project are discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

This study places emphasis on the importance of learning contexts, as well as on the connectedness of various contexts that learners encounter whilst on their language learning journeys. Contexts and learning environments include those inside the classroom as well as those beyond it. Chapter 7 of this study discusses data from a complementary language learning context, that of Anglophone learners of German engaging in study abroad at a university in Berlin, Germany. This chapter highlights the role that identity plays in determining learners' choices to engage with or avoid using the L2, as well as the ways in which Anglophone learners approach their out of class L2 use strategically to build their L2 competency. Methodological considerations, research questions and a detailed description of both the Australian and German language learning contexts are set out in Chapter 4.

This study concludes in Chapter 8, with an overview of the research outcomes achieved in this study. These research outcomes pave the way for a number of suggestions for implementing this new knowledge into teaching methodologies. Finally, the data attained as part of this research project provides insights into many areas of great potential for future research projects focusing on the connections between social language learning strategies and identity as part of the L2 learning process.

Chapter 2: Language learning and identity

There is much which can be unpacked, inferred, implied and understood under the heading *language learning and identity*. There are many ways in which language, language learning, and identity can be conceptualised, along with numerous possibilities for understanding the relationships between these constructs. This chapter sets out to consider these possibilities and the ways of thinking that underlie them. Further, this chapter makes an argument for the socially situated perspective on language learning and identity which is reflected by the theoretical and methodological approaches taken up in this study.

Historically, identity is a topic that has been of interest to scholars across many disciplines. It is a familiar and frequently used term but it can be used with an array of intended meanings. Section 2.1 accordingly looks at the ways in which conceptions of identity have changed over time and how these understandings have been guided by academic research and by the theoretical frameworks associated with it. The construct of identity has been viewed both as a set of fixed, measurable characteristics that define a person, group, or community, and more recently, as something that is constantly changing in relation to one's interactions with others. These very different understandings of what defines identity have important implications for research approaches, the interconnected understandings of language and culture in relation to identity, and for language teaching methodology. This study therefore places great importance on establishing a clear definition of identity, amidst the many available conceptualisations, as this forms a basis for the present research approach as a whole. The possible ways of seeing identity and the various terms associated with it such as *the self*, *self concept*, and *self efficacy* are discussed in Section 2.1, where the position taken within this study is made clear.

A socially situated view of identity implies that culture, as part of the social environment of the individual, plays a crucial role in identity construction. Like identity, culture is a familiar word, whose specific meaning, however, can often be elusive. The construct of culture and its relation to other constructs such as *nation*, *subculture*, and *the individual* is discussed in Section 2.2. Culture can be viewed as something which is tied to national borders; however, it is also possible to see culture as something that occurs, exists and is created between people in specific situations. Such a perspective understands culture as a construct which, like identity, changes across time and space, and interacts directly with the identities of individuals and groups.

Culture exists in close connection not only with identity, but also with language. Use of language implies identity construction through interaction and also takes place within or between cultures. Section 2.3 looks at ways of viewing language, emphasising that language is not something fixed and stable, but a tool that is used in various and ever changing ways to communicate meanings and develop social relations between individuals. Language is a powerful tool for identity construction. Language ability and use can act as a gatekeeper for access to communities, cultures and lifestyles. Language can connect people as well as separate them. Cultural practices, routines and ways of doing things are frequently tied up in ways of speaking or writing. Thus, language is a central issue in the consideration of identity. Knowledge of language and of the cultural practices associated with it particularly important when looking at language learning and learners' willingness to use an L2.

Language learners' beliefs about language, such as what they believe constitutes a language, how they think language functions, to what degree they believe a language is concrete or changing, what it means that there is an official version of a language, and what it means for them to know that language, are influenced by the institutional context and government policies for language education. The implications of teaching a national, standardised language, rather than one that is as flexible, inconsistent and flawed as the language that is used in the day to day lives of many people, are considered in Section 2.4. Here, the emphasis on correctness of grammar as part of the standard language is viewed in relation to the language speaking anxiety experienced by many learners. If high proficiency in a language implies a particular, usually positive, identity for a learner, then a lack of proficiency also must have certain, largely negative implications for a learner's sense of self. Learners can fear portraying themselves in undesirable ways due to their lack of ability to speak standard language and this can be a major barrier to language use.

Learners' choices to use or not use a language, and the decisions relating to which language they use, i.e. L1 or L2, mediated by identity positions, are examined in Section 2.5. In some situations, learners' language use may be limited by their proficiency; however, often there are many other social factors at play, including the language anxieties discussed above, which produce resistance to use of the L2, rather than engagement. The final considerations of this chapter focus on the positive and negative ways in which learner identities are engaged in the

language learning classroom, and on the possibilities for developing a teaching methodology which fosters the engagement of learners.

2.1 Concepts of identity, changing over time

Intuitively, when one thinks about what defines identity, or what best describes who one is, the things that come to mind tend to be categories such as gender, age, nationality and occupation. It is no coincidence that during first encounters these are often the first things we notice about a person or the topics of conversation: *What do you do? Where do you come from?* Upon spending a little more time with a new acquaintance, further questions that give us categorical information will be asked: *What are your hobbies? Who is in your family?* In fact, these questions likely constitute some of the first phrases one learns when learning a new language. These categories must then be critically important to the construction of identity, and of course, they are. Consider though, that in each such interaction, there is not only a person asking these questions, but someone answering them, and choosing their answers in a certain way, based on who asked them. Consider the different possible answers to the question: *Where do you come from?* If this question is asked by a speaker who shares the same accent as the person they are questioning, the answer likely to be given will relate to a specific location, perhaps a town or even a suburb within a specific city. The same question asked by a speaker with a different accent from that of the person they are questioning will likely receive a much more generalised answer, perhaps a capital city or a country name. Viewing identity in terms of simple, categorical answers to simple questions does not take into account the importance of context in determining which variations of answers to such questions might be most appropriate. It is probable that each answer would be true, but the elements of a person's identity that are brought into focus, and the way they are both presented and interpreted, always exist as part of a social situation, rather than in isolation, or as simple answers on a piece of paper.

Many of the views of identity from the past do not align with the perspective on identity taken up in this study. However, current approaches can be better understood within the context of their history (Joseph 2016). A discussion of previous conceptualisations of identity within applied linguistics aims to explain the motivations for the socially situated approach adopted here.

2.1.1 Identity and language learning in applied linguistics: past and present

Explicitly, or implicitly, much research from applied linguistics, along with studies from connected disciplines such as anthropology, psychology and sociology, takes essentialist groupings of research participants as its starting point. For example, many studies have investigated differences between men's and women's speech, or compared the literacy levels of different social classes. These fixed identity categories frequently act as the basis for research into language and behaviour, but the considerations taken for dividing research participants into these categories are rarely brought into question. This reflects an implicit essentialist perspective on identity in academia, which sees a person as defined through categories, which are fixed, and form part of a person's *essence* (Baxter 2016). These categories include biological groupings such as gender, facial features, and skin colour, as well as social categories such as nationality, religion, ethnicity or social class. Such categories do not change situationally, and generally do not change throughout a person's lifetime. The frequent categorisation of identity in academia suggests that such categories are often seen as being unavoidable and unquestionable (Bucholtz & Hall 2004). Further, the majority of these categories are those which a person is born into (Block 2014). Social and biological categorisation also assumes that groups are cohesive and homogeneous, with similarity or sameness of group members (Bucholtz 2003). They do not account for, and often simply exclude or ignore, issues of overlap between groups, partial membership, and the ways in which a person's identity can change according to the social situation in which they find themselves.

The language learner: a construct, rather than a person

Applied linguistics research has taken a variety of approaches to conceptualising the identity of the language learner, many of which are problematic from a sociocultural perspective. As has been observed by Benson (2019), early language teaching theory, such as that developed by Jespersen (1904), tended to disregard the learner, and their identity, completely. It focused instead on the actions of the teacher and the scientific knowledge that the teacher needed to impart. This aligned with an understanding of the mind as a computer, an input and output processing machine, espoused by many prominent linguists, such as Chomsky, into the 1960s (van Lier 2004). This perspective placed great importance within linguistics on methods of

information processing and had little regard for learners' identities or the social contexts in which language was used.

Following criticisms of a lack of recognition of the individual, research from the 1970s, and into the 1990s, changed its focus, drawing its attention more directly to the language learner. However, the identity of the language learner within much research from this era was defined largely in essentialist terms (Benson 2019). Many studies aimed to group and categorise language learners in terms of personal attributes deemed to be relevant to their language acquisition such as their personality, motivation (e.g. Gardner 1985; Gardner & Lambert 1972), attitudes (e.g. Lambert 1972), strategies (e.g. O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990) and learning styles (e.g. Reid 1987). Learners were categorised in terms of these attributes, for example as having instrumental or integrative motivational orientations, or auditory or tactile learning styles, and this was seen as an unchanging and defining characteristic. Such fixed categories meant not only that the individual identity of the learner was lost, but also that their agency in terms of their ability to change and adapt within varying circumstances was denied (Benson 2019; Block 2014).

As a reflection of this understanding of the language learner and language learning process as quantifiable and generalizable, language learning achievement was also viewed most often in simple terms of academic success. Large scale questionnaires were the primary means for data collection within such studies, designed to allow for the separation of individuals into predefined learner categories based on their answers about their learning experiences and motivations. As has been pointed out by a number of scholars (e.g. Benson 2019; Block 2014; Rampton 1991; Riley 2003; Toohey & Norton 2003), although this body of literature appears to focus on the individual and take into account the identity of the learner, in its unproblematised essentialist categorisation of individuals it in fact denies the learner their individualism and their socially situated identity. This research created an idealised, simplified construct: the language learner, from which further generalisations and scientific predictions about language learning processes could be made. In the search for homogeneity, the identity of the individual was 'erased' (Benson 2019, p. 66); the individual referred to within such research is not a true individual person who exists in any reality, but an amalgamation of commonly occurring characteristics identified across many learners as being most relevant to the language learning process. Research from this era, whilst still offering useful insights into

language learning processes, is problematic in that it simultaneously claims to place importance on learners as varied individuals, while categorising learners into groupings which do not take into account the social and ever changing nature of the individual and their identity (Block 2014; Mohanty 2003).

2.1.2 A situated perspective on language learner identity

Conceptions of identity as something that is fixed or measurable, or as something less tangible, multiple and ever changing, have an extensive history across many academic disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, anthropology and psychology, as well as somewhat more recently in applied linguistics. For example, in his book *Being no one*, German philosopher Thomas Metzinger (2004) takes neuroscientific research as the basis for his philosophical concept of identity and the self as multiple. He points out that recent neuroscientific research has shown that there is no specific location of the self in the brain. The self instead exists as a collection of connected neurological pathways. Even earlier, in his highly influential work on psychology in the 1920s and 30s, Sigmund Freud had argued that the self is incoherent (see Alcoff 2003), seeing the perceived unity of identity as an illusion. Similarly, following the ‘death of the subject’ in the 1960s, when many postmodernist thinkers shifted their focus from the notion of a single identity, there has been increasing interest across many disciplines in the idea of multiple identities (Laclau 2003). Tensions between the competing concept of the unity and multiplicity of identities have been an interdisciplinary point of concern over an extended period; however, only in more recent years has this become a key issue within applied linguistics.

Essentialist views of identity have been criticised for ignoring the minority and those who do not easily fit into predefined categories (Mohanty 2003). Furthermore, they do not take into account personal histories and the ways in which identity roles can shift with changing contexts. As a result, within applied linguistics, as in many other disciplines, much research into identity has moved towards an emphasis on the non-unitary and situationally changing nature of identity. Such approaches to understanding identity as multiple, inconsistent and socially situated are generally labelled as being poststructuralist within applied linguistics. The term ‘poststructuralism’, however, has been described as both ‘vague’ (Block 2014, p. 15) and ‘difficult to define’ (Baxter 2016), often being used without the provision of a specific definition. Block (2014) emphasises that poststructuralism is that which goes beyond, and to a

large degree rejects, structuralism. Key poststructuralist philosophers such as Bakhtin (1981), Foucault (1981, 1986, 1988) and Lacan (2006), who developed their theories independently of one another, were united by their views of identity as bound up in language and discourse, and as being constructed through interaction (Baxter 2016). Poststructuralism is a branch of the broader movement of postmodernism which takes the impossibility of absolute knowledge as its starting point for understanding the world. In both poststructuralist and postmodernist views, knowledge is unstable and socially constructed. Poststructuralist approaches place emphasis on what this means specifically for identity construction, in connection with discourse and language. Poststructuralism sees identity as created through interaction with the environment; as such it cannot be independent of it. Individuals are not simply assigned identities through biology or social class, as would be the case from an essentialist or social structuralist perspective. Identity is negotiated in a process of interaction with one's social environment. One cannot simply choose one's identity; instead it is constructed, developed and created endlessly through discourse and language, embodied in the words and actions of the individual and those around them (Baxter 2016; Djenar, Mahboob & Cruickshank 2015; Joseph 2016).

Over the last 30 years an increasing number of applied linguistics researchers have taken up poststructuralist approaches, sometimes referred to more generally as sociocultural approaches. They have placed increasing importance on understanding identity as changing over time, contradictory, negotiated in interaction, and ambivalent (see Block 2014; Norton 2013). This change of direction in applied linguistics was instigated largely by Bonny Norton Peirce's (1995) study, which looked at the social identity roles assumed by and imposed on English language learners in Canada. This study identified the ways in which learners' willingness to use English changed situationally, in relation to their changing identities and group memberships, leading them in some situations to avoid speaking English, despite being highly motivated students. Further studies have expanded on this research, using poststructuralist theory as an effective tool for understanding language learners' language use choices in relation to their identities in a wide array of contexts (e.g. Allen 2011; eds Benson & Nunan 2005; Block 2014; Cruickshank 2012; De Costa 2016; eds Djenar, Mahboob & Cruickshank 2015; Menard-Warwick 2011; Norton 2000, 2013; Paltridge 2015; Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004; Pavlenko & Lantolf 2000). These studies give evidence for the interdependence of language use and identity construction, and the effects that this interrelationship has on language learning.

There are two key elements in the poststructuralist approach to identity which are highly relevant to language learning and to this study in particular. Firstly, poststructuralism sees identity as constructed in interaction with others. This directly implies the use of language, as well as other means of communication such as gestures or pauses. Identities are constructed within discourses, understood broadly as language and extra linguistic practices used to convey meanings within communities of practice, outlined in greater detail in [Section 2.3](#). Identities are situated within contexts that are embedded within cultures and histories (Bucholtz & Hall 2004; Higgins 2011). In this sense, identities can be understood as a ‘web of relations’ (Mercer 2011, p. 25) between the individual and their roles in society, the people, objects and artefacts they come into contact with, the knowledge they possess, and the ways in which they use language. As language is used, intentionally or unintentionally, to construct identities, it is always ‘half someone else’s’ (Bakhtin 1981, p. 293). Words and their meanings are learnt and borrowed from others. They bring with them associations and implications that can be intended by the speaker, and inferred by the listener. Words, and thus also identities are always attached to histories, to past experiences, and to knowledge shared between persons. Identities are constructed not only in the context of words and discourse, but also amongst other resources and artefacts in the social environment (van Lier 2004). Environments and contexts of identity construction are not limited to the physical. They include also virtual and online environments, where increasingly more day to day interactions are taking place (Baxter 2016; Block 2014; Paltridge 2015).

The second key characteristic of poststructuralist approaches to identity is that identity is viewed as being negotiated as part of these interactions. Identities can be forced upon persons unwillingly, and they can also be taken up. This only occurs, however, through the actions of others and is not an inevitable result of predetermined biology or social structures (Djenar, Mahboob & Cruickshank 2015). Language learning, therefore, is often seen as a ‘site of struggle’ for learners, who need to negotiate their identities using a language of which they do not yet have full command (Norton 2000, p. 127). Power relations and social positioning play an important role in determining identities and language use choices. Particularly in second language learning scenarios, learners may need to go through the painful process of self translation and (re)construct their L1 selves in order to position themselves within their new environment (Cruickshank 2015; Higgins 2011; Pavlenko & Lantolf 2000). Negotiation of identities can also be referred to as positioning, that is to say finding and establishing one’s

place in relation to others in a given social situation through language use (Davies & Harré 1990). Positioning describes the degree to which learners have the right and power to speak, and how those power roles are played out and develop through speech. Like identities, positions are fluid and change according to time and situations, and they have important implications for learners' language use and willingness to practise and engage with the L2, which is imperative to language learning (Lantolf 2000). Kayi-Aydar (2014) has shown, for instance, that positioning in the ESL classroom can result in a more positive language learning experience for some students, and in more negative experiences for others. The process of language learning involves the whole person and the act of language use, particularly the use of an L2, and has direct implications for both positioning and the construction of identity (Benson 2019; Lantolf 2000; van Lier 2007).

Viewing the language learner as a whole person

In his paper titled 'Ways of seeing', Phil Benson (2019) suggests that in more recent years there has been a shift in applied linguistics, away from 'learner' centredness with its focus on learning processes, towards a person centred approach. This is evident in the increasing number of studies taking poststructuralist and sociocultural approaches. The 'person centred era' of applied linguistics research takes the individual, the person, with all their experiences, beliefs, wishes, worries and dreams as its foundation (Benson 2019). As a result, issues relating to the construction of the self are central to understanding how and under which conditions language learning takes place. It is important to consider language learners within the many contexts and environments in which they use various forms of language. This extends far beyond the classroom, encompassing learners' whole lives, taking into account also their experiences outside of the language classroom and beyond traditional language learning activities. An emphasis on the bidirectional relationship between learners and their environments can be described as an ecological approach, which complements sociocultural and poststructuralist understandings of identity (see Kashiwa & Benson 2018; van Lier 2004). Thinking of learners as existing within an ecology made up of resources and affordances is a useful metaphor for illustrating the complex nature of the language learning process. Learner ecologies will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3; however, it is important to emphasise here the significance of interactions between learner and context when seeking to understand the language learner as a whole person.

A person centred approach means that rather than being considered as input processing devices or machines computing, memorising and copying information, learners are active agents who participate in their language learning (van Lier 2007). Previous understandings of learners which emphasised the importance of the teacher and content, as well as innate characteristics of learners, meant that learners were stripped of their agency. Learners were seen as subjects of actions taken by teachers or receivers of language input. Learners had characteristics, which teachers could endeavour to accommodate. From a person centred perspective, however, learners are positioned in different ways throughout the process of language learning and have the agency to choose how they respond to this positioning (Toohey & Norton 2003). As agents, learners are understood to have the power to ‘construct the terms and conditions of their own learning’ (Lantolf & Pavlenko 2001, p. 145). The degree to which the learner can exercise agency is determined by a combination of their actions and their environment. Seeing the learner as a whole person means acknowledging their power and agency, their individual struggles and strengths, and seeing the learning process as something that occurs differently for each individual language learner, embedded within their broader life experiences and history.

2.1.3 Clarification of some identity related terminology

Identity, as has been discussed in the above sections, is a complex, often elusive and multifaceted construct, which can be understood to encompass a range of different meanings. To complicate matters, terms connected to identity such as *agency*, *the self*, *self efficacy*, *self confidence* and *self concept* are often used without specific clarification as to how they relate to identity. This subsection lays out the meanings intended by these terms as they are used in this study, first providing clarity on identity related terms, then giving a definition of the term *identity* as it is used in this study.

Agency

Above has been discussed the importance of taking into account language learners’ identities as a means of allowing them greater agency for both their language learning and language use. Agency has been defined by Ahearn (2001, p. 112) as ‘the socioculturally mediated capacity to act’. This definition emphasises the contextually embedded and interactional nature of agency. Agency relates to a person’s actions in context and is thus tightly bound with identity.

It describes what a person does, how they behave, act, think and speak, and all of this contributes to who they are (Vitanova et al. 2014). Agency is a primary component of a person's identity because it constitutes the perceived power they have to take actions. Particularly relevant to this study is learners' perceived right to speak within varying social contexts, often influenced by the presence or absence of certain speech partners. Through their interactions, even those that are routine and day to day, these speech partners contribute to learners' sense of agency and connectedly their willingness to engage with the target language (Norton 2013; Norton & Toohey 2011; Toohey & Norton 2003). Learner agency has a direct impact on learning outcomes and on the attainment of proficiency in a foreign language because of its influence over learners in interaction (Gkonou 2015). Agency can be understood as a branch of identity which relates specifically to learners' ability to take action within social contexts.

The self

A further term in need of clarification is *the self*. In many instances, the self is used as a synonym for identity. In some cases it has even been referred to as a joint entity, for example Giddens (1991) uses the term 'self identity'. From this, one can infer that the two constructs are closely linked and largely overlap. Both are connected to a description of *who one is*. However, Leo van Lier (2007, p. 57) proposes some distinctions, suggesting that the self is a 'dynamic interrelationship' of past, present and future perceptions of who one is and why one is the way one is. In his view, the self is related directly to one's internal perception of who one is, and identity, in contrast, is how the self is interpreted within social contexts, in interaction with others. A slightly different view is put forward by Valerie Pellegrino Aveni (2005). Based on her study of the self and language learners' self presentation through language use during study abroad, she suggests that the self is comprised not only of one's own self perceptions, but also of the perceptions of others. In keeping with the sociocultural understandings of identity discussed in the previous section, she emphasises that the self exists only within its social context, within society and in relationships between people. Further, language plays an important role in the presentation of the self in interaction, although the self can also be communicated through other means such as gestures, clothing and facial expressions. Relatedly, self presentation is also connected to agency, as it relates to one's ability to acquire and sustain power positions in interaction with others. While the construct of

the self shares many similarities with identity, the term implies a closer connection with internal happenings, whereas identity places emphasis on the interactions of the self with context. The self, however, is always in some form of interaction with its context and so the terms *self* and *identity*, as they are used in this study, are largely interchangeable.

Self efficacy, self confidence and self concept

Often discussed in conjunction with the self is self efficacy, which can be defined as learners' beliefs about their abilities and skills (Graham 2007). This construct is sometimes referred to as self confidence. It does not describe a learners' actual abilities, rather it describes what a learner thinks they are capable of doing. Despite this, there is a bidirectional relationship between self efficacy and language skills; learners who think that they are capable tend to be more successful and vice versa (Mills, Pajares & Herron 2006). As has been observed by Sarah Mercer (2011), this construct has largely been used within studies that take a learner centred focus, seeing it as a set characteristic of learners which influences other variables such as strategy use, anxiety, and learner beliefs relating to autonomy and motivation (e.g. Graham 2007; Horwitz 1987; Mills, Pajares & Herron 2006; O'Malley & Chamot 1990). These studies have given evidence for the existence of an important connection between learners' self beliefs, their willingness to use language, and their overall learning outcomes. Mercer (2011) discusses the related construct of self concept, which she identifies as the most imperative and encompassing of the self related terms in applied linguistics research into language learning in context. Like self efficacy, self concept relates to what learners believe about themselves. While self efficacy focuses more specifically on beliefs about abilities relating to foreign or second language learning, self concept is understood to include learners' more general self beliefs. These beliefs are seen as highly relevant and influential with respect to the more language specific beliefs entailed by self efficacy. Mercer (2011, p. 4) describes self concept as a 'powerful, central psychological construct' which can assist in understanding the way learners approach their language learning and use. Self efficacy and self confidence can thus be understood as branches of self concept, which is itself a branch of the self, the latter being in turn a branch of the broader construct of identity.

Identity

As the overarching entity, encompassing the self, and perceptions of the self, the notion of 'identity' is the most in need of clarification within this study. The preceding discussion has highlighted the many possibilities for seeing and understanding identity. It has put forward a socially situated, poststructuralist perspective as one that is appropriate for studies whose aim is to understand learners' reasons for engagement with the language that they are learning. While the self is understood to relate to internal perceptions of who one is, identity looks not only at the internal self but also at how this exists in constant interaction with the external environment. Van Lier (2004, p. 131) describes identity as being both a 'project' (internal) and a 'projection' (external), constructed from 'within' as well as from 'without'. Taking a similar perspective, Norton (2000, p. 5) describes identity as 'how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands the possibilities for the future'. Mercer (2011) expands on this definition, pointing out that negotiation of the self in interaction is a central focus in understanding identity.

Often, identity can seem like an unfathomable construct, something so large and all-encompassing that it cannot be easily related to everyday experiences. As a term which has over time been used to mean so many different things, it can feel loaded, full of expectations of complex, philosophical definitions. Yet identity as it is understood in this study is constructed on an ongoing, continuous basis as part of the regular, mundane experiences that language learners encounter in their day to day lives. While identity construction is not limited to the mundane, and large changes in our lives can most certainly leave the impression of having changed who one is, everyday experiences are those which take up the majority of a person's time. In taking up a large proportion of one's life, they also play a key role in determining who one is. The complexity of identity comes from its construction as part of these ongoing, interrelated experiences, forming a web between environments and the people within them, and between past, present and future selves.

Identity describes who a person is in relation to their history, their future, and their experiences in interaction with others. Conversations with someone at the supermarket, text messages from friends or acquaintances, a teacher's answer to a student's question in the language classroom, notes taken in class, books being read, YouTube videos being watched in one's spare time,

these are everyday acts all requiring language. These are all acts of identity construction. It is through these acts that learners position themselves in relation to the people, resources, tools, and objects they are confronted with in their environments. Decisions made relating to language use, to speak or not to speak, how to speak, choosing which language to use to answer a question in the language classroom, choosing which people on social media to follow, which songs to listen to, are all identity forming acts. They impact on language learning and are what will be in focus as part of the investigation into identity and language learning within this study.

2.2 Connections of culture and identity

Seeing identity as a process of construction, on an ongoing basis within everyday environments implies that an important role is played by culture, as it is an integral part of the contexts or environments that contribute to and interact with identity. Culture, however, much like identity, is a term whose meaning requires some clarification. This subsection looks at approaches to conceptualising culture and how these different perspectives align with varying constructs of identity, setting out a view of culture that aligns best with the approach to identity taken up in this study.

2.2.1 Ways of thinking about culture: large and small cultures

Large cultures

Perhaps the most commonly intended meaning when one refers to *culture* is that which Adrian Holliday (1999, p. 237) has described as a ‘large culture’. For Holliday, large cultures are those linked to nations, such as British culture, Australian culture or French culture. This view of culture often corresponds with teachings about different national cultures and traditions such as those that are frequently part of language education in schools, often taking place in conjunction with the teaching of the language associated with that culture. Such cultural teachings might also involve students making comparisons between their own (large) culture and the culture of the L2 (e.g. Liddicoat & Crozet 2001; Moloney 2019). Welsch (1999, p. 195) similarly describes large, or national cultures as ‘single’ cultures, emphasising that an understanding of culture as connected to and bounded by nation states implies that cultures exist independently of one another, as ‘islands’ or ‘closed spheres’. The constructs of ‘large’ and ‘single’ cultures both highlight a commonly held assumption perpetuated through language education that implies that cultures exist and operate inside of themselves, separate from the other nation-cultures around them.

Single or large cultures are limited by the arbitrary national borders placed between nation-states. A national identity is one which is ascribed by birth and is associated with geographical location, and often with a single culture and language connected with that place. This large culture has been described as the ‘primary form of identity available to us’ (Poole 2003). The idea of nations as bounded and separate is often put forward as part of nationalistic political agendas (Holliday 1999). Such a view of culture as well as the associated perspectives on

identity are, from the perspective of Welsch (1999), in reality impossible. They imply homogeneity within individual cultures and clear borders between them. From such a viewpoint, there is no consideration given to the parts of cultures which overlap, to blurred borders between nation states and communities, or to the diversity that exists within nations and the commonalities between them. Furthermore such an approach leads to separatist thinking, setting up language learners, amongst others, to think in terms of us versus them. It encourages the belief in simplistic homogeneity amongst members of one's own culture, and of the difference from those who do not belong to one's culture (Davies 2013). A large culture view is limited by sweeping generalisations such as *Germans like to drink beer* or *Australians enjoy watching sports* which identify unchanging characteristics of persons located within a particular geographical area, disregarding the array of personal experiences and histories that exist amongst any given group of people. It is a simplistic perspective which denies the true complexity of the ways in which culture operates within, between and across national borders, as well as the ways in which it contributes to the construction of identities in a non-linear way.

Small cultures

The criticism here of the construct of large cultures does not set out to say that no shared behaviours, language and traditions exist within nations. Of course, people within a particular nation state will inevitably find many similar ways of doing things and thinking about the world, by virtue of their geographical proximity to one another. The issue with a large culture approach is that the focus is on the homogeneity of a group, rather than on the diversity that exists within any group. From an applied linguistics research perspective, seeking to investigate the factors that affect language learning, it is most useful to take up a conception of culture that allows for focus on the true complexities of language use within a variety of different situations, which language learners are likely to be faced with as part of their everyday lives. Thus, as an alternative to viewing cultures as 'large' and as divided by national borders, Holliday (1999) suggests the construct of 'small cultures'. 'Any cohesive social grouping', regardless of its size, geographical location(s), and ethnic background(s), can be understood as a small culture (Holliday 1999, p. 237). Put simply, small cultures are defined by habitual ways of doing things between people. They are based on shared behaviours and are linked to expectations of how others will also behave. They are not limited to or in any way bounded by large cultures; they

can run within, between and beyond national borders. Small cultures are fluid; they can form, change and overlap unproblematically.

A sports team practising for a big game, students taking a test in a language classroom, a group of friends meeting for dinner, a person driving their car on a busy road, each of these is an example of a situation in which one participates in a small culture. Within each of these scenarios, a number of overlapping small cultures will exist at any given time. When a group of friends meets for dinner, they are entering the small culture of the restaurant setting. Restaurant employees will have set ways of doing things within the restaurant. The group of friends also have their own small culture in relation to how they converse with one another, how they eat together, how they drink together, what jokes they tell, how they greet and say goodbye to one another, how they organise paying the bill, and so on. These are everyday activities but they are tied up in mutually understood ways of doing things. Taking a small culture approach to understanding culture means acknowledging the complexity and diversity that exist in human interaction and language use. This approach has become increasingly more appropriate as part of today's world where national borders are often blurred, communication across cultures and great distances is largely uninhibited through the use of technology, and many people from different national and ethnic backgrounds live within close proximity to one another. From this perspective the construct of multiculturalism takes on a new meaning, not only a multiplicity of 'large' or national cultures in one geographical area, but also implying a melange of small cultures which exist in constant interaction with other small cultures, unbounded by physical or geographical borders.

Small cultures and communities of practice

In his discussion of ways of seeing culture, Leo van Lier suggests the following definition:

Culture is the way we do things around here (van Lier 2004, p. 183).

This aligns largely with Holliday's notion of small cultures. Van Lier points out that this definition is helpful because, in its lack of specificity, it reflects the difficulties of defining and separating individual cultures. Further, the definition implies the importance of day to day activities, as well as implying a group of people, *we*, whose members are mutually accepted. It also highlights the importance of shared behaviours, *ways of doing things*. Holliday's juxtaposition of the terms 'large' and 'small' is particularly useful in its provision of a direct

comparison between ways of thinking about culture, which often otherwise remain implicit. Both Holliday's and van Lier's descriptions of (small) culture echo those of the construct of communities of practice, first coined by Lave and Wenger (1991). A community of practice can be defined as 'an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour' where they have shared 'ways of doing things, thinking, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short practices' (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992, p. 464). Any group of people can form a community of practice, no matter how great or small the group, the only requirement being that they have mutual behavioural norms (Joseph 2016). Wenger (1998) points out, however, that in contrast large cultures do not fit into the construct of communities of practice. Countries, cities and large scale corporations cannot be single communities of practice, though they do contain many communities of practice. To see such large entities as communities of practice would be to deny the diversity of the small scale interactions that take place within them. Communities of practice, like small cultures, exist instead between and within families, circles of friends, school classes and workplaces. They are formed as part of day to day interaction and are reflected in the existence of ongoing interactions and relationships, shared knowledge, in jokes, mutual knowledge and acceptance of discourse practices, as well as established practices for and approaches to getting work done (Wenger 1998). Small cultures and communities of practice are two sides of the same coin. The notion of small cultures is helpful because it highlights what a small culture is not, namely it is not large. The term 'communities of practice', however, has been widely adopted within and beyond applied linguistics literature to describe this notion of culture. As such, the term adopted within this study to describe culture, from a small culture perspective, will be communities of practice.

Central to communities of practice is participation, that is to say the active involvement in and contribution to the community and their ways of doing things, in short the notion of practice. Practice is described by Wenger (1998, p. 47) as not only 'doing', but 'doing in a historical and social context.' Practices therefore cannot be separated from their social context. Practices are formed through communities, learning, education, shared knowledge and mutual understandings. Participation in a community's practices can involve shared experiences, processes, and resources (Mercieca 2017). Participation may at first be 'peripheral', whereby a person takes part in the community through observation of its practices, before becoming increasingly more confident and active within the community of practice (Lave & Wenger

1991). Participation in practices implies more than the acquisition of the knowledge and skills related to that community of practice: through participation a person comes to make up an element of that community. There is great value in becoming part of a community. Participation in practices involves an ongoing process of learning and adaptation, in which one learns and contributes to ways of doing things in the community. It involves directed action, rather than the simple, passive learning of facts (Lave & Wenger 1991). Many of a community's practices involve ways of using language. Thus, participation in communities of practice is directly connected with language use and learning. For learners in second language contexts, participation in communities of practice through language use can be a 'struggle' (Pavlenko & Lantolf 2000), a struggle to learn and a struggle to participate in communities with new and unfamiliar language practices.

Participation in communities of practice and identity construction

As outlined earlier, identity within this study is understood to exist as a process of ongoing negotiation. Communities of practice are the primary locations in which this identity negotiation and construction occurs (Paltridge 2015). Identities are developed as each individual takes part in their own range of communities of practice, meaning that the process has an element of individuality, whereby each person will have their own set of identities depending on their personal experiences and history, but is also influenced by collective experience (Wenger 1998). Identities are simultaneously unique and shared. They change situationally and are constantly being reconciled into a unified concept of experience for each individual. Knowledge of and participation in the practices of a community lead to the ongoing changes and development of identities (Lave & Wenger 1991). Learning, including language learning, involves the learning of practices. As such, learning can be seen as the development of the ability to participate in a community of practice. With participation in a community of practice, one gains membership, a sense of belonging, and new experiences which contribute greatly to the sense of who one is (Wenger 1998). From this perspective, cultural learning and knowledge cannot be equated to the simple knowledge of festivals, traditions or cuisine. Meaningful cultural knowledge is, instead, the knowledge of and ability to participate in the practices of a particular community (van Lier 2004). Through participation, membership and identity are highlighted through practices which feel relatable, familiar, straightforward, predictable and easy to understand. Practices which are experienced as unfamiliar, complicated

and difficult to understand similarly contribute to one's sense of identity by highlighting the communities to which one does not (yet) belong (Wenger 1998). In this way, identity is played out through practice and participation in the communities that form part of our lives. It is social, has a direct connection with learning, and involves a process of ongoing negotiation with others in those communities. The communities within which one engages and the practices that one knows, as well as those one does not know, form part of one's identity.

Learning in communities of practice

If one sees learning as the increasing ability to participate in communities of practice, the perspective on two important areas of learning is brought into question: the *contexts* in which learning is understood to take place, and the *practices* that are believed to lead to learning. Traditionally, the context for learning has been the classroom and the teaching practices have been understood as those which result in learning. However, in seeing learning as an ongoing process that is embedded in the participation in communities of practice, the contexts for learning become the varied and innumerable settings in which we operate throughout our lives. Likewise, in communities of practice, which are informal and ever changing social groupings, much learning naturally occurs outside of formal learning settings as part of everyday practices.

It was with this in mind that Lave and Wenger (1991) chose to draw on anthropological data gathered during apprenticeships, rather than in classroom contexts, to support their theory of learning as both practice and identity construction. Taking Vygotskian theory as their basis, Lave and Wenger developed their theory of socially situated learning, in which learning is the process of becoming a member in a community of practice. The more one learns, the more competent one becomes in operating in a particular community of practice. Thus, learning goes beyond the assimilation of factual knowledge. Knowledge of facts may be necessary in some communities of practice; however, the full process of learning involves not only knowledge gain, but also (and sometimes only) the ability to act. Learning is not restricted to the walls of classrooms and educational institutions but occurs as 'an aspect of all activity' (Lave & Wenger 1991, p. 38). This means that cultural learning is a part of everyday action in communities of practice. Further, for Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 225), 'learning cannot be designed' because it occurs through engagement in practice. From this perspective, learning that occurs in the language classroom is essentially learning to participate in that particular community of practice. This might involve learning new words, grammar structures, speech routines or ways

of writing but is not limited to these. Everything that is learned in the classroom is contextualised to the purposes, goals and norms of that particular small culture. Though there are often intentions for generalisability to other communities of practice or to large cultures, the key learning that goes on in a classroom community of practice relates to the means that facilitate successful participation in that community of practice, rather than the transfer of those skills to other language use environments. The more the language classroom discourse mirrors the discourse of communities of practice outside the classroom, the easier it becomes for learners to transfer knowledge from the classroom community of practice to other communities. Communities of practice are where identities are negotiated and are key locations in which learning takes place.

2.2.2 Culture as a melange: globalisation and transcultural identities

The construct of communities of practice helps to highlight the dynamic and complex nature of culture. In conjunction with taking this approach to understanding culture, it is also useful to consider the effects of globalisation and technological developments on culture and on the ways in which it is perceived. Rather than taking a large culture approach, this subsection looks at the ways in which identities and culture have come to exist within and across national borders. A broader perspective of culture and cultural exchanges on a global scale allows also for a clearer picture of the local (De Fina 2016).

While the phenomenon of globalisation is not new, it is constantly evolving as technology, media, ways of communicating, patterns and methods of travel, and politics also develop. Globalisation has been described as the ‘intensified flows of capital, goods, people, images, and discourses around the globe’ (Bloomaert 2010, p. 13). Increased opportunities for exchanges between people across the world have important implications for language use, as well as for culture and identity. Changing ways of using technology such as those that can be seen in the development of apps for real time translation of documents or spoken language, or in the increasingly uncomplicated access to media in the form of news, television and film from international sources, imply the intermingling of cultures. Culture within our current global landscape exists as a melange, a mixture, whose parts do not have clear starting or end points. Such technological developments mean that our approach to viewing cultures on a global scale likewise needs to be updated (Higgins 2011). Globalisation also has important implications for

foreign language learning and teaching, as students have increasing access to the language and to communities of practice beyond the classroom. For example, learners can now engage in social media or join online social groups in the target language.

Globalisation and the blurring of the lines between nation states and national cultures have direct influence on the ways in which small cultures operate and interact with one another. The importance of understanding how global processes influence cultures at a local level raises the question of how to look at culture(s) from a broader perspective, whilst avoiding sweeping generalisations and limitation to national borders. A number of different approaches to conceptualising the intermingling, or simultaneous existence, of cultures have been suggested. The oldest concept is that of multiculturalism, whereby cultures are viewed as closed spheres or islands, existing in close proximity to one another, but without touching or overlapping. This analogy for culture is illustrated in **Figure 2.1, Diagram 1**. Multiculturalism is problematic in a number of ways. Firstly, cultures are viewed as closed off; thus they are conceptually understood as having no possibility for overlap or interrelation. In other words, such a view implies that when cultures meet or exist in close proximity to one another, they nonetheless remain separate. Even minority cultures, however, have at least some influence on the dominant culture, for example, through the presence of foreign language newspapers or restaurants serving different cuisines. These cultural phenomena, though seemingly small, contribute to the wider culture. As has been observed by Welsch (1999), such a perspective is not able to account for the interactions and influences that take place between cultures.

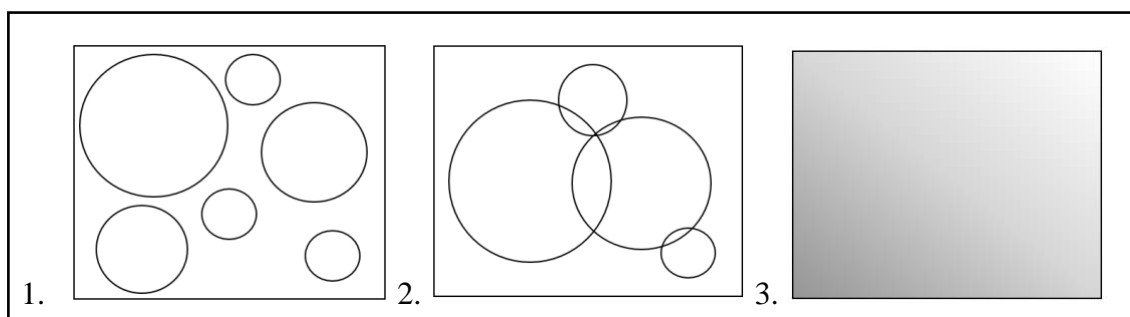


Figure 2.1 An illustration of (1) multiculturalism, (2) interculturality, and (3) transculturality

Interculturality, **Figure 2.1, Diagram 2**, has been suggested as a conceptual solution to the issues of separateness attached to multiculturalism. Interculturality resembles a Venn diagram,

whereby cultures remain as closed spheres or islands, but can overlap to certain degrees. However, while this analogy for the way cultures interact does at least acknowledge some intermingling and demonstrates the potential for mutual influence, the cultures remain closed and bound within their own clear cut boundaries. Welsch has suggested that such a view promotes separatism, because through this analogy one sees cultures as essentially closed and as having clearly defined borders, even when there is some overlap. Other concepts that have tried to capture the existence of cultures between or beyond national cultures include that of ‘middle cultures’, also referred to as ‘third places’, ‘third cultures’ or ‘third spaces’ (see Featherstone 2003; Holliday 1999; Kramsch 1993). The construct of third or middle cultures sets out to describe the experiences of people whose lives take place in between national cultures, for example those who have migrated away from their home culture and found a group of people from their home country with whom they can speak their L1, whilst still functioning in the larger foreign culture. A child with a migration background whose parents speak a different language at home from the national language is a further example of someone who experiences a third culture. Whilst it is a useful construct for highlighting the overlapping nature of cultures, and for emphasising the feeling that many people experience of existing between, rather than within, cultures, the third and middle culture constructs continue to put forward a similarly problematic conception of bounded cultures as the constructs of multiculturalism and interculturalism. They still present cultures as essentially closed and connected to nations, with third places as an exception whereby a person’s experience spans across cultures and countries. These constructs cannot account for the interdependent, unbounded, and blurry nature of the ways in which many small cultures interact to form a larger cultural melange.

For Welsch (1999, 2010, 2011), such understandings of culture are not only problematic but also impossible; they are entirely inaccurate representations which encourage separatist and nationalist ways of thinking. Cultures as closed spheres can only collide with one another. Welsch therefore proposes the construct of transculturality, which better reflects the ‘inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures’ (Welsch 1999, p. 197). Transculturality sees cultures as interconnected and hybridised. Instead of being separated by clear borders, cultures as conceived by transculturality have no borders, there are areas of difference, as well as similarity. Cultures on both small and large scales exist together and blend into one another. **Figure 2.1, Diagram 3** represents the construct of transculturality as a gradient, in which it is

difficult to distinguish where one shade ends and the next begins. This gradient could of course take many forms and have many differing patterns, the key being that the gradient has no defining edges. There remains the possibility for cultures to be different within this analogy; they can span from shaded to unshaded; however, they remain connected in some way. Transculturality reflects the status of culture today in our globalised world, where very little is unfamiliar, where lives, communication, media and information transcend national borders.

Taking up this perspective for understanding culture on a larger scale aligns with a view of identity as multiple, socially situated and malleable. Identities, previously seen as defined by membership within nation states, can now be seen as transcultural. Transcultural identities are not taken up only by those people who might be categorised as having third place identities. Instead, transcultural, transnational and hybrid identities are those held by all who participate in today's modern, technologically advanced, internationally interconnected world (De Fina 2016; Higgins 2011; Sandhu & Higgins 2016).

While it is useful to view cultures and the learning associated with cultures on a small scale, using constructs such as that of a community of practice, the view of transculturality discussed here allows us to see the ways in which these communities of practice are interconnected. Instead of seeing cultures as closed spheres, cultures are conceptualised as connected, overlapping, with no clearly defined edges. They are able to interact without the implication of conflict. This is a useful way of understanding culture in our current globalised, interconnected world.

2.3 Defining language and its relationship with identity

A rethinking of culture and identity, opposing traditional categories and exchanging them for constructs that are fluid rather than fixed, leads to the question of how language is understood within this study. This section sets out the spectrum of ways of seeing language as defined either by its form or through its use. Language can be understood as a key element of discourse, and language learning as a form of participation within discourses. Discourses and communities of practice can both be understood broadly as ways of doing things between people. This section looks at the influence on identity construction of participation in discourses in one's L1(s) and in additional languages. One's use of language can never be neutral and the message communicated goes far beyond the meaning of the words within an utterance. Thus language learners' choices of words, and their choices to speak or to remain silent, go far beyond their grammatical and lexical knowledge within the L2. This section thematises the nature of language as constructed, unbounded and ever changing, as well as its important role in identity construction.

2.3.1 Changing metaphors for understanding language and language learning

Language and language learning as defined by its structure

Language has often been understood by linguists as being composed of layered elements such as syntax, morphology, pragmatics and phonology. Consequently, these are seen as the elements that a language learner must master, or acquire, throughout the language learning process. From this viewpoint, language learning is thought to involve the acquisition of a predetermined set of linguistic facts and rules. This means that the information required to learn a language can be clearly set out and understood and the language learning process has clearly differentiated stages, as well as a distinct end point (Pavlenko & Lantolf 2000; Sfarid 1998). Language has been understood as a separate system, operating independently of one's emotions and social contexts (van Lier 2007). Such views align with Saussure's (1916) theory of language as a set of arbitrary linguistic signs, a stable and fixed linguistic system. This perspective also fits with a more general view of learning as a predominantly cognitive process, which takes a 'non personal' view of the processes involved in learning such as acquiring skills, completing tasks, and gathering information (Lave & Wenger 1991, p. 47).

This view of language and language learning can be useful for learners in certain circumstances, for example in scenarios where they want to understand the functionality of a specific grammatical or pronunciation error that they have discovered themselves making (van Lier 2007). However, it does become problematic when this is the central or sole view of language taken up in language teaching and language learning research. The result is a ‘kill and drill’, largely behaviourist approach, which focuses on teaching learners abstracted pieces of linguistic information, and which neglects the social, cultural and functional aspects involved in language use (Roche 2020, p. 4). A compartmentalised, scientific view of language can be useful for gaining understandings about the underlying functionalities of language. Science requires to a large degree that its subject be consistent, factual, reproducible and measurable. Language that has been taken out of its social context, pulled apart and analysed becomes in many ways lifeless. Spontaneous, meaningful, everyday language use, on the contrary, is very much alive. It is difficult to reproduce; it varies between speakers and contains errors and inconsistencies. This language, the language of *real life*, the language that many learners seek in their language classrooms for use in their life outside of class, is not the language that emerges as part of the scientific dissection of language into categories and parts (van Lier 2004). Traditional approaches to language teaching and the overarching concept of language attached to them break down language into understandable, teachable, learnable pieces. This implies that language is essentially something that can be acquired, collected and possessed as a direct result of learning facts and rules. There is a clear, methodological pathway to L2 acquisition. Connections between language learning and identity seem negligible from such a viewpoint, as learning is associated centrally with acquiring information. Yet there remains the question of the social, inconsistent, unmeasurable elements of language and communication that form an essential part of the language learning process.

Language and language learning as participation in communities of practice

An alternative metaphor for conceptualising language learning has been suggested, initially by Sfard (1998) within literature on general education and learning, and brought to light within applied linguistics by Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000). They suggest that both learning in general and language learning in particular can be understood as a process of increasing participation in communities, that is communities of practice, rather than acquisition. Learning therefore

becomes a process of learning practices, ways of doing things, which enable one to participate fully in the communities of practice for which one seeks membership. These practices might, and often do, require specific technical knowledge such as that of grammatical structures. However, the focus remains on the practices for which those structures might be used, rather than being limited to the learning of the structures themselves. Under this view issues relating to action, belonging, membership and connection become of central concern. This means that knowledge and the acquisition of linguistic facts are understood in the context of being products of interpersonal, communicative goals. Participation has been the metaphor of choice and way of seeing language learning for many sociolinguistic researchers over the past two decades (e.g. Block 2014; Menard-Warwick 2011; Norton 2000, 2013). Following this approach, Anna De Fina (2015, p. 271) emphasises the importance of participation as a key element of the language learning process, describing language learning as made up of ‘highly complex, individualised, and context bound processes,’ which are ‘deeply embedded in intricate social interactional encounters and practices in which learners participate, often carrying the baggage of highly professional backgrounds, complex motivations, anxieties, and desires.’ Language learning is connected to the individual and to the situations both inside and outside of the classroom in which the language is used.

In her study looking at learners of French in an *accueil* ‘welcome’ program for newcomers in a French speaking Quebec school, Dawn Allen (2011) provides a strong example of the influence and importance of seeing language learning as participation. Learners in the study were isolated from the mainstream school curriculum so that they could focus on gaining language skills. The study found that the focus on linguistic acquisition meant that non-French-speaking students were isolated from the French speaking community within the school. This social isolation had a negative impact on their language learning because the program stopped them from learning to participate in the practices of the mainstream school community. The results of Allen’s study led her to suggest that language is best viewed as something that is gained through use and participation within a particular community, rather than as something which learners should first attain to then gain access to a community.

Language is more than the sum of its parts. It can be broken up and categorised into an array of different elements – words, sentences, sounds, endings, gestures – many of which can be found in grammar books and language learning guides. Yet without context, without the

situation in which language is being used, language in all its fullness, with its ongoing, ever adaptive relationship with its surroundings, cannot be captured (van Lier 2004, 2011). Regardless of whether one is a proficient user or a language learner, each time language is used there is an element of creation and assemblage within that process. The process by which one chooses elements of a language to use for one's own specific purposes forms part of a process through which identities are constructed (van Lier 2004). Selves are reified through language use, language ability and language choices (Lantolf & Pavlenko 2001; Pellegrino Aveni 2005). Each time a person uses language, they engage in bidirectional communication, conveying information about their identity, as well as their perception of the identities of their audience (van Lier 2004). This goes far beyond grammatical knowledge of a particular language, and instead includes knowledge related to the ability to participate in specific practices associated with different communities.

2.3.2 Identity construction through participation in discourse

One need not hear more than a few sentences spoken by another person to be able to make inferences about a person's age, generation, nationality, gender. One might even make guesses as to occupations, education and religion. Language, through the forms that are chosen by speakers and writers, perhaps even more than through the meaning of what one says, is a primary medium through which identity is communicated (Fielding 2015). There is no escaping this characteristic of language. Language cannot be used in a neutral way. It requires both choices and knowledge of which choices, words, accents, syntax, phrases, sayings, etc. are available. The ability to speak or write a certain way reflects one's life history. It tells of a person's education, where they have spent time, in which countries they have lived, what their area of expertise is, and with which people they habitually communicate (Blackledge & Creese 2016; Joseph 2016).

Knowledge of language, of how to write a text message to a friend, or how to create a post on social media implies knowledge of experiences and of discourse. Language is a key element of discourse, which can be understood as the language connected with a certain topic enabling its discussion, such as the vocabulary and phrasing associated with talking about biology, or baking, or child rearing (Du Gay 1996; Layder 1997). However, discourse can also be seen to extend beyond language, despite always remaining intertwined with it. James Paul Gee (1990,

p. 142) describes discourse as ‘always more than just language’; it is ‘a way of being in the world which integrates words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes’. Further, Gee understands discourse to be connected with a membership or an identity within a certain social role such as being a man or woman, a teacher, a student or a parent. With its role in discourse, language is connected to a wide variance of the ways in which people make meaning, expressed not only through words but through other cultural emblems such as buildings, institutions, books, television shows, art, cuisines and body language (van Lier 2011). Discourses are connected to and reflect knowledge of particular activities, groups and lifestyles. There are clear parallels between discourse and communities of practice. Both describe ways of doing things between people, and within both constructs, language and participation in practices are key elements. Discourse is a construct with a focus directed towards language use, whereas the construct of communities of practice comes from the angle of culture. Within this study, the terms will be used with this distinction in mind, but also with the acknowledgement that they both primarily describe ways of acting and using language between groups of people with similar intentions.

Discourse, implied identities and L2 learning: research examples

The act of language learning implies learning to participate in new discourses, embedded in and coupled with communities of practice. Language learners not only face the challenge of learning the *facts* associated with a language, they must also consider the discourses in which they wish to participate and how comfortable they feel with the potential for initial low levels of competency in those discourses in the earlier stages of the language learning process (van Lier 2004). The self comes into play each time one learns something new and is thereby required to present oneself in a new, different and often less competent way than that which one is used to. This has important implications for language use, particularly in second language contexts, where using an L2 has the potential to reveal a lack of competency in or knowledge of a particular discourse, and can lead to negative assumptions about the learner. Language use leads interlocutors to make inferences about language learners’ identities, regardless of whether these inferences are those that the learner desires. As is shown below in the three examples from research into language learners in a range of contexts, these factors can have long term influence over learners’ choices around language learning and language use.

Avoiding L2 use opportunities to preserve the L1 self

The first illustration of discourse knowledge, or lack thereof, influencing learners' choices to use the L2 can be seen in Pellegrino Aveni's (2005) study which looks at study abroad students from the United States, in Russia. The study focuses on self presentation in the L2 and how this affects learners' use of Russian in the study abroad context. The study found that many students resisted opportunities to speak Russian because of fears of being considered less intelligent than they would be if they conversed in English, due to a lack of correct syntax, erroneous pronunciation, or concerns about listening comprehension. Learners reported being spoken to as if they were unintelligent or even mentally or physically challenged. The participants in Pellegrino Aveni's study described feeling like children, unable to express their intelligence, humour and full personality. Ways of speaking and the degree to which a person is able to participate in a particular discourse have a great impact on the impressions of self that that person presents towards their speech partners. As a result, learners in the study often avoided speaking Russian, despite being motivated to learn. This study exemplifies the ways in which learners' lack of knowledge of L2 discourses can contribute to the construction of learners' identities by speech partners. This in turn can have a large influence on learners' confidence and willingness to engage with the language.

Retaining L1 accents and resisting L2 learning

A further example of learners' choices to use an L2 in specific ways, distancing themselves from or not fully participating in discourses as a resistant act of identity construction can be seen in Kurban's (2015) study looking at bilingual marriages in Istanbul, Turkey. The study focuses on L1 English speakers who work as English language teachers and are married to non-L1 English speaking partners, residing long term in Turkey. The participants in the study reflect on the ways in which they adapt their L1 accent in their use of the L2 to emphasise certain elements of their identities. Two participants, content with maintaining a mainly transactional level of language ability, resist learning Turkish, their lives functioning for the most part entirely in English. These participants speak of a desire to maintain their English accents, even when speaking Turkish, and do not wish to adapt their speech to blend in with the locally spoken variety. Kurban describes this as an act of identity construction, motivated by the advantageous social status granted by being an L1 English speaker. This stands in relation to the alternative identity of being an L2 Turkish speaker who is not highly competent. These

learners are not motivated to further their language learning or their integration into Turkish speaking society. One of these two participants describes herself as living in a ‘bubble’ of foreignness (Kurban 2015, p. 154). This participant emphasises her agency in making the choice not to switch between cultures, remaining in her L1 culture as much as possible; she could switch if it were necessary. This conscious choice to operate within the language and culture which is familiar, and highly socially regarded, and over which one has the most control, has clear connections with a desire to position oneself as having greater social power.

Hiding L1 accents to blend in

The previous examples discuss language learners who often resisted use of the L2 within second language learning environments. In contrast, another participant in Kurban’s study had attained high levels of Turkish, to the degree that she could speak without giving away her English accent. Kurban considers that a possible motivation for this is that she had previously worked outside of the realm of English teaching, and was therefore required to speak Turkish in the workplace. For this participant, Turkish language ability likely gained a higher value in her professional and social life, prompting her efforts to learn the language and adapt her speech to mirror that of those around her. This study illustrates that a person’s willingness to learn and use a language is intricately connected with their work, friends and day to day life. The choices learners make about how much they wish to learn, and the degree to which they will adapt their ways of speaking their L1 to fit in with the norms of the L2, are not as simple as learning rules of pronunciation and improving their ability to hear different sounds. Language use and learning are in all instances socially motivated, and are tools of identity construction.

A final example of language learners manipulating their L1 and L2 accents to convey different identities comes from Piller’s (2002) study looking at language learners who have achieved especially high levels of proficiency in the L2. The study investigated bilingual couples in Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the United States, where at least one person in the couple had achieved native like levels of their partner’s language. The act of speaking an L2 with the accuracy of accent, intonation and phrasing that implies to one’s interlocutor that one is a local is referred to in the study as ‘passing’ for an L1 speaker. This is something L2 speakers can do in certain situations, a performance which generally takes place as part of first encounters. In the study, L2 users describe ‘passing’ as a method of remaining

unmarked, or neutral within general transactional interactions. The ability to speak without accent allows the person to avoid being assigned any particular national identity, and also implies inclusion in the local culture. It alleviates a feeling of foreignness. In longer encounters, however, 'passing' can also have problematic implications for identity. One participant from Denmark could pass as a German L1 speaker. She describes the issues she encounters when she does not tell people she is from Denmark within extended conversations; inevitably a niche German cultural reference will come up and her identity as an intelligent and well informed person will be challenged by her lack of this cultural knowledge. This demonstrates that mere knowledge of a language, even at a very high level of proficiency, does not suffice for full participation in L1 speaker discourses. Piller observes that this language learner is faced with a choice between an unmarked identity as a local through her high level of German language attainment, and her identity as a knowledgeable person. Following similar experiences, some participants in Piller's study also report using non local dialects of language, or interchanging the accent from their L1 for one associated with another language, so that they are not identifiable by their nationality but at the same time will not be assumed to be a local. In all instances, L2 users make many conscious choices about the ways in which they use the L2. They do not always speak the L2 in its exact standard variety, or local dialect, even though many would be capable of doing so, because this can lead to problematic identity relations.

The three studies described above discuss a variety of instances in which L2 learners adapt their language use according to the ways they wish to present themselves and the identities they wish to project. For a variety of social and identity related reasons, learners do not always use the L2 to the fullness of their ability, but instead may downplay their ability or put on accents to convey a different social identity which they perceive to be more desirable. Language learning requires not only the learning of language form but also the learning of discourses and how to participate in them. Learners are sensitive to discourses and to their degree of ability to partake in them successfully. If a learner feels that they will be unable to fully participate in a discourse they may resist speaking the language or find alternative ways to participate, such as by withholding their higher status L1 accent. In some cases learners may feel that they cannot participate in discourses due to a lack of language ability. However, learners can also be excluded from discourses because of a lack of discourse related knowledge such as awareness of niche cultural facts, local histories, sayings or styles of humour.

Language, life experiences and knowledge far beyond that of language forms contribute to language learning and learners' willingness to use an L2.

A view of language as a part of discourse leads to the observation that language is multifaceted, not only in terms of its formal components such as grammar and syntax, but also in regard to the way it is used socially. Languages are made up of many components that enable participation in a variety of discourses. These components include dialects and registers, and even within a single language, one frequently and seamlessly switches between forms and styles of language according to one's daily interactions. These changes in register, for example from slang spoken with close friends, to polite chit chat while waiting for a work meeting to begin, to giving a presentation at a conference, are different discourses, to which not every speaker of a particular language will have access. Each choice of a particular way of speaking is received by its listeners as existing within a range of discourses. Bakhtin (1981, p. 293) describes language as 'heteroglossic': one's use of words inevitably refers back to the previous uses of those words. Thus, it is impossible for language use to exist outside of its relation to discourses. Likewise it is impossible for language to remain static as it is being used. Language is reshaped, taking on new meanings, compiling them with old meanings, each time it is used (Blackledge & Creese 2016; Lantolf 2000).

2.3.3 Shifting conceptions of language and multilingualism

The notion of discourse begins to blur the borders of where language ends and actions, culture and ways of doing things begin. It emphasises the overlapping role that language plays in our lives and in forming the communities of practice in which we operate. As these borders become blurred so too do the borders between languages and the categories that have been created for them. If, as discussed above, a single language is made up of many different forms, perhaps referred to as dialects or registers, perhaps not given a name at all, over which one may or may not have competency, then the lines that separate one language from another also become less clear.

The questioning of what defines an individual language and of what separates one language from another has occurred within applied linguistics in a similar vein to the questioning of traditional structural, categorical views of identity and culture discussed earlier in this chapter. As transcultural approaches have been offered in place of multiculturalism, views of language

as static and complete have shifted towards an understanding of language as something that is grounded in action, and ongoing processes (van Lier 2007). The necessity for this shift has been perpetuated by changes in literacy practices brought about by the increasing use and presence of technology. Social media in particular has enabled and encouraged a diverse range of multilingual communication practices, as well as increased cultural exchange (Darvin 2016). Research into multilingualism has begun to move away from a view of language as a single entity with clear cut edges (Blackledge & Creese 2016). The borders of language do not correspond to national borders, nor do they correspond to the limits of what one finds in a grammar book or a dictionary (van Lier 2011). Instead, they shift within the ever changing ways that people use words, in many and various forms, to express meaning to one another (Jørgensen & Møller 2014).

Language as languaging

As an alternative to the static construct of language, Swain (2006) has suggested that language instead be viewed as ‘languaging’. This alternative term is motivated by its emphasis on doing, process, action, and the agentive behaviour required of language users (2007). In languaging, interlocutors make use of the linguistic resources that are available to them. These resources are not limited to a single language or language form such as the standard language. They extend to include an array of words, phrases, expressions, accents, registers and dialects, not held back by the borders of official language (Blackledge & Creese 2016). The resources a speaker chooses to employ are instead selected according to their knowledge of their audience. They will choose elements of language that are appropriate and meaningful to their speech partners, perhaps drawing on a range of languages, registers and dialects familiar to both interlocutors. The way in which language is used in the lives of real people is not limited by borders imposed between languages or within languages, determining which features belong, or are correct, and those which should be avoided.

The differentiation between a standard variety of language and a regional dialect is a social, cultural and political distinction, rather than a linguistic one (van Lier 2011). There is nothing within descriptive linguistics that says that one version of a language is the correct or official one other than the fact that that version is being used as such and being taught within educational institutions. A conception of languages and their associated registers, sociolects and dialects as ‘neat packages’ does not correspond to the messiness of real world language

use, which disregards the barriers between languages and language categories on a regular basis (Jørgensen & Møller 2014, p. 77). Thus as an alternative construct to multilingualism, Jørgensen & Møller (2014) suggest polylingualism and polylinguaging. Polylinguaging sees language use as an act in which features from any number of language forms and categories may be used. Polylingualism refers to the shared use of multiple forms and features of language(s) by different groups of people throughout the world. This reflects the diverse use of language within modern societies, where it is common for speakers to be proficient in multiple languages. Codeswitching therefore is also reconceptualised as a form of polylinguaging, whereby instead of focusing on language users switching between discrete, separate language codes, they are drawing on the multiple linguistic resources available to them and their speech partners (Jørgensen & Møller 2014). The central claim of polylingualism is not that separate languages do not exist. Most certainly there are many varying forms of language used throughout the world. Polylingualism instead emphasises the diversity that occurs within what may generally be referred to as an individual language. It further highlights the connectedness of languages that might typically be regarded as separate. The construct provides a different frame for viewing language, a frame that seeks to escape the social and political linguistic categories that have traditionally been assigned to languages.

(Poly)linguaging in the language classroom

Language teaching in most instances tends to be focused on one individual language in the bounded, categorical sense. Polylinguaging, or codeswitching, in the classroom is often seen as a potential hindrance to language learning. As has been touched on above, this does not correspond to the real life use of language, which makes use of the full spectrum of linguistic resources available, regardless of their linguistic category. Certain assumptions about language learning can partially be blamed for this approach to language teaching. It is commonly believed that the L1 and any additional language(s) one is attempting to learn oppose each other. One must do everything one can to shut down, push out and disable the L1 in order to enable the L2 to function fully. Teachers may be concerned that if they allow polylinguaging, that is, fluid use of the L1 and the L2 in the language classroom then learning may be hampered, or that learners will learn pidginised language forms, or will not use the L2 at all (van Lier 2004). Contrary to this hypothesis, use of the L1 and L2 in the language classroom has been shown to be beneficial to L2 learning (Brooks, Donato & McGlone 1997; Creese & Blackledge

2010). When engaging with meaningful activities such as project work in the classroom, learners can continue to use the L2 despite having the option to switch to the L1. They naturally reduce their use of the L1 as their proficiency and confidence in the L2 increases (Brooks, Donato & McGlone 1997). Thus, allowing students to discuss, clarify and understand an exercise in the L1 in the language classroom will not inhibit their L2 learning or stop them from being able to think in the L2. It will enable them to complete the exercise with an understanding of the task that they feel comfortable with, in addition to helping them to build polylinguaging skills that they will require for language use outside of the classroom.

There are a number of different ways of understanding language. Some more traditional perspectives see it as static, fixed and defined by its form. However, this study views language as ever changing, as action, as in process, as languaging, an entity whose use is unbounded by the linguistic categories that may be assigned to it. This fits with the understandings of identity and culture adopted in this study, forming an overarching sociocultural approach to understanding language and language learning with an emphasis on social contexts. Understanding language as embodied through participation in communities of practice and their associated discourses, and acknowledging that, as such, the nature of language is inconsistent and varied have important implications for identity within the language learning classroom, some of which have been touched upon thus far. These will be explored in greater detail in the next section.

2.4 Language ideologies and identity in the language classroom

If, as outlined in the previous section, it can be claimed that the borders between individual languages and features of languages are not clearly or permanently defined, what does this mean for the language that is taught within second and foreign language classrooms? Which form of language is it exactly that can and should be singled out for language teaching? On what basis should certain styles and features of languages be selected and excluded? This section looks at the ways in which the answers to such questions differ depending on the view of language that has been assumed and at what this means for the question of identity. Views of language and the ways that they play out in a practical sense within schools and other educational institutions can be understood as language ideologies. An ideology is a group of ideas, practices or systems which reproduces or creates power relations within society (De Costa 2016). These power relations are most often economic and political, and in the case of language, ideologies influence the way in which language is conceived within society, as well as when, where, how, by whom, and why certain varieties of language are spoken in certain contexts, for example schools and universities. Language forms and the ideologies connected with them are both created and perpetuated by powerful persons and the groups to which they belong, such as religions, cultures, nationalities and ethnic groups (Davies 2013). The learning of particular standardised forms of language is typically set out in language classrooms as being a clear and specific goal for learners. However, the standard version of language that is taught in most language classrooms, with its grounding in definitions of correct and incorrect grammatical structures, in many ways lacks correspondence with language forms used in real life situations. Through its exclusivity and focus on correctness, standard language can exclude learners, as well as lead them to exclude themselves, from the L2 communities of practice in which they wish to partake.

2.4.1 Standard language as a questionable main goal for L2 learners

Standardised versions of languages, for example Standard English, or *Hochdeutsch* (Standard German), typically have a number of characteristics in common. Firstly, they are usually connected to a certain geographical region or nation, and as such they are associated with the perpetuation of nationalistic ideals (Holliday 2008; Jørgensen & Møller 2014; Roche 2020). Secondly, the use and maintenance of a standard language imply that certain alternative dialects, grammars, words and accents have been excluded, meaning that certain forms are

perceived as being 'correct', whilst others are 'incorrect'. This is problematic because what is correct usually corresponds to that which is used by the well educated and privileged. What is incorrect is represented in the language use of those who are underprivileged, belong to regional or minority groups and are often less educated (Jørgensen & Møller 2014). Thirdly, standard language usually attempts to avoid change and innovation. The teaching of standard language perpetuates the use of historical language forms and deems deviations to be incorrect (Joseph 2016). The ability to use standard language, or lack thereof, indexes language users' identities in terms of their nationality and educational background, among other things. Holliday (2008) suggests that standard language, for example British English, as it is advertised within language courses and textbooks in the United Kingdom, is better understood as a form of branding than as a linguistic code. For Holliday, instead of describing actual language use in the United Kingdom, standardised British English represents an ideal, a form of language associated with academia and academic status. Even in formal contexts where academic language, which corresponds most closely to standard language, is being used, the standard versions of a language deviates from the real life use of that language.

The classrooms and language textbooks that perpetuate standard languages represent the physical embodiment of language ideologies. Standardised languages are mediated through educational institutions and materials. Education operates through language on almost all levels, from the teaching and assessment that takes place, to administrative activities and school newsletters. The ideologies embedded within standard languages and thus within education are often implied and tend to be neither noticed nor questioned. However, learning a standard language will lead learners to have certain beliefs and make particular inferences about the identities of their interlocutors based on their speech (De Costa 2016). Choices made regarding education are very often motivated by politics, not least of all those choices related to language within education (van Lier 2007). Education stands in a reciprocal relationship with standard language; both require each other for their continued existence (Davies 2013). Standardised language is taught in schools and in language classrooms. It is presented to learners as a norm, an ideal, which they need to attain fully to be able to gain the social status that is attached to it.

The deviance of standard language from day to day language use can be observed in that when school children enter the education system, they will likely feel comfortable with their ability to use their first language(s). However, they will quickly notice that much in the L1 is yet to

be learnt, not simply reading and writing but conventions, grammar, text structures and styles, registers, and genres specific to the array of school subjects available (van Lier 2004). Not only L2 learners but also L1 speakers of any language have to explicitly learn the rules of the standard language to be able to use it competently. While learning and knowing the standard form of a language is useful for continued engagement with academia, L1 speakers' frequent lack of competency in standard language strengthens the argument that standard language cannot be equated to the 'true', 'correct' or 'complete' version of a language. This further suggests that the construct of the L1, native speaker, as a model user of the standard language, is also in need of some critical reconsideration.

The opaque construct of the native speaker

There is a dichotomy between the standard language that is taught in language classrooms and the language that is used out in the world by 'native speakers', which in few cases outside of academia actually follows the rules of the standard language. With this in mind, Davies (2013, p. 50) describes the native speaker construct as 'both reality and myth'. He states that native speakers do exist in the sense that one has a special ownership over the language(s) that one learns as a child and uses throughout one's life. However, the construct of the native speaker that is most often associated with language learning, and to which learners must aspire, is for Davies mythical. This corresponds with Holliday's (2008) analogy of standard language as a brand rather than a true linguistic form. The native speaker represents an unattainable ideal, something one might aspire to acquire, packaged neatly as the outcome of participation in a language course, but which ultimately remains out of reach. The native speaker construct represents prestige and high culture. It does not represent the average person who has learnt the said language from a young age. Language learners are taught and assessed against 'native speaker' standards which many native speakers have not achieved. So it can be said that standard language is 'no one's real language, but one to which all aspire' (Davies 2013, p. 50).

The language, more specifically the discourses, that one uses in everyday life, are those in which one builds competency. This is true of both L1 and L2 language learning and use. One may have learnt a language from childhood and be highly educated with high social status, and still not be competent within unfamiliar discourses. An example of this might be a person who works in the field of academia and can operate within those discourses, such as writing papers, and giving lectures and presentations with competency. However, the same person might

struggle to write a report for a commercial company, or, put amongst fans of a sport or a music group with which they are not familiar, might find themselves less competent and able to participate in those particular discourses, that is in conversations associated with that area (Davies 2013; Holliday 2008). Each individual has a separate set of competencies in language(s) connected to the discourses and communities of practice which are a part of their lives. Each individual therefore also has their own version of the language(s) that they speak, divided into different discourses and registers that may or may not include knowledge of the standard language as it is taught in language classrooms.

Not only does the term native speaker not align with the actual language abilities of many native speakers, but the term native speaker, and its counterpart non-native speaker, are neither neutral nor transparent (Davies 2013; Holliday 2008). There are many speakers, for example, who have migrated in early adulthood and never returned to their country of birth, for whom an L2 is a primary language. It is the language to which they feel connected, whose discourses they know well, and in which they can express themselves most accurately. Many such persons may lose much of the ability to speak their L1. It is unclear whether they would be regarded as a native speaker of their first, less used, or additional language over which they have greater mastery. It is likely that they would often be excluded from the category of native speaker for both the L1 and L2. Davies (2013) suggests that there is a continuum between being a native or non-native speaker, rather than two clear cut categories. This is reflective of the complex reality of the modern world and the cultural and linguistic melange contained within it. Davies further observes that native speaker status is typically determined by having learnt the L1 from childhood, and thus having intuitions about grammar and the ability to speak fluently and without inhibitions. Many L2 learners, he points out, are able to fulfil the majority of these criteria, despite having learnt the language later in life. Their grammatical intuitions may vary from those of 'true' native speakers, but these intuitions vary greatly between native speakers as well. This adds to the argument that there is a continuum relating to familiarity with a language in its various forms, rather than categorical exclusion based on place of birth.

The construct of the native speaker has strong connections with identity. It implies belonging to a place and culture, as well as ownership of a particular language. Being a native speaker means not only recognising oneself as such, but being recognised by others as a member of that group (Davies 2013; Jørgensen & Møller 2014). There is an underlying belief that a

person's native language is their most authentic and true form of self expression. Correspondingly, divergences from one's native language come with an implication of a lack authenticity (Joseph 2016). As was exemplified in the earlier description of Piller's (2002) study of L2 learners who can pass as native speakers, being accepted as a native speaker involves more than mere linguistic abilities. It requires the knowledge of discourses, practices or what Bourdieu (1991) refers to as 'habitus'. Habitus implies ways of being, thinking, acting, speaking and the specific cultural knowledge that is gained through time spent in a particular location. The Danish L1 speaker described in Piller's study had acquired the German language to a native like level, however could not gain the full habitus required for native speaker status. Because L2 learners by default will not have the same habitus as local L1 speakers, there is a barrier to them being accepted as members of the native speaking in group, even when they attain the L2 to high levels.

What to aim for in the language classroom, if not native speaker standards

One must then ask what this means for the language forms used as models and goals in second and foreign language teaching. It has been outlined above that not only L2 learners but also competent L1 speakers need to explicitly learn the standard language, and often use it inconsistently, with varying levels of success and 'correctness'. Should, then, the aim of a language teaching class be perfect mastery of the standard language to the level of the idealised native speaker, which is for the vast majority, if not perhaps for all, an impossibility? Is it sensible to set learners up with a goal that they will almost certainly never achieve? Whilst the native speaker ideal is deeply embedded as an unproblematic linguistic reality within language teaching practices, as well as more broadly in society, it is at least a step in the right direction to highlight some of its flaws and the negative impact this model can have on the language learner. Pellegrino Aveni (2005) suggests that a more appropriate goal for language learners would involve a focus on the ability to communicate the self in the L2; conveying one's ideas and one's personality without a sense of being held back, rather than measuring L2 achievements only against linguistic accuracy. In a similar vein, Holliday (2008) also proposes a version of language learning goals based on learners' competencies in specific discourses, determined by learners' ability to communicate successfully in a particular area. This would shift the focus to what learners can do, and away from defining them in terms of what they are

not, that is as non-native speakers. As such, L2 competency becomes a domain specific achievable goal for all learners, no longer limited to those born in a particular nation.

2.4.2 Grammar in the language classroom: standard language dissected

Language teaching that is directed towards achieving native speaker standards tends to put a large emphasis on the attainment of the very specific grammar of the standard language. Diverging from a view of language as moving and changing, this version of grammar corresponds with a view of language as static and predictable, with a set of memorisable rules. The attainment of grammatical knowledge is often mathematical and methodological, involving tables and rules to be learnt by heart, accompanied by a plethora of exceptions and inauthentic example sentences (van Lier 2011). Grammar allows for easy judgements of a sentence as ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’, ‘good’ or ‘bad’. Grammar knowledge is practical to test and easy to quantify because of its objective nature as linguistic fact, set out and reaffirmed by language textbooks based on standardised language.

[T]he grammar book is about the dissection of linguistic cadavers. Dead bones (sentences) are piled up, sequenced, labelled and catalogued like in a paleontological museum (van Lier 2004, p. 108).

For van Lier (2004, 2007, 2011) grammar teaching as it is commonly found in language classrooms involves the separation of language from its true, malleable form and from the playful possibilities that come along with it. It attempts to make language neutral and consistent, and in doing so takes away a key aspect of its nature. Grammar books are often seen as ‘containing the real language’ however, they are a ‘dissection’ rather than a living representation of language in action (van Lier 2004, p. 109). Instead of looking to grammar books and dictionaries as a breakdown of all of the elements one must know to speak a language well, van Lier (2004) suggests a learner might consult a children’s book or listen to a conversation between two people in a coffee shop for a more accurate representation of language. Examples of language in real life, and of all of the imperfections and inconsistencies that come with its use, can also be found in many sources online, available readily to both second and foreign language learners, for example a Facebook post, a YouTube video or a podcast. This is not to say that grammar books do not have their place in a language classroom. Grammar helps to provide a structure for language and for learning, which can in some ways make learners feel reassured. However when it is presented to learners, in conjunction with

standard language, as embedded within the unachievable goal of reaching native like standards, of speaking without errors, as the only true and correct version of the L2, it can also lead to an overbearing focus on correctness that inhibits creativity and willingness to speak.

Grammar, identity and anxiety in the language classroom

It will not come as a great surprise to anyone who has learnt or taught a foreign or second language that grammar can often be quite anxiety inducing for many learners. Language learning is frequently accompanied by fears of speaking incorrectly, of making mistakes and of appearing unintelligent. Instead of comforting learners, grammar resources can highlight the vast expanse of grammatical information that remains unknown to them, giving the impression that their attempts at achieving perfect language use are inevitably set to fail (van Lier 2011). What may seem less intuitive is the connection between grammar-provoked anxiety and learners' identities. Anxiety can be defined as 'a state of anticipatory apprehension over possible deleterious happenings' (Bandura 1997 in Mills, Pajares & Herron 2006, p. 275). It is also 'a symptom of having lost security of being able to present the ideal self', the consequence of which is often decreased L2 use (Pellegrino Aveni 2005, p. 19). Language use, particularly in the case of speaking an L2, always involves a risk to one's self image because learners in most cases do not have the same precision of control over styles and meanings in the L2 as they do in their L1. This risk, which is emphasised in situations where there is a strong focus on speaking correctly, with grammar and pronunciation that need to fit the ultimately unachievable native speaker standard, can often lead learners to avoid L2 use altogether (Pellegrino Aveni 2005; van Lier 2004, 2007, 2011). Learners' choices to engage with the L2 or resist opportunities for language use are largely mediated by social dynamics and the degree to which learners feel that the self is at risk of being presented in an undesirable way (Norton 2000, 2013; Pellegrino Aveni 2005). Students may, for example, be willing to speak with each other in small groups but far less willing to speak in front of the class or with the teacher, following anxieties about who is most likely to make judgements about the shortcomings of their use of grammar.

Grammar as grammaring

An alternative perspective on grammar has potential to help with the anxieties a traditional understanding sometimes provokes. Instead of seeing grammar as a fact, as stable, static and

unchanging, grammar as ‘grammaring’, a term coined by Larsen-Freeman (2003), involves viewing and teaching grammar as a process. Grammar is a tool that speakers use in various ways to convey meanings about details such as time, actors, focus and sequences of events with maximum clarity. It is ‘another word for characterising the effectiveness of a person’s overall language use’ (van Lier 2011, p. 4); its meaningfulness and importance extends far beyond what can be conveyed through the memorisation of a table of verb endings. Grammar, even when one breaks the rules, underlies all creative use of language. The greater one’s understanding of grammar, the more possibilities one has for ways in which it can be both employed and manipulated. Grammar as grammaring is embedded in meaningful language use and cannot be separated from it. It forms a part of the structure through which language users convey their identities. It looks at structures and patterns of language in the context of specific discourses and practices, rather than being isolated from them (van Lier 2011). Approaching grammar as a process rather than as a set of fixed, predefined rules allows for playfulness with language and reduces the anxieties that are often connected with learners’ focus on using the L2 only if they are sure they can do so with the correct grammar. This view of grammar, which follows the sociocultural perspectives taken up in this study, does not necessarily need to be adopted by language teachers in their methodology explicitly, although of course it can be. It is, however, also an understanding which if taken up by learners, can help identify the meaningfulness of the grammar rules they are learning. It can also help them to feel less anxious in language focused tasks. Seeing grammar as grammaring has the possibility to empower learners by emphasising the ways in which they can use the L2 to convey a message that corresponds most closely with the meaning, and hence also the identity, they would have conveyed in the L1.

2.5 Deviating from teaching only the standard language: engaging learner identities

In a classroom concerned with the ways in which learners' identities are constructed through language use, rather than being centrally concerned with language form, meaningfulness of language tasks and learner engagement are key issues for language pedagogy. Engaged learners can be described as being involved with language tasks at mental and emotional levels, using their cognition, taking actions and responding with affect (Chapman 2003). Engagement can be understood as corresponding to actions learners take, such as the effort they put in, their commitment to learning and their completion of both formal and informal learning activities (Boulton et al. 2019). Engagement involves participation in communities of practice, and it therefore involves interactions and negotiations, and implies learners' active contributions to that interactive process (Lave & Wenger 1991). Learning becomes a process of action and 'emanates' from learners who are truly engaged, instead of simply being based on something that is 'delivered to them' (van Lier 2007, p. 222). The higher the degree of learner engagement with a task, the more learners' identities are involved in learning. Engagement requires tasks to be meaningful, and it reciprocally requires learners to actively contribute to tasks in a meaningful way (Lave & Wenger 1991). High levels of learner engagement have demonstrable effects on learners' disposition, involvement, and initiative in language classrooms (van Lier 1988). Greater learner engagement is also linked to positive learning outcomes (e.g. Ellis 2005; Nunan 1989, 1991), as well as being connected to greater feelings of happiness associated with learning (Boulton et al. 2019). It is likely that a teacher would struggle to facilitate ongoing engagement in a classroom whose pedagogy is composed of grammar drills based on standard language forms, because of the lack of opportunities to use the L2 in a way that is personally meaningful for the learner. Learners' attention, or engagement, is instead likely to become directed to their concerns about correctness and their self image in class when answering grammatical questions.

2.5.1 Learners' lack of engagement as a form of non-participation

Learner engagement is ultimately something that teaching methodology can promote but which also requires intentional actions and responses from learners. For pedagogy that puts value on learner engagement, situations in which learners are not engaged present an opportunity to reflect on the reasons behind this detachment, and for potential improvements that might foster engagement. In the sections above, some ways of seeing language and approaching grammar

teaching have been problematised, as they make it difficult for students to engage with the L2 content because of a lack of meaningful material and because of the anxieties provoked by a focus on correctness associated with traditional grammar teachings. Within these scenarios, learners' lack of engagement is often a form of non-participation (Lave & Wenger 1991) or resistance (Cruickshank 2015; Norton 2000, 2013) with respect to the practices of the language classroom, whereby not participating is a socially motivated and active decision, driven by a desire to convey one's identity in a particular way.

Our identities are constituted not only by what we are but also by what we are not. [...] [N]on-participation is [...] as much a source of identity as participation (Wenger 1998, p. 164).

Wenger makes clear in this observation that decisions not to participate in a community of practice, to distance oneself, can be an equally powerful act of identity construction. Many language learners choose not to use or learn to use an L2 to the level of competency that they might be able to, as was exemplified earlier in the descriptions of Kurban's (2015) and Piller's (2002) studies, because this allows them to retain elements of their L1 speech, and hence identity, whilst still being able to communicate in the L2 (see also Pavlenko & Lantolf 2000). This is a form of non-participation in and resistance to the linguistic practices of particular communities. Similarly, Song's (2019) study of female Saudi Arabian ESL learners in the US found that these learners resist engaging in classroom activities, not because of a lack of desire to learn English but because of gender norms within their L1 culture. Learners' L1 identities and cultures can clash with classroom practices, and the identities, communities and practices presented to them within the L2 culture, resulting in acts of non-participation.

Learners invest in identities, rather than languages

Such a disjuncture between learners' motivation to learn and their acts of engagement and participation in the classroom can be accounted for by the term 'investment', coined in this sense by Norton Peirce (1995). The socially oriented construct of investment exists as a complement to the psychologically grounded construct of motivation. Language learning motivation (e.g. Gardner 1985; Gardner & Lambert 1972; Gardner & MacIntyre 1991; Splosky 1989) is a construct representing static learner characteristics associated with their (also static) personality traits and instrumental or integrational reasons for deciding to learn a language. In short, motivation describes how much a learner wants to learn a language and why. It can provide little insight into situations in which learners who score highly on questionnaires with

scale of learning motivation contradict their own intentions and choose to engage in behaviours that do not further their learning. Investment refers to the social gains achieved through language use as well as learners' socially motivated reasons for choosing to participate in or avoid using the L2. Learners invest their efforts in language learning and use with the expectation that this investment will pay off in terms of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1977). Cultural capital can take the form of 'symbolic or material resources', such as new language or cultural knowledge, attaining a qualification, or creating the impression of being highly educated (Norton Peirce 1995, p. 17). If the potential payoff does not match or outweigh the social investment required of the learner in that particular L2 use situation, the learner is unlikely to participate. For example, a learner who is unsure of the answer to a question in class will likely not risk speaking up and getting the answer wrong, even though it would be an opportunity to use the L2. The social cost of that investment in language learning, that is the risk of looking unintelligent, outweighs the benefit of the short chance for language practice. In this way, identity relations are ever present in classroom interactions, even in those focused on form rather than meaning (Norton 2000).

Investment in future selves and imagined communities

Learners' investments in the L2 are by nature future focused. They come with the expectation of identity related returns at a later date. Investment is therefore an interaction between learners' assessments of the costs associated with their actions in the present, and the payoffs receivable by their future selves. Language learning investments are made with the intention of enabling learners to one day fully participate in their desired communities of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998).

Imagination in this sense is looking at an apple seed and seeing a tree (Wenger 1998, p. 176).

Imagination here means making an investment in a possible future version of oneself. Norton (2001), drawing on Anderson's (1991) construct, describes this as learners' investment in 'imagined communities'. An imagined community is a community which exists in the minds of its members, based on the knowledge or belief that there are other similar members, despite not having yet met and likely never meeting all or maybe any of those members. Anderson describes this construct with reference to nation. However, Norton extends its use to various communities of practice such as the imagined communities of professionals, for example teachers or businesspersons. Learners' beliefs about membership as well as their desired

membership in imagined communities affect their decisions to invest in language learning. A language student who, for example, projects belonging to the imagined community of teachers might resist some of the classroom practices that position them as a student, because they conflict with their projected identity and membership of the imagined community of teachers (Norton 2000). The power of imagining one's future self as a fully participating member of the L2 community is demonstrated in Al-Murtadha's (2019) study, in which EFL learners imagined themselves as successful English users through visualisation and goal setting activities. Learners who engaged in these activities developed a stronger sense of their future self as an L2 speaker and as a result became more willing to communicate in the L2.

There are a range of teaching practices which have the potential to foster learners' readiness to invest in the L2 and can thereby help learners to become more engaged. A further example can be found in Menard-Warwick's (2011) study looking at ESL learners' engagement with classroom texts. Interviews with language learners and classroom observations highlight the value learners place on the incorporation of personally relevant texts into the L2 classroom. The inclusion of texts which are sought out in a joint effort between learners and teachers, involving considerations of what kinds of texts learners engage with and enjoy in their L1, has the potential to empower language learners. Such texts connect L1 identities with L2 identities and imagined communities. They allow learners to build more concrete connections with their goals for language learning and to see a practical and meaningful application of their L2 knowledge as part of their concept of the future self. The use of meaningful texts motivates learners to participate in the class, encourages them to practise the language more outside of class, and at the same time exposes them to new vocabulary and grammatical forms. In this way, meaning oriented activities in the classroom can complement and give greater meaning to more traditional form focused tasks.

2.5.2 Recommendations to help language teachers engage learner identities

Many sociocultural studies that take language learning, teaching and identity construction as their focus make a number of similar recommendations of actions that should be taken by language teachers based on the outcomes of their research. Teachers, for example, might be held responsible for making a 'diagnosis' of what kind of help individual students need, based on an assessment they can make of learners' social situation (Kayi-Aydar 2014, p. 711). They

should make sure that learning programs reflect learners' personal interests (Gkonou 2015). They further are described as needing to understand learners' 'changing identities in the target language', as well as their interests, personal histories, life experiences and reasons for investing in or resisting opportunities to use the L2 (Norton 2000, p. 153). Teachers are portrayed in these and many similar studies as needing to take on significant responsibility for understanding the identities and associated needs of individual learners in order to ensure their success in the L2. In L2 classroom scenarios in which it is practicably possible to develop such a deep personal relationship with each class member, taking on these suggestions most certainly will be of great benefit to learners and the classroom atmosphere. Yet what is to be made of the scenarios in which such a relationship cannot be fostered; perhaps due to the size or frequency of classes, or the increasing use of blended or entirely online learning environments, along with many other potential factors involving, for example, students' attitudes, approaches and culture clashes. Are learners in such situations doomed to resist truly participating in and engaging with the L2?

This study takes the stance that the incorporation of language learning strategies, discussed in greater detail in the coming chapter, into language teaching methodology is a practical alternative means of engaging learner identities in the classroom. Strategies empower students to make language study personally meaningful for themselves. Strategies can be used and developed independently of the classroom. Learners can employ language learning strategies in classroom scenarios where they feel disempowered, and in situations where classroom teaching approaches may take a more traditional form focused approach. In such contexts, strategies can help to alleviate the anxieties associated with concerns about using language 'correctly'. They can encourage learners to make greater investments in their language learning.

Teaching language learning strategies places the responsibility for reflections on the self and for considerations of one's individual language needs on the learner, rather than the teacher. Strategy teaching has the power to give students the tools that they need to make language learning meaningful in their own lives. It is still useful for teachers to reflect on and consider the identity positions and histories of their students; however, strategy teaching removes the requirement of the teacher to provide a curriculum impossibly tailored to each individual member of the class. Strategy teaching opens the potential for a joint process of interaction

about L2 needs, desires and identities between students and their teachers. Types of strategies, how they relate to identity, and how they can be employed inside (and outside) the classroom are set out in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Strategies for building learner identities in the L2 in and outside of class

This chapter looks at language learning strategies and the ways in which they can be incorporated into the language classroom and beyond to construct learner identities in the L2 and foster learner autonomy. [Section 3.1](#) sets out a clear definition for language learning strategies. Providing a general definition of what language learning strategies are has proven itself a simpler task than that of categorising the strategies themselves. [Section 3.2](#) provides an overview of the numerous approaches to classifying language learning strategies. These include grouping strategies by function, i.e. cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social, as well as by skill area, i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing, by use context, and by language level. Each system of classification brings with it a particular lens through which it views language learning, such as that of cognitive linguistics or of making strategies easily adaptable for language educators.

With consideration of the various strategy typologies that other researchers have developed, this study puts forward, outlined in [Section 3.7](#), an alternative strategy framework, with a focus on teaching social language learning strategies. As part of this alternative framework, a broader understanding of the term ‘social’ is taken. As a result, social strategies are understood to be those which learners use to create meaningful opportunities for interaction with the L2, limited not only to instances of spoken interaction.

In support of the argument for a broader understanding of social strategies, [Section 3.4](#) takes formats for out of class learning as its focus, with out of class engagement with language being seen as increasingly more crucial to language learning. When considering in and out of class contexts for language learning, the metaphor of learning ecologies can be helpful in demonstrating the importance of settings, materials and other people within a learning environment ([Section 3.5](#)). Learners have been shown to engage with the L2 in a variety of personally meaningful ways, determined largely by the affordances of their learning ecologies. These include receptive activities such as listening to popular music and watching Internet television. Often these activities are undertaken for leisure, rather than as a means to learn language, yet such activities are of great value to language learning. Strategy teaching has

potential to help learners realise the full potential of the autonomous out of class actions they are already taking.

Any dialogue with learners about learning strategies is situated closely with respect to discussions of learner autonomy. [Section 3.3](#) thematises the relationship between these two constructs, as well as how they relate to learner identities. Autonomy has implications for changes in both teachers' and learners' roles. Teachers who wish to encourage learner autonomy can incorporate materials that help learners to build up their own sets of strategies and to find their own personally meaningful L2 materials. Considerations of autonomy and language learning strategies lead to a wealth of potential approaches to language teaching methodology. Possibilities for teaching language learning strategies and for fostering learner autonomy inside the classroom, to promote meaning focused L2 use outside the classroom, are discussed in [Section 3.6](#).

This chapter provides a state of the art overview of current research into language learning strategies, along with an account of research into the related fields of out of class learning and learner autonomy. It demonstrates the great potential held by language learning strategies to help learners structure their L2 use outside of the classroom. [Section 3.8](#) discusses the particular relevance of social language learning strategies for Anglophone learners, whose language learning faces the challenge of increasingly widespread use of English. As a conclusion to this and the previous chapter, the research questions that have guided this study are laid out in [Section 3.9](#), along with the ways in which this study is contributing to the body of literature taking language learning strategies and identity as its focus within applied linguistics.

3.1 Defining language learning strategies

Before delving into questions of categorisations and applications of language learning strategies, it is important to be clear about what exactly is meant by the term *language learning strategies*. Broadly speaking, language learning strategies are actions taken by the learner to achieve the goal of communicative competence in a second or additional language (L2) (Oxford 1990). More specifically, these actions might take the form of techniques, approaches or devices, which help learners to remember, organise and use the target language. Language learning strategies are ways of thinking and acting that help learners to understand, retain and reproduce information (O'Malley & Chamot 1990). Strategies can be used to make language

learning more efficient, faster, more effective, more personalised, as well as allowing the learner to find greater enjoyment in the process of learning (Cohen 2014; Oxford 1990). Further, language learning strategies can be tailored to learners' own personal interests, goals and needs.

The process of language learning is multifaceted. It involves not only learners' cognition, but also many other elements such as their social positioning, ability to organise their learning, access to and knowledge of resources and their ability to control their emotions and motivation. The strategies that can be used for language learning are similarly varied and numerous (Cohen 2014; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990). Language learning strategies can be used in instances of classroom learning, such as strategies for remembering vocabulary or learning grammar for a test. They can also be used for the planning of language learning such as for creating opportunities to practise the language outside of class.

Because of their goal directed nature, language learning strategies are usually, arguably always (see White 2008), conscious actions taken by the learner, made with a clear and specific learning related goal in mind (Cohen 2014; Oxford 1990). They can be taught but students need to be able to select and adapt strategies to suit their own personal goals. In this way they help students to become more autonomous (Cotterall & Reinders 2004; Oxford 1990).

3.1.1 Evidence for the effectiveness of teaching of language learning strategies

Research into language learning strategies began almost half a century ago, with the investigations of Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) into the habits of 'good' language learners. These studies documented the behaviours of academically successful learners, i.e. the language learning strategies they used and discussed ways in which these strategies could be taught to less successful language learners. Since these initial findings, research into strategies has repeatedly shown links between strategy awareness and use on the one hand and positive language learning outcomes on the other (e.g. Chamot 2007; Chen 2007; eds Cohen & Macaro 2007; Kao & Oxford 2014; Lee & Oxford 2008; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990), though conceptions of 'good', or successful, language learners and exactly how strategies can be taught, learned and used have transformed and developed over time.

Earlier studies, such as those of researchers Chamot and O'Malley (Chamot 2007; Chamot & O'Malley 1996; O'Malley & Chamot 1990) tended to focus more on cognitive language learning strategies and academic success. Later studies have shifted their focus to the effects that strategies can have on motivation and identity. A study by Lee and Oxford (2008) looking at learners of Korean showed that strategy awareness and use were connected to a positive English learning self image and perceptions of high English proficiency, demonstrating that strategies not only lead to academic success but also have impact on a motivational and personal level. Similarly, Chen's (2007) study investigating the effects of strategy teaching on college EFL students in Taiwan demonstrated that knowledge and use of language learning strategies can empower learners and influence their attitudes towards language learning, as well as offering improved academic outcomes. In addition, a study by Lai *et al.* (2014) involving an online training program including strategies for using technology for English language learning found that learners changed their language learning beliefs and behaviours. Participants of the training program were prompted to use technology to seek out additional personally relevant resources.

Despite the positive relationship research has demonstrated between language learning strategies and learning outcomes, studies have also shown that this relationship becomes much weaker when learners are left to their own devices to develop and choose strategies. Chamot (2001) showed that it is not merely strategy use that is associated with positive learning outcomes. Learners who were less successful also used strategies; however, their choices of strategies and the ways in which they went about using them were not beneficial to their learning. Oxford (2008, p. 51) describes learners with lower proficiencies as often using strategies 'in a desperate way', as they are unable to make effective strategy selections. Without instruction, learners do use strategies, but are unsure of the outcomes of those strategies, and neither do they know the full scope of possibilities of strategies available (Cotterall & Reinders 2004).

A recent study looking at the speaking strategies used by EFL learners in India, carried out by Harish (2014), showed that, without specific instruction, they tended to choose the strategies that required minimal effort and interaction in the L2. Similarly, studies of language learners in Australia by Kurata (2010) and Taylor-Leech and Yates (2012) have shown that learners have little knowledge or conscious use of strategies for creating opportunities to speak outside

of classrooms. Learners do tend to intuitively employ some strategies; however, the lack of effective choices in strategies made by learners provides a strong argument for incorporating language learning strategies into language teaching.

Research has demonstrated that explicit instruction of language learning strategies is a reliable way to encourage learners to use strategies effectively (e.g. Brown 2007; Chamot 2007, 2009; Chen 2007; Gunning & Oxford 2014; Nakatani 2005; Oxford 1990, 2017). Chamot (2001, 2007) demonstrated the effectiveness of integrating strategy instruction into language teaching, rather than it being an add on to course content, as part of her Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) model. In this model, the teaching of language learning strategies teaching played a central role. Chamot emphasised the importance of providing examples and activities for using language learning strategies, in combination with explaining the concepts behind them.

Gunning and Oxford (2014) also found that, following instruction on strategies for speaking, ESL learners in Canada showed improvements in their oral proficiency. Strategy teaching can also 'heighten learner awareness' (Cohen 2014), meaning that learners deepen their understanding of how the process of learning functions and how they can engage in behaviours that promote learning. Incorporating language learning strategies into classroom teaching not only gives learners additional knowledge about language learning; it also enables them to learn more independently outside of the classroom (Cotterall & Reinders 2004; Palfreyman 2011).

3.2 Typologies of language learning strategies

Whereas the definition of language learning strategies, with its appropriately broad nature, has essentially remained uncontested, the categorisation of language learning strategies has over a long period been a much more contentious issue (Cohen 2007, 2014; Dörnyei 2005; Ellis 1994; Grenfell & Macaro 2007; Griffiths & Oxford 2014; Macaro 2006; Murphy 2008; Wenden 1991; eds Wenden & Rubin 1987; White 2008). The debate and ambiguity surrounding proposals of typologies for language learning strategies are likely to be accounted for by the wide ranging nature of the strategies themselves, as well as the many varying contexts for their use. Specific strategies can be problematic to differentiate because they very often overlap with others. Despite, or perhaps because of this, researchers have proposed many different typologies for conceptualising and teaching language learning strategies. Benson (2011b) pointed out that research on language learning strategies has taken three central focusses, one concentrating on the issue of the classification and identification of strategies, whilst the other two areas look at the more practical aspects of strategy teaching and its outcomes. This observation highlights firstly, the complexity of the task of categorising strategies and secondly, it suggests that in practice, strategy teaching methodology and learners' strategy use is not confined to the categories and structures developed by researchers. Rather, conceptions of language learning strategies are useful for researchers, teachers and students alike to provide ways of structuring approaches to learning. The next subsections will provide a brief overview of what are to date the most prominent typologies within the field.

3.2.1 Language learning and language use strategies

One method of grouping language learning strategies proposed by Cohen (2014) is in terms of whether they help students to learn the language. This involves both strategies for the attainment or memorising of new information such as grammar and new vocabulary, typically used within a classroom setting and strategies for putting language knowledge into action. According to Cohen, language *learning* strategies are those for learning brand new grammar and words, whereas language *use* strategies are those for using elements of language that learners are already familiar with. Examples of language *learning* strategies include: managing and grouping learning material and exercises; practising newly learnt vocabulary and grammar rules; and evaluating progress to determine future actions and strategies.

In contrast, language *use* strategies can be divided into retrieval, rehearsal, cover and communication strategies. Retrieval strategies can also be referred to as memory strategies. They are strategies for retrieving words and information about the L2. Rehearsal strategies are those for practising previously learnt language structures such as verb conjugation, but also for rehearsing conversations and interactions in one's own head in advance. Cover strategies include creating the impression that one possesses a higher level of language ability than is actually the case, e.g. learning phrases in chunks that are not fully understood to be able to respond to an L2 utterance. Communication strategies help learners to continue interacting with other speakers despite not being fully competent speakers of that language. These might include asking for clarification or repetition, using gestures or paraphrasing.

Cohen advocates this approach to grouping strategies with the observation that many of the strategies necessary to complete pedagogical language activities do not overlap with those needed to *use* language outside of the classroom for non-pedagogical purposes. In making these claims, he acknowledges that researchers such as Oxford (2011, 2017) would be of the view that in communicative language teaching approaches, language learning significantly overlaps with or even is the same as language use. He states, however, that 'much of what they learn, especially in language classes, never makes it to real world communication' (Cohen 2014).

Perhaps it is helpful to see this approach to categorisation another way: learners do necessarily both *use* and *learn* language in the classroom, and they do *learn* through their *use* of language in non-pedagogical contexts. The strategies that can be most helpful for these different approaches to *learning* and *using* the language, however, are for the most part very different. Thus, Cohen's grouping of strategies as those for learning and use might be better understood as strategies for classroom learning and strategies for meaning focused use, which typically occurs primarily outside the classroom.

3.2.2 Classifying language learning strategies by skill area

A very practical way to classify language learning strategies is by skill area (Cohen & Weaver 2006). In this context, 'skills' refers to the 'four skills' that are the focus of many communicative language teaching methodologies: reading, writing, speaking and listening. These can be grouped into strategies for receptive and productive skills. In addition to this,

there are also strategy skill and knowledge areas that extend across the four skills such as vocabulary, grammar and translation strategies.

Examples of reading strategies are: identifying text types and predicting what might be said before reading, reading without stopping to look up all unknown words, practising skim reading and reading for detail. Writing strategies encompass behaviours such as: planning a text in dot points before writing, planning writing in the L2 rather than in the L1 and trying to write without a dictionary. Strategies for speaking and listening are often connected as speaking usually requires learners to listen too. They might focus on pronunciation or on finding a partner to speak with on a regular basis. Listening strategies also include searching for proficiency-level-appropriate materials to listen to and practising listening for the main point, as well as listening for specific details (Cohen 2014; Cohen & Weaver 2006).

Dividing strategies this way is useful for teachers who wish to incorporate strategy teaching into their existing material, as it allows them to select strategies according to activities that may already be planned for the class. Grouped by skill area and practised in the language classroom, strategies have a tendency to become skewed towards traditional teaching methods and classroom practices such as reading or listening comprehension and the writing of short texts. Alternative strategy classification methods allow us to change the area of focus that strategies serve to support, for example shifting from in class to both in and out of class learning.

3.2.3 Classifying language learning strategies by function

An additional and often cited approach to classifying language learning strategies is to divide them in terms of their function from a perspective heavily influenced by psychology and cognitive linguistics. Researchers such as Oxford (1990, 2017), and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have contributed greatly to these theoretical frameworks, following similar though slightly different pathways in their categorisations. In the view of these researchers, strategies can be divided into cognitive, metacognitive and social-affective strategies. The finer details of the social-affective strategy group(s) are, however, key points of difference within the proposed frameworks, as will be discussed below.

Cognitive strategies

Similar to Cohen's (2014) language *learning* strategies, cognitive strategies are those which are directly related to the formal learning of language. They are referred to by both research parties as being 'direct' strategies because they have a direct impact on the way language information is processed. Broadly they are strategies for grouping, analysing, summarising, remembering, deducing and inferring.

Specific examples given by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) include using existing knowledge to help to learn and remember new information, summarising information in written, spoken or mental form, discovering and defining rules and finding ways to remember new vocabulary and grammar such as using images or sounds to help build mental connections. Oxford (1990, 2017) also suggests that students might highlight information while reading, create summaries of new information, repeat new words in both written and oral form and analyse input in the new language to deduce meanings. In her initial (1990) overview of language learning strategies, Oxford proposes memory strategies as a separate category; however, in her more recent book (2017) she merges this with cognitive strategies, similar to the initial approach taken by O'Malley and Chamot, as well as Cohen.

Whether referred to as language *learning* strategies or cognitive strategies, these strategies are most traditionally and directly associated with learning in a classroom context. Many of these strategies will be familiar to learners who have been educated in other areas, for example as part of their schooling. These familiar strategies are likely to be those that are most intuitively incorporated into classroom teaching of language or otherwise, as well as used by learners to further their language learning efforts.

Metacognitive strategies

The next group of strategies identified by both Oxford (1990, 2017) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) is that of metacognitive strategies. These are strategies related to planning, organising and evaluating, which are crucial for successful language learning (Cotterall & Reinders 2004).

Metacognitive strategies help learners to plan, self manage and be more responsible for their own choices in language learning. Examples of metacognitive strategies include keeping a learning log to evaluate progress, reviewing known material, self assessing, deciding what is most important and focusing on that first, monitoring comprehension while listening and

identifying strengths and weaknesses to decide which skills to work on (Chamot & O'Malley 1996; Cohen & Weaver 2006; Cotterall & Reinders 2004; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990, 2008).

This group of strategies can aid students with their general approach to their learning in terms of planning when, where and how to go about their learning. According to O'Malley and Chamot, they can also help students in more specific instances of learning, such as planning how they are going to complete a single classroom task. Somewhat conversely, Oxford (1990) classifies these strategies as indirect strategies, meaning that strategies for specific instances of learning belong, instead, within the category of cognitive strategies. This is an instance of the often occurring overlap between groupings of strategies.

Whether to the effect of simplifying or complicating the task of differentiating overlap between categories of strategies, in a revised edition of the follow-up to her initial book on language learning strategies, Oxford (2017, p. 157) proposes the additional category of 'metastrategies'. These are organisational strategies assigned to each strategy group. Under this view, there are not only metacognitive strategies, i.e. those for planning learning, but also meta-affective strategies, i.e. those for managing and planning around emotions and meta-social strategies, i.e. for planning and managing interaction in the new language. The addition of the separate 'meta' categories for strategies means that the issue of whether a strategy belongs to the category of metacognitive strategies because it is related to planning, or whether it belongs with the group the planning is related to, can be resolved.

Affective strategies

In the model proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), affective and social strategies are grouped together for practical reasons; however, here they will be discussed separately following the approach taken in Oxford's (1990, 2017) accounts of language learning strategies. Nonetheless, the connections between emotions and the ways in which learners go about their interactions remain clear and are a key element within both affective and social strategies.

Affect plays a critical role in language learning as it is connected closely to learning motivations and also to cognition. Emotions have strong influence on the ability to learn and take in new information, as has been demonstrated through research into motivation and

language learning (Dörnyei 2001; Swain 2013). This is also reflected in theories of language acquisition in which learning is influenced by the ‘cognitive filter’ (Krashen 1982). Research specifically looking at strategies and learning outside the classroom has also shown that learners’ emotions can greatly affect their learning (e.g. Hurd 2008; Reinders 2011). Actions and behaviours which help learners to manage the emotions they experience connected with language learning belong to the category of affective strategies. This includes managing attitudes towards the L2 and language learning, anxieties related to speaking or test situations, as well as one’s motivation to continue learning. Further examples include cooperating with classmates, thinking positively, encouraging oneself with positive self talk, finding relaxing environments for study, making language learning enjoyable by finding material in the language that is personally meaningful, taking breaks and reflecting on one’s emotions during and after completing a language based task (Chamot & O’Malley 1996; Cohen 2014; Hurd 2008; Oxford 1990).

Macaro (2006), Oxford (2017) and Cohen (2014), point out that there is significant overlap not only between affective and social strategies but also between affective and metacognitive strategies. Strategies such as deciding when to take breaks, defining priorities for language learning, setting out a plan for language learning are forms of what would be referred to by Oxford (2017, p. 157) as ‘meta-affective’ strategies. Planning and organisation of language learning is a useful tool for reducing anxieties associated with it, thus strategies for planning can also often function simultaneously as strategies for controlling affect. Clearly affective strategies relate to L2 interactions and the planning learners do around them. Reducing anxiety can motivate learners to engage in social interactions in the L2. To aid with situations in which learners wish to communicate, in written or spoken form, in the L2, learners can use a combination of affective and social language learning strategies.

Social strategies

This section discusses conceptualisations of social language learning strategies in the literature to date. Clarification on what is meant by ‘social strategies’ within this study will be provided further in [Section 3.7](#).

Social strategies are actions taken by learners to regulate their interactions with others in the L2. This means regulating emotions, as has been mentioned in the above discussion of affective

language learning strategies. It also means cooperating, empathising and asking for clarification (see Cotterall & Reinders 2004; Oxford 1990). Further specific examples of social language learning strategies include: keeping a language learning diary and sharing experiences with other learners, speaking in the L2 with other learners or more proficient speakers, asking questions in class in the L2, working together to problem solve, asking for repetition or verification when something has not been understood, tolerating ambiguity, creating opportunities to speak the L2 and developing intercultural empathy by learning more about the culture of the L2 (see Harish 2014; Oxford 1990).

Social strategies are the group most directly connected with interaction and communication in the L2. For this reason, learners' access to opportunities to speak the L2 within their learning environment will determine which strategies they need to employ. For example, learners in second language learning environments are likely to have more everyday access to interactions with more proficient speakers of the L2. They have the possibility to use strategies to help them find ways to increase their interaction with L2 speakers, such as joining a local club or sports team and to help them keep conversations going despite not understanding everything. Learners in foreign language learning contexts, in which face to face access to the language is not likely to be available as a part of everyday life, need to employ different social strategies to create opportunities to communicate in the L2. Although they are situated outside of the environment in which the language is usually spoken there is potential for them to create conversation groups with other students or find access to L2 speakers online. Regardless of the learning context, 'other people' represent a key resource for language learning and indeed for all forms of learning (Palfreyman 2011, p. 19). This group of strategies encompasses not only strategies to help learners to be able to keep up a conversation with others in the L2, but also strategies to aid them in planning and organising opportunities to interact.

As previously mentioned, Oxford (2017, p. 199) suggests that strategies for planning and organising interactions in the L2 are better regarded as 'meta-social' strategies. Meta-social strategies are further divided into the subcategories of finding resources, setting goals, developing cultural awareness and undertaking self evaluation. Strategies for finding resources include finding highly skilled L2 users, finding people to practise with, as well as finding films to watch. Goal setting strategies include prioritising personal goals over those set by the teacher, prioritising goals within a specific task and identifying strengths and weaknesses.

Strategies for increasing cultural awareness and empathy include paying attention to cultural differences and being aware of differing social identities. Strategies for self evaluation include self monitoring while using the language as well as taking time to reflect on how interactions went after they have finished. Oxford's revised decision to separate these planning related strategies from those that learners need in using the L2 emphasises the important role they play in setting learners up to be able to use social strategies and interact in the L2.

Because social strategies are those which foster communication within learners' varying sociocultural contexts, social strategies also include many strategies that facilitate intercultural communication, empathy and understanding across cultures. In foreign language learning contexts, social strategies can be used to help learners communicate with other L1 speakers who are learning the same L2. They can also help learners to gain knowledge about the L2 culture through use of resources. Learners can find cultural information through engagement with authentic L2 texts such as television series, songs, books, Internet sites and social media. These activities can help them build up cultural understanding and empathy without physically needing to be living within the L2 culture. For learners in second language learning contexts, social strategies have great potential to assist with creating and maintaining opportunities for face to face L2 interactions. Such strategies include tolerating ambiguity in conversation, being willing to ask for help in confusing situations, remaining open minded, empathetic and aware of cultural misunderstandings, reflecting on difficult or unexpected situations that involved the L2, and considering potential cultural differences. Oxford (2017, p. 202) proposes the acronym 'CRITERIA' to describe key social strategies, with a focus on intercultural communication: 'Cooperation', 'Respect for other cultures', 'Integrity' and fairness in dealing with other cultures, 'Tolerance of ambiguity', 'Exploration' of other cultures, 'Reflection' on the L1 and L2 culture, 'Intercultural empathy', and 'Acceptance of complexity' of cultures, rejecting stereotypes and generalisations. Regardless of language learning context, social strategies can be used to facilitate communication with other speakers of the L2, including other language learners and more proficient speakers. They help learners to learn more about the L2 culture, which further enables them to interact smoothly and with attention to the cultural norms in the language that they are learning.

Other strategy typologies also have strategy groupings that closely align with social language learning strategies. In Cohen and Weaver's (2006) practice oriented overview of language

learning strategies in which strategies are primarily grouped by skill area, many strategies defined as strategies for speaking are similar to social strategies. These include lowering anxiety, using positive self talk (though once again also overlapping with affective strategies), self correcting, evaluating performance, using existing knowledge and context clues, asking for clarification, identifying task goals and purposes, and selecting areas to improve on.

Similarly, within Cohen's (2014) typology of language *use* strategies, communication strategies could be otherwise understood as social strategies. Cohen's communication strategies are those which help learners to continue a conversation despite difficulties or shortcomings in the L2. When using these strategies, the focus tends to be on meaningful communication, i.e. getting one's point across and keeping the conversation going, more than it is on form. Communication strategies include code switching and the use of gestures, or even made up words, to make oneself understood. These strategies encourage learners to go beyond the constraints of grammatical correctness and expectations for perfect form, giving priority to sustained communication in the L2. Social strategies might otherwise be called communication, interaction or speaking strategies. Although they are not limited to verbal interaction, this does tend to be the focus. Social strategies are methods that language learners use to find speech partners, and to sustain their interactions with them.

3.2.4 Additional language learning strategy typologies

As well as classifying language learning strategies by use and learning, by skill area and by function, strategies can also be divided by proficiency level and age. These groupings are less frequently cited. It is important, however, to note that, as learners become more proficient in an L2, the breadth of strategies available to them increases. This does not necessarily mean that they use more strategies, but rather that their strategy use changes (e.g. Green & Oxford 1995; Magogwe & Oliver 2007; Park 1997). Advanced learners are able to use more sophisticated strategies than beginners, and in the earliest stages of L2 learning, learners will not be able to use many of the social strategies suggested above, simply because they do not yet know enough of the language. Beginners will naturally be more dependent on formal language learning materials and will be able to become more able to produce language independently of formal materials as their proficiency increases. Similarly, younger learners will tend to develop their

strategy use as they become older and as their L2 proficiency simultaneously progresses (Magogwe & Oliver 2007).

Rather than being an inconsistency, the extensive overlap between typologies, and categories within typologies, of strategies is reflective of the vast number of strategies available to learners, and the varied ways they can be viewed and implemented. Language learners and researchers alike can benefit from the abundance of examples of strategies and strategy groupings available and can select those which are most appropriate for their contexts and purposes. In the case of this study, a typology focusing on social strategies has been developed. This typology, described in detail in [Section 3.7](#), sees social strategies as those which are directly linked to meaningful language use and thus involve L2 identity construction.

3.3 Language learning strategies and learner autonomy

When considering language learning strategies, an important associated concept within applied linguistics literature is learner autonomy. Learner autonomy describes learners' ability to manage and control their own learning (Benson 2011b). Language learning strategies are tools that learners can use to better control their learning. They require engagement and active decision making from learners (Oxford 2008). If strategies are individual actions that learners can take up, then learner autonomy might be regarded as a more general way of thinking about and acting upon learning, which leads to the adoption of such strategies. In other words, in order for learners to use language learning strategies they need to demonstrate autonomy. Autonomous learners are able to think and take actions of their own accord, determining learning goals and outcomes for themselves. Language learning strategies simultaneously help and require them to do this (Oxford 1990).

3.3.1 Defining learner autonomy

The term 'autonomy' originates from philosophy and is connected to the idea of the right, originally of a city and later of an individual, to be self governed (Huang & Benson 2013). This construct has been taken up in many areas, and within applied linguistics its definitions are situated around learner control, self reflection and the freedom and ability to make choices. In one of the earliest definitions within applied linguistics, Holec (1981, p. 3) describes learner autonomy as 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning.' For Holec, the learner should take charge of every aspect of learning including methods, materials, sequencing and evaluations. In a later definition, Little (1991, p. 4) describes an autonomous learner as 'having the capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action.' Building on this, Benson (2011b, p. 58) states that learner autonomy is 'the capacity to take control of one's own learning.' Having control over learning means managing one's learning in terms of planning the practical details of places, times and modes of learning; controlling cognition, i.e. deciding where to focus one's attention; and controlling learning content, i.e. choosing what is learnt according to learning goals and personal interests.

In their definitions of learner autonomy, both Little and Benson use the term *capacity*. This emphasises a view of learner autonomy as a potential within the learner, rather than a group of set behaviours which a learner must adhere to. The autonomous learner therefore does not

necessarily always take control over each and every aspect of their learning but has the ability and self awareness to do so. Learner autonomy is multifaceted, and learners can be regarded as autonomous on a scale of degree, rather than taking an all or nothing approach. Little (1991, pp. 3–4) clarifies that autonomy is not a ‘single, easily described behaviour’, nor is it ‘a steady state achieved by certain learners’. Autonomy has the potential to develop and increase over time as learners become more self assured in both learning and using the L2 (Oxford 1990). Autonomy is not an individual act but a systematic way of going about learning that involves control and independence (Benson 2011b).

Although, to be autonomous, learners act based on their own choices and find independence from instructors and classroom contexts, the actions they take are not isolated from their social context. Learner autonomy does not imply that learning must be undertaken completely independently. Learners within organised language courses can be autonomous as much as those learning completely independently of instruction. What defines learner autonomy is the way in which an individual goes about learning within their own learning context. There is an interdependence between learners, teachers, contexts and other learners that plays a key role in the development of learner autonomy (Jiménez Raya & Vieira 2015; Little 1994; Littlewood 1999; Palfreyman 2018). The communities with which learners interact and to which they have access have an impact on the degree to which they have a chance to engage in meaningful and authentic communication. These communities can influence learners’ chances of engaging in autonomous learning and their decisions to do so (Palfreyman 2018).

Differentiating agency and autonomy

The terms autonomy and agency are closely related concepts and have been used interchangeably by some researchers, especially with regard to research on the connections between autonomy and identity (e.g. Toohey & Norton 2003). Both constructs refer to instances of an ability to take action independently or of one’s own choosing. Agency is determined not solely by the individual; instead it is connected to an individual’s relationship to their context and other individuals (Lantolf & Pavlenko 2001). Agency is defined by Lantolf and Thorne (2006, p. 143) as ‘the ability to assign relevance or significance to things and events’ and to have ‘voluntary control over behaviours’. Closely tied in with the choices a person makes, and is able to make, is their identity, thus agency and identity are important constructs to consider when contemplating autonomy (Huang 2013).

Huang and Benson (2013) make an important distinction between agency and autonomy. In their understanding, autonomy represents an approach to learning that is taken by the learner over an extended period of time with at least some degree of consistency. Agency, in comparison, refers to individual and potentially inconsistent, autonomous acts that a learner might take. This might look like studying for an exam the night before or beginning a new project with great enthusiasm that is lost shortly after. These acts, in the view of Benson and Huang, as well as Benson (2011b), are instances of agency, which are a criteria for autonomy. They do not, however, represent instances of autonomous learning because they are episodic and inconsistent in nature.

3.3.2 Connecting autonomy and identity through personal relevance

Because both agentic and autonomous actions imply that learners reflect on and consider their own plans, goals and desires, these actions lead to the construction of identity. Learners have been shown to create their own communities and social spaces for L2 interactions and learning (e.g. Chik 2007; Norton 2000; Thomson & Mori 2015; Toohey & Norton 2003). Huang and Benson (2013) describe agency as ‘the learner’s ability to take necessary actions within the constraints of a particular context’, meaning that learners have ‘the ability to craft individual spaces to pursue personal and language proficiency development’. From this perspective, the creation of communities of practice and social spaces for language use can be seen as an act of learner agency, which over time accumulates to learner autonomy and contributes to learners’ identities, as identity construction is so intricately connected with learners’ actions and interactions.

Learners who are able to control their learning are capable of making their learning personally relevant. Learning that is personally meaningful is not only more effective and enjoyable, it also aligns with and contributes to the development of learner identities (Huang & Benson 2013). Within language classrooms, as a matter of practicality, content is created more for the group than the individual. Even in the case of a smaller learner group, for which the teacher has made many special considerations, course material is still designed for more than one individual learner. It becomes the job of the autonomous learner to find ways to make what is learnt in class personally relevant. Personal relevance includes but certainly is not limited to learners’ personal interests. It also encompasses learners’ personal goals, access to resources,

strengths, weaknesses, learning styles and agendas. Barron (2006) observes that when learners have personal interest in a learning activity or topic, they are more likely to take this learning outside of the bounds of the classroom and into other parts of their lives. Learners who are able to make their learning personally relevant are likely to be more cognitively involved, engaged and autonomous (Jiménez Raya & Vieira 2015) and so, because this is a sustained approach to learning, they are also more likely to continue with their language learning over a long period of time, allowing it to become part of who they are.

3.3.3 The role of the teacher in autonomous learning

The idea of learner autonomy, with its focus on the learner, offers itself to many forms of misunderstanding, particularly with regards to the role of the teacher. One could easily assume that in the case that the learner has taken control over their learning, the role of the teacher becomes obsolete, or that a teacher's input could interrupt the process of autonomy development. Much to the contrary, however, while the 'seeds of autonomy' are often visible in the actions of learners prior to any explicit instruction on autonomy (Benson 2011b, p. 78), it is unlikely that learners will develop autonomy completely of their own accord (Little 1991).

Fostering learner autonomy therefore becomes an important teacher role. Along with teaching knowledge about L2 language forms and L2 culture, language educators can help learners to understand how to control and take charge of their own learning (Benson 2011b; Illés 2012; Jiménez Raya & Vieira 2015; Teng 2018). Implicated in this is not only metaknowledge about language learning and how to be an effective language learner, but also knowledge about resources and language learning strategies (Cotterall & Reinders 2004; Lai 2015; Lai, Zhu & Gong 2015; Reinders 2011; Wenden 1986). Many learners, especially those in or coming directly from traditional educational institutions such as schools, believe that it is the teacher's role to organise all aspects of their learning, both inside and outside of the classroom. This leads them to be passive and to follow directions given by the teacher without the desire to make their own learning related decisions, often without the consideration of doing so. Methodology that encourages students to be more active and to make choices about their learning towards their own personal goals can be incorporated into language teaching to foster autonomy. Learners first need to become willing to approach their learning differently to be receptive to any teaching of language learning strategies (Oxford 1990).

Through the lens of a more traditional view of the teacher learner relationship, roles of the teacher include instructor, organiser, knower, assessor, ideal model, figure of authority, director, judge, leader, decision maker, ultimate expert, presenter and evaluator (Jiménez Raya & Vieira 2015; Teng 2018). Such roles are reflected in teaching methodologies that follow the sequence of information presentation, drilling and assessment (Jiménez Raya & Vieira 2015). In contrast, methodologies that seek to foster learner autonomy will view the teacher as a guide and facilitator. Teachers' roles become to encourage, support, assist, bridge knowledge gaps, facilitate discussions and reflection and create structures from which students can base their learning related decisions (Benson 2011b). Teaching therefore becomes centred around the learner rather than the teacher, empowering the learner and creating a dialogic relationship between both teachers and learners, and amongst learners. This means that pedagogical approaches can give learners chances to reflect on and analyse their experiences and performance, include self and peer assessment tasks and can give students a strong voice through student feedback (see Jiménez Raya & Vieira 2015).

Such a change in the view of teacher learner roles corresponds to the 'social' or 'person centred' turn within applied linguistics and relatedly to the change in focus from acquisition to participation metaphors for understanding how language is learned (Benson 2019; Pavlenko & Lantolf 2000), as has been outlined in Chapter 2. From a social perspective, teachers and learners alike are negotiators of knowledge and curriculum, as well as facilitators of and participants in L2 interactions.

Incorporating strategies to foster autonomy and construct L2 identities

Planning, monitoring and evaluation skills, connected with all areas of learning including the social, are central to autonomous learning. These skills are also those which learners can develop through their use of strategies. Benson (2011b, pp. 96–97) suggests that 'autonomy might also be described in terms of the capacity to make use of strategies that are clearly associated with the idea of control of learning'. This illustrates the close connection between autonomy and language learning strategies. The strong link between the development of learner autonomy and learner identities has also been discussed in this subchapter. This implies further that language learning strategies, particularly social strategies, stand in close relationship with the construction of identity. If teachers wish to engage learner identities and take them into

account in their teaching, a focus on learner autonomy and social language learning strategies is a well considered step towards this goal. To make strategy teaching effective, teachers can take on the role of helping learners to take charge of their learning inside and outside of the classroom.

3.4 Bringing out of class learning into the spotlight

Learning is intuitively understood by many to be something that happens primarily in the classroom. Relatedly, much of the research into language learning has focused on classroom learning contexts. This is likely the result of classrooms being what teachers and researchers both have most immediate access to. Behaviours, practices, methodologies and materials of classrooms can be readily observed and tested. The practices of learners outside of the language classroom are much more elusive, not to mention more difficult to trace and measure.

So, why focus on out of class learning, when it is something language educators appear to have so little control over? Firstly, with advancements in technology, learners are now more able to access language learning content online, whether it be form or meaning focused (Illés 2012; Sockett 2014). The language classroom is no longer the central resource for gaining access to the L2. This is particularly relevant for foreign language learning contexts, where learners' opportunities to access the L2 outside of class had previously been extremely limited. The Internet offers learners the chance to access a huge range of language learning resources, from instructional videos on YouTube, to music, to television series and even access to L2 speakers through online chats and groups. Learners are increasingly able to select their own learning materials online, many of which are free or available at a very low cost.

Secondly, in addition to the growing number of possibilities for learners to engage with the L2 outside of the language classroom, a view of learning as a social practice (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998), along with research demonstrating that much learning does in fact occur outside of educational institutions (e.g. Hall 2009; Kashiwa & Benson 2018; Lai 2015; Lai, Zhu & Gong 2015; Sundqvist 2011), will lead us to take learners' actions outside of the classroom into closer consideration. Focusing only on classroom learning can mean missing important instances of learner initiated learning. Out of class activities not only lead to L2 learning, but also contribute to the construction of identities thanks to the communities developed through interaction, strengthening of personal interests and the sense of achievement that learning creates (Barron 2006).

Thirdly, the efforts made by language learners outside of class have also been shown to positively affect their language proficiency (e.g. Sundqvist 2011), as well as their enjoyment of learning (e.g. Lai, Zhu & Gong 2015; Lamb 2007). Learners who engage in out of class

learning are also more likely to make connections between what they learn in the language classroom and what they are able to do outside of it (Kashiwa & Benson 2018). Lai (2015) suggests that such a combination of in and out of class language learning is optimal for successful language learning. Benson (2011a, p. 7) also suggests that, ‘the wise language learner will . . . be well advised to adopt the view that classroom learning and out of class learning are equally important.’

3.4.1 The dimensions of out of class learning

Out of class learning refers to any L2 activities that learners engage in when they are not in formal classroom settings. Out of class activities can range from completing set homework tasks to watching TV in the L2, that is, they can be highly structured, form focused and set out by the teacher, and they can also be meaning focused and determined completely by the learner. Most out of class learning activities rest somewhere between these two extremes. The single criterion that differentiates out of class learning from other learning is its location. The broadness of this criterion, however means that it can take many forms and occur in a wide range of non-classroom contexts. Benson (2011a) describes out of class learning as having four key dimensions which determine the approach the learner is taking to learning beyond the classroom. These are: location, pedagogy, locus of control and formality.

Location

As mentioned above, out of class learning is defined by what it is not, i.e. it is not classroom learning. There are a wide range of locations in which out of class learning can occur. Locations can be geographical, referring to specific countries or cities in which learning is taking place. Location can refer to specific spaces or rooms, such as in a community centre, a lounge room, a café, or a library. It also refers to the social context in which learning takes place. It implies the presence or absence of other persons, along with the potential for interactions with them. Descriptions of location also often imply approaches to pedagogy, such as out of school or extracurricular learning (see Benson 2011a; Lai, Zhu & Gong 2015).

In their book looking at what language learners do outside of institutional contexts, Benson and Reinders (2011) use the term ‘learning beyond the classroom’ to include learning undertaken by those who are not affiliated with any particular learning instruction or official language course. This includes learning that occurs intentionally (e.g. Lai 2015), as well as

learning that occurs incidentally (Cole & Vanderplank 2016; Sockett 2014). While the focus of this study is on learners who are part of an organised language course, there is great potential for learners in any context, engaged in language learning in any format, to benefit from building their autonomy and incorporating language learning strategies. Here, the term out of class learning has been adopted; however, the research and strategies under discussion throughout this thesis are relevant to learners more generally beyond the classroom.

Pedagogy

The dimension of pedagogy refers to the approach to self teaching taken up by the learner, i.e. how out of class learning is structured in terms of the ordering of material and topics, the degree of focus on meaning and form and how learning is evaluated. The pedagogy of out of class learning is located on a continuum that ranges from ‘self instructed’, to ‘naturalistic’ learning (Benson 2011a, p. 11). Learners adopt self instructed pedagogies when they use dedicated learning materials such as language learning textbooks or phone apps to learn an L2. Self instructed learning has a high degree of formality and follows patterns of classroom pedagogy, despite not physically (or virtually) taking place in a language classroom associated with an educational institution. The ‘instruction’ in self instruction comes from the pedagogical materials, which the learner chooses to be guided through. At the other end of the continuum, learners who adopt naturalistic pedagogies for their out of class learning will take up meaning focused activities. Naturalistic pedagogy is focused on learning by doing and learning through language use, the same way that one learns the L1. Learners might, for example, practise speaking with native speakers or listen to radio programs in the L2. Naturalistic pedagogies are largely unstructured and not sequenced according to language forms or levels. Much out of class learning, however, finds itself situated between these two extremes, with many learners adopting a combination of pedagogical approaches.

Locus of control

Closely related to out of class learning pedagogies is the dimension Benson (2011a, p. 12) terms the ‘locus of control’. The locus of control relates to who is making the main decisions about the learning activities being undertaken: the learner or another party. Though a teacher may not be physically present in self instructed learning, learners are still being directed by the pedagogically organised material that they are using. In contrast, when using naturalistic

pedagogies, the locus of control lies with the learner. They need to make decisions regarding how to approach naturalistic learning activities, as well as how to select which activities to do without guidance. Instances of such naturalistic learning are examples of highly autonomous learning, whereas learners who shift the locus of control away from themselves are exhibiting less autonomy. An important note made by Palfreyman (2011), when considering the locus of control, along with settings for out of class learning, is that social contexts also play an important role in structuring the possibilities a learner has for accessing resources and broadening their knowledge of how to approach learning. Social contexts can structure the degree to which learners are informed of the potential to shift the locus of control in their out of class learning, as well as the degree to which they are able to do so.

Formality

The final dimension of out of class language learning, outlined by Benson (2011a), is formality. In this context, learning can be broken down into formal, non-formal and informal language learning. Formal learning is that which is typically associated with classroom learning, taking place within an institution such as a school or university and leading to an official qualification such as a degree or high school certificate. Non-formal learning, e.g. receiving private tutoring, is similarly structured and organised in terms of use of professional pedagogical learning materials and approaches but does not lead directly to a qualification. It does not necessarily take place within a learning institution. In contrast to formal and non-formal learning, informal learning is learning that occurs as a part of everyday activities. It is not structured or scheduled, does not involve the use of pedagogical materials and is not associated with educational institutions or qualifications. Much informal learning occurs without learning being a specific intention or goal of the learner. Because informal learning is often incidental, unintentional and occurs as a part of other actions learners take, it is by nature meaning rather than form focused.

Consideration of the four dimensions of out of class learning allows us to see more clearly how learners approach learning beyond the classroom. Thinking about out of class learning in terms of these dimensions also provides a gauge for the degree to which learners are autonomous, as well as a potential insight into the beliefs about learning that learners hold.

3.4.2 Evidence for the usefulness of out of class learning

Research evidence for the effectiveness of out of class learning looks at situations in which out of class learning is intentional, occurring as part of self directed learning or even as part of an institutionally run program, or unintentional, occurring naturalistically, without the learner having specific intentions to learn the L2. The studies outlined below discuss the effectiveness of both intentional and unintentional out of class learning.

Naturalistic learning

Unintentional, or ‘incidental’ as termed by Ellis (1994) and Sockett (2014), out of class learning occurs unconsciously when learners engage in activities of their own choosing that involve the L2. Such activities are often connected with leisure and enjoyment such as watching television or listening to music and this is often the motivation for learners to partake in these activities. This type of learning occurs in second language learning contexts where learners access L2 interactions incidentally in their day to day life. However, it also occurs in foreign language contexts where students engage with L2 materials and speakers within their community. Naturalistic learning often occurs as a by product of the enjoyment or relaxation brought by L2 activities. Unintentional language learning is a key element of the ‘natural approach’, the well known teaching methodology developed by Krashen and Terrell (1983). Krashen and Terrell suggest that L2 adult learners acquire language in the same way that children do and so need a large amount of ‘comprehensible input’, meaning that language input needs to be decipherable for them to enable meaning focused learning. According to this theory, L2 input can and should be above the level that the learner is able to produce in the language but not so high above it that they are unable to infer meaning based on context. They suggest that with sufficient naturalistic L2 input, learners will eventually develop productive abilities in the language. Krashen (2003, 2004) puts emphasis on leisure reading as a central opportunity for personally relevant, comprehensible L2 input. As Sockett (2014) points out, Krashen’s theory is extendable to other forms of L2 interaction such as television dramas or user generated videos on YouTube, which have become increasingly relevant with the great technological advances that have occurred over the last two decades. Benson (2011a, p. 11) discusses learning naturalistically through media as being a form of ‘public pedagogy’, which occurs when learners are indirectly taught about L2 language forms as well as the associated culture through their engagement with L2 media. Public pedagogy does not occur only through

media but can occur within physical public spaces such as parks or galleries. It is possible to learn about language and culture through participating in and experiencing such social spaces.

A demonstration of the potential of incidental acquisition in L2 learning can be found in Sockett's (2014) study, in which university students in France were shown to have learnt English through informal and largely incidental engagement with the English language online. The students in Sockett's research were not majoring in languages and did not receive formal English classes at the university. Despite this and being in a foreign language learning environment, these students demonstrated gains in English proficiency through their use of English for activities such as listening to music or watching television online. The students not only improved their language abilities but also improved the way in which they approached use of the L2, for example increasing their tolerance for ambiguity. This, in turn, motivated them to engage with more L2 media and promoted further learning. Similarly, a study by Cole and Vanderplank (2016) looking at EFL learners in Brazil found that learners who learnt informally and naturalistically, without attending any formal language classes, were able to attain the same high and in some areas even higher, levels of English proficiency as learners who had been learning formally over an extended period of time. In this study, informal learners were those who enjoyed using the L2 in their free time and were actively engaged in L2 activities, many of which were online. Both studies outlined above show that adult learners, even in foreign language learning contexts where they are physically separated from the greater L2 speaking community, are able to make impressive gains in language proficiency through engagement in meaningful activities in the L2. These activities are determined by the learners themselves and the enjoyment that comes with personally meaningful material perpetuates learners' desire to continue using, and therefore also learning, the L2.

Self directed naturalistic learning

Sockett's (2014) study emphasises the lack of intentionality to learn language on the part of the learners in his study and demonstrates that intentionality is in no way a requirement for successful adult L2 learning. Benson (2011b, p. 76), however, uses the term 'self directed naturalistic learning' to describe what might be regarded as a middle point between the two extremes of intentional and unintentional learning. In self directed naturalistic learning, learners may organise and plan to engage with the L2 in a naturalistic way, e.g. organising to have coffee with a proficient L2 speaker, or choosing a television series in the L2 to watch, but

they do so with the intention of learning the language. Despite language learning being a motivation for taking up the activity, during naturalistic L2 exchanges the focus can, and often does, remain on pragmatics rather than language forms. Learners who engage in this mode of out of class learning might be part of a formal language learning program, they might be learning non-formally through online classes, or they may not partake in any training at all. This mode of learning requires a desire to improve one's language skills as a motivating factor to use the L2 in meaning focused ways and the ability to select materials and tasks independently.

Such approaches to language learning have been the focus of much research into out of class learning. A series of studies outlined in the book *Language Learning Beyond the Classroom* (Nunan & Richards 2015) have shown ways in which learners' out of class organised and deliberate interactions with music (Kerekes 2015), video games and TED talks (Coxhead & Bytheway 2015), Internet television (Lin & Siyanova-Chanturia 2015) and proficient speakers of the L2 (Cadd 2015) helped to improve their language ability, especially their ability to use language informally and fluently, as well to lessen their anxieties associated with L2 use. Further, a study by Lai (2015) looking at learners of diverse foreign languages in China found that out of class learning was a key motivator. It allowed learners to gauge their own progress by their ability to do activities in the L2 that were important to them, such as being able to watch favourite television series without subtitles. In this way, out of class learning was shown to function as a form of self assessment and to be complementary to classroom learning. Out of class learning was viewed by the participants as more connected to real life and it created a sense of belonging with other members of the L2 speech community.

Complementing this research, an additional study by Lai, Zhu and Gong (2015) of junior high students in China found that the way in which students went about their out of class learning was highly determinant of their success. The study found that some learners engaged in meaning focused activities with the intention of form focused gains that mirrored the grammar textbook activities from their language classroom. For example, learners might watch television or speak with a proficient L2 speaker in order to broaden their vocabulary or improve their grammar, taking their focus away from meaning and putting it back on form. In trying to replicate familiar formal classroom structures for learning, they are also shifting the locus of control away from themselves and back towards learning formats that are more familiar.

Learners who approached naturalistic activities this way did not benefit from them the way that students who focused on meaning did. Furthermore students who engaged in meaning focused out of class learning were shown to have better academic success, as well as attaining greater enjoyment from language learning.

Organised naturalistic learning

The studies discussed above took out of class learning that is determined by the learner as their focus. There is also the potential for flexible structures for out of class learning to be offered by educators or institutions to learners within formal or non-formal learning contexts. An example of this is shown in Stickler and Emke's (2011) study, which looks at language learning as part of a 'tandem program'. As part of the tandem program, learners across five European countries were assigned language learning partners from other countries, with the intention that through informal communication they would have the opportunity to learn each other's languages. Communication occurred online via chats and emails, as well as in person. Face to face meetings took place partly through organised events and partly through informal meetups organised by the learners. Participants in the tandem program reported not only language gains, but also gains in social competence. They also reported a change in perspective on the value of informal learning contexts for language learning. They became more aware of their own language learning processes within the informal language learning environment created through the tandem program.

The degree of learner control in determining activities undertaken outside of the classroom can vary greatly. Based on the studies discussed above, out of class learning that is integrated with classroom learning can serve to foster language proficiency directly, as well as indirectly through motivating learners to continue their L2 learning. There is, however, no requirement for out of class learning to be connected to formal or non-formal learning for it to be of benefit to the language learner. Learners, whether intentional or unintentional learners, benefit from using the L2 in a way that is meaningful and enjoyable for them. This will be different for each individual learner and implies the necessity of taking control, to varying degrees, of one's own learning and becoming more autonomous.

3.5 In and out of class learning contexts as ecologies

A shift in the understanding of learning not only as something that occurs within traditional educational institutions but as an activity that is greatly enriched by its extension to out of class learning, brings with it new metaphors for conceptualising learning contexts. One useful way of thinking about out of class learning is to conceive what is otherwise often referred to as the setting, environment or context in which learning takes place constituting a learning ecology.

3.5.1 The connectedness of learners to their environment

Ecologies were originally a construct used in the field of biology to describe the interconnection of objects or organisms within nature and their environments. The term has been extended, initially by van Lier (2002), within applied linguistics to refer to the interactions and interrelations of learners and their contexts. Context thus refers to social spaces that learners find themselves in, including physical spaces such as classrooms and houses, along with virtual spaces such as social media networks and web chat or video interfaces such as Zoom or Skype. Objects within these spaces such as resources, materials and other people also form part of learning ecologies. Along with this, the relationships between people and things, e.g. cultural traditions, beliefs, laws, workplace and classroom practices, also contribute to learning ecologies (Barron 2006). Viewing learners in context as part of learning ecologies means turning the focus away from individual entities or objects and onto the relationships between them (van Lier 2002). Within a learning ecology there is a reciprocal relationship between the learner and their environment. Learners influence and are influenced by their environment (Dörnyei 2009; Ushioda 2015).

In his description of ecologies for children's learning and development, Bronfenbrenner (1979) outlines the multilayered and interrelated ecosystems that exist within learner ecologies. These layers include microsystems which are made up of: activities, e.g. drawing, building, discussing, writing; roles e.g. teacher, student; relationships, e.g. student-teacher relationships; and settings, e.g. schools, kindergartens, buildings, or ovals. Microsystems exist within macrosystems; they are comparable to subcultures or cultures and represent the ideologies that influence the ways in which microsystems are laid out and function. This echoes the comparisons between large and small cultures made by Holliday (1999), as well as the construct of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) as a way of

describing such small cultures. What these alternate metaphors do not bring into focus, however, is the key role played by settings, environments, materials and objects in all areas of a learner's life, not only within the classroom, in determining learning outcomes. The multilayered nature of ecosystems allows us to look at how the spaces in which learning occurs and the materials to which learners have access, influence learning outcomes.

3.5.2 Opportunities for out of class learning as affordances

In considering learners as active participants in learning ecologies, the question of what learning opportunities the learning environment offers comes to the forefront. Also initially adapted from the field of biological studies, the construct of affordance describes what the environment can offer a learner in terms of materials, resources and anything else that has the potential to have an impact upon learning (Menezes 2011; van Lier 2000). Affordances, however, do not describe simply what is present within an environment. An affordance is that which a learner perceives to exist within their environment and thus is able to act upon. Affordances therefore are closely linked with learner perceptions of the potential for learning offered by their environments (Menezes 2011). These perceptions are influenced by their more general beliefs about learning, as this is what enables, or hinders, the recognition of many opportunities for learning. Just as learning ecologies focus on the relationships between learners and their environments, the interrelations between learners' perceptions, opportunities and actions taken are key to affordances.

The affordances within a learning ecology are not dictated solely by language learners but are a product of the environment itself, including other learners, teachers and the social spaces within which they act. Van Lier (2002) demonstrates this by citing personal experiences in which students who strongly dislike foreign language classes in school demonstrate extensive abilities in the language in informal environments outside of class, such as in a car on the way home from school. These abilities have been attained through out of class activities, e.g. watching favourite television shows or listening to music and are not recognised within the bounds of classroom learning. Thus the affordances of resources such as pop music, as well as the language learning which has already occurred through them often remain unrecognised within classroom environments.

When considering teaching language learning strategies, an understanding of learners' ecologies, it is useful to think about learners' ecologies and the affordances within them in terms of which strategies might be most useful for a particular learner group. In her research on how adolescents acquire technological skills outside of school environments, Barron (2006) identifies an important connection between activities beyond the classroom and learners' use of strategies. In her study, learners used metacognitive and planning related strategies such as identifying and finding mentors and online resources, seeking out opportunities for learning and determining additional topic related activities for themselves, as well as opportunities for creating contexts in which they could undertake such activities. Learners in Barron's study were able to relate knowledge gained through their self initiated out of class learning activities back to their classroom learning. This highlights the importance of considering learners' environments and their associated affordances as broadly and inclusively as possible when contemplating language learning and teaching and it underscores the usefulness of learning ecologies as a construct. Language learning strategies hold great potential to help learners recognise the affordances within their learning ecologies.

3.6 Teaching language learning strategies: promoting autonomy and out of class learning

So far, this chapter has given evidence for language learning strategies as multifunctional tools for language learning. It has also highlighted the connectedness of learner strategy use and the development of learner autonomy, along with the way in which these elements interact to encourage student directed out of class learning activities. If we see classroom activities as models for behaviour outside the classroom, then it is logical that we teach not only models for language forms, i.e. grammar and vocabulary, but also models for strategic approaches to learning and use. These might include examples of how to approach naturalistic language activities, how to create opportunities for language use, how to select materials and more generally how to go about practising language outside of the classroom. This subchapter solidifies the argument for incorporating strategy teaching into classroom practices and describes some of the existing approaches to teaching methodologies for language learning strategies.

3.6.1 Reiterating arguments for teaching language learning strategies

As discussed in [Section 3.3](#), autonomy is a valuable trait which modern language teaching often intends to cultivate as part of formal language instruction. Research has shown that learners often demonstrate intermittent autonomous behaviours (Benson 2011b) and similarly employ various language learning strategies of their own accord, albeit with issues in their selection of strategies and with limited success (e.g. Chamot 2001; Oxford 1990, 2008). An ability to effectively select and use strategies in the L1 does not mean that learners are able to transfer these strategies to the L2 (O'Malley & Chamot 1990). Teaching language learning strategies in conjunction with form related language teaching gives learners knowledge, not only of what strategies are available to them, but of how to select them most effectively.

Learners may have access to high quality resources but without clearly laid out strategies they cannot know how to use these resources most effectively (Reinders 2011). Naturalistic out of class learning by its nature involves engagement with unstructured resources. It is also the type of learning which is likely to be most personally relevant, as students choose their own material according to their own interests, goals and needs. Strategies offer language learners a structure with which they can approach this as well as other types of learning (Cotterall & Reinders

2004; Lai 2015; Lai, Zhu & Gong 2015). Additionally, strategies can help learners to relate classroom learning to out of class learning and language use (Kashiwa & Benson 2018). There are many possible behaviours, activities, approaches and interactions that form learning ecologies, and amongst these, many things are often taken for granted, particularly those that might seem logical or obvious to language teachers. Language learning strategies often fall into the category of productive learning behaviours that learners are capable of coming up with themselves. As outlined above, this is correct: learners are able to devise learning strategies without instruction. Strategy instruction, however, brings order to the strategies learners might have already been using intermittently. Further, strategy instruction puts a focus on strategies as essential and effective tools for language learning in their own right. The teaching of strategies does not simply give learners information about strategies; it requires them to reflect on their own existing strategy use and approaches to language learning, to identify strategies that they might be using intuitively and to take action to make their strategy use more effective.

3.6.2 Methodology for teaching language learning strategies

When contemplating how to go about teaching language learning strategies, a key consideration is how, or whether, to integrate strategies into the existing language curriculum. Much like strategies themselves which span across many areas of language learning and can be adapted according to learners' needs, teaching methodology is similarly flexible and is best designed with a particular learner group in mind. There are, however, some overarching approaches that can be taken for strategy teaching, as well as some evidence to suggest which strategies might be the most effective for a particular learner group.

In their practical guide for teachers wishing to integrate strategies into their teaching practices, Cotterall and Reinders (2004, pp. 13–15) outline three options for strategy instruction: 'detailed instruction', 'integrated instruction' and 'adjunct instruction'. Detailed instruction involves focusing on language learning strategies only and teaching them to students entirely separately from their L2 course. The next option, integrated instruction occurs when teachers incorporate strategy instruction into existing language teaching materials. This method is highly practical as it does not require teachers to develop entirely new material and students are taught strategies to deal with material that has already been selected for their needs. A potential disadvantage of this approach is that learners may become overwhelmed with the dual forms of both language

form related and strategy related information. Yet there is also empirical evidence (see Chamot 2001) suggesting that, if well executed, this approach can be effective.

A final option for strategy instruction is adjunct instruction. This involves the incorporation of strategy teaching into existing language classes, potentially at the beginning and end of sessions. This differs from integrated instruction because strategies are not discussed at the same time as language form or meaning focused materials. Instead, strategies can be discussed directly in class, a strategy can be introduced and learners can have opportunities during the lesson to use it in the first instance within classroom activities. The focus in the main part of the lesson remains on the activities rather than on the strategies. Learners' strategy use is then discussed towards the end of the lesson, allowing for reflection on how they were or were not able to incorporate the strategy into their learning.

If materials or topics are perceived as being additional rather than as being key elements of a language course, language learners are likely to disengage from and avoid these activities (Murphy 2005). In any approach to incorporating language learning strategies into classroom teaching, it is important to make clear that it is an equally essential part of language learning. One potential way to do this is by including strategies as part of the course assessment (Oxford 1990), for example having learners keep a language learning journal in which they reflect on their learning, strategy use and also practical use of the L2. However, if the strategies being taught are directly linked to course content and goals and further, if learners understand how to use strategies to further personalise their learning activities, it is not a requirement that they be included in assessment. In this instance they are so integrated into the course content that they are assessed indirectly as part of other course assessment items. In such a scenario, strategies will contribute to students' preparation for other language focused assessment tasks. Oxford (1990) also emphasises that strategy teaching should not be a one off event, but should be carried out over an extended period of time. Ideally, strategy teaching might be incorporated into language teaching on an ongoing basis, constantly building upon and sharing existing learner knowledge and experiences.

In addition to selecting the overall approach of how strategies will be incorporated into language teaching, consideration needs to be given as to how strategies are presented and practised within the classroom. Setting learners up well in classroom contexts will allow them to be more capable of using strategies outside of the classroom. Most lesson plan models for

strategy teaching processes (e.g. Cotterall & Reinders 2004; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990) include the phases of gathering of existing knowledge, presenting the strategy (or strategies) with examples, providing an opportunity for learners to practise using the strategy, evaluating and reflecting on the strategy and finally looking for ways to use the strategy in other areas.

Strategy instruction is not limited to the classroom, but can also be undertaken in the form of self instruction. Reinders (2011) makes clear that learners can follow a similar structure to that outlined for teachers in designing their own strategy self instruction. The steps self directed learners need to take to teach themselves strategies include considering their own needs and goals, setting an outline for what they want to learn, choosing appropriate learning materials and strategies to accompany them, practising strategies and reflecting on and evaluating their own progress. Key to strategy instruction, whether it be self or teacher directed, is firstly, learning how to recognise one's own personal language learning goals and secondly, learning how strategies can be adapted to help to achieve those goals. This requires from learners a great deal of reflection on individual learning motivations, styles, habits and activities to enable autonomous decision making for strategy use.

3.7 Social strategies within this study

Section 3.2 outlined the difficult and complex task of categorising language learning strategies. A variety of frameworks for understanding these strategies have been proposed, each one bringing certain qualities of language learning strategies to the forefront. Function based typologies reflect cognitive descriptions of language learning. Skills based approaches are highly practical and reflect communicative language teaching methodology with its focus on the four language skills. The potential uses of language learning strategies are not confined to any individual typology within which we choose to describe them. Rather, much like the way that strategies provide a structure for understanding and acting upon learning, typologies of strategies can help researchers, teachers and students alike to select strategies appropriately. This subchapter describes a typology of strategies that has been devised for the teaching and research specific requirements of this study, which is also extendable to other similar teaching and research scenarios. This includes use by foreign and second language teachers, self instructed learners, as well as researchers looking at out of class learning or strategies connected to communication and identity construction.

3.7.1 Social strategies as strategies for interaction

With its emphasis on language learning and identity and relatedly on meaning focused L2 interactions, this study understands social strategies to be those strategies which help learners to engage with others in the L2, as well as with L2 texts and materials in naturalistic, meaning focused ways. The social strategies within this study align to a large degree with those in the typologies proposed by Oxford (1990, 2017), and O'Malley and Chamot (1990). These typologies see social strategies as those which are connected with organising and carrying out L2 speaking activities. This study, however, offers a broader conception of social strategies, spanning across not only function based (O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990, 2017) but also skills based (Cohen & Weaver 2006) typologies. This approach has been taken with the intention of embracing the overlaps between categories and typologies, as it is precisely this overlap which contains great potential for learning.

Strategies are by nature multifaceted and span many elements of learning. They are inherently interrelated and co productive. A learner who uses strategies to create and plan L2 speaking opportunities will likely also use strategies for managing anxiety, as well as writing and reading

in the L2 as part of their planning process. Additionally, they might use various paraphrasing or codeswitching strategies during their interactions. The connectedness of such strategies for interaction seems intuitive, yet they reach across not only social but also affective, cognitive, meta-social, meta-affective and metacognitive categories. In addition to this, they are forms of communicative, speaking and language use strategies (Cohen 2014; Cohen & Weaver 2006). A separate typology has been developed for understanding strategies within this research project. It is based on practicality and function in terms of what a learner needs to do to plan, carry out, emotionally manage and evaluate authentic L2 interactions.

It is important to note here that accompanying ongoing form focused learning of the L2 is ideal and clearly plays an important role in language learning, including aiding meaning focused tasks. The strategies needed for form focused L2 learning, termed by Cohen (2014) as language *learning* strategies and by Oxford (1990) as cognitive strategies, are not the focus of this study. Practical frameworks for teaching and researching form focused learning have been the subject of much research (Chamot 2001, 2009; Chamot & O'Malley 1994, 1996; Cohen & Weaver 2006; Cotterall & Reinders 2004; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990). However, meaning focused (social) strategy instruction has not been the subject of a great deal of research, nor is there a clear framework for doing this, although recent works by Lai and colleagues (e.g. Lai 2013, 2015; Lai, Zhu & Gong 2015) on out of class learning have made a positive start in this direction by pointing out students' need for structure and strategies in meaning focused out of class activities.

A broader view of 'social' interaction: interacting with texts

Recent research such as that of Lai (2015), Sockett (2014) and Bernales (2016), not to mention the work of many others discussed in [Section 3.4](#), has found that learners interact in meaningful ways with L2 content that they seek out for themselves and that the forms of this content go far beyond spoken interaction. The advent of technology and the vast expanse of digital media available to L2 learners through the Internet have changed the way in which learners go about learning outside of class (Illés 2012; Sockett 2014). Learners engage in productive L2 activities such as written exchanges on social media platforms or playing video games. They also engage in meaning focused activities in which the learner plays a receptive role, such as listening to music or podcasts, reading books, watching YouTube videos or television, or browsing the Internet in the L2.

As a point of deviation from many other groupings of social strategies, this study extends the understanding of ‘social’ to go beyond spoken interaction to include many of the written, visual and auditive interactions that learners can have with language, often facilitated by technology. Activities in which the learner is not directly interacting with another person, such as listening to podcasts, reading a novel and watching Netflix are seen as social in the sense that the learner is interacting with a form of L2 text. Texts in this sense are not limited to written language but can also be audio or audio visual. Other typologies (e.g. Oxford 1990, 2017) tend to see engagement with such texts as a means for gathering L2 cultural knowledge to the final ends of spoken interaction in the L2. Within this study, however, learners are considered to be interacting in the L2 when they engage with L2 texts that are meaningful to them, i.e. texts that are personally engaging, connect with their own interests, ideas, or spark thoughts and opinions. As learners read, write, listen and speak, they socially position themselves in relation to the text or interlocutor with which they are engaging.

Language use and interaction are comprised of much more than face to face interactions. Consider learners’ engagement with their L1 in everyday life. Most speakers will read, listen to, write and watch large chunks of text through digital mediums such as social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok), online news forums (news websites, podcasts etc.), workplace and personal interactions (accessing websites, online shopping, writing and receiving work emails). These activities, though often individually small and perhaps seemingly mundane, typically occupy a large proportion of learners’ time and attention. Even the seemingly passive consumption of digital media requires a process of coconstruction involving both the text’s author and its audience (Canagarajah 2013; Joseph 2016). In this way, digital and other written texts provide an alternative form of social interaction for learners. They can serve as a platform for the construction of identity, in the same way that speaking requires learners to negotiate and situate their identities (Preece 2016). In engaging with a text, readers or viewers not only position themselves in relation to the text, building their own identities, they also form a perception of the identity of the texts’ author. Texts, in and beyond the forms listed above, contribute to the knowledge of and ways of thinking about the world. Mediums such as social media not only confirm but also guide and develop personal interests. The more learners become engaged with their L2, the more they will begin to conduct similar activities in the L2.

Additionally, learners must determine their own inferences and meanings from the L2 texts they engage with. Authentic texts do not set out meaning for language learners, nor do they perform comprehension checks to see whether, and in what way, the text has been understood. Learners must determine meanings based on their own inferences and knowledge about the texts with which they engage. From this perspective, the learner interacts with the text despite not physically saying or writing anything. Simply understanding a text and forming an interpretation of an intended meaning from another writer or speaker in one's mind is a form of interaction. Such seemingly passive forms of interaction with an L2 can often be a gateway to building confidence and beginning more active forms of L2 interaction. Meaning making acts in the L2, aloud, on paper, or in their own mind, through which learners situate themselves socially and construct identities, are the actions towards language learning with which this study is concerned.

3.7.2 A framework for social strategies

This study presents a practical framework, shown in **Figure 3.1**, for teaching and researching social language learning strategies. This framework is intended to be extendable to other language learning and teaching situations in which a teacher wants to provide a structure for meaning focused out of class learning. Drawing on constructs from both function and skills based strategy typologies, the framework highlights the conceptual elements of the function focused typologies, whilst placing emphasis on practical transferability to language teaching through the inclusion of skills based categories. The framework also emphasises the interconnectedness of social strategies with other functional strategy groupings such as metacognitive and affective. Further, the typology within this study brings to the forefront the important role that interaction with meaning focused texts plays in identity construction and language learning.

Within the skills based typology proposed by Cohen and Weaver (2006), strategies across all functional categories are grouped together according to which skill they support. It is useful, however, from both a theoretical and practical perspective to separate strategies for planning language learning, i.e. metacognitive and strategies directly intended to support learners during language use. Similarly, function based typologies do not separate strategies by skill area. Focusing on a particular skill such as reading or speaking can help to simplify the integration

of strategies into existing language teaching materials. It is also useful to view social strategies within a framework which seeks to incorporate a broader range of elements which contribute to social interaction than simply speaking. The framework for social strategies in this study sees social strategies as actions learners take that lead them to interactions in the L2, verbally, in written form or through engagement with media and texts.



Figure 3.1 *A framework for social strategies: strategies for interaction*

The framework depicted in **Figure 3.1** shows three hierarchical, interrelated levels of social strategies. The first level of strategies contains three key groups of social strategies: productive, receptive and affective strategies. Though interconnected throughout all levels and groupings, learners' activities tend to be either receptive or productive in nature, with affective strategies being a requirement for both activity types. Learners use more productive strategies, indicated in blue, for active interaction with other L2 speakers or writers. When focusing on more passive interaction with texts, written, visual or auditory, learners use more receptive strategies, indicated in orange. To enable learners to employ both receptive and productive strategies, affective strategies, indicated in purple, are also needed to help to regulate emotions and motivation. These three groupings of strategies form the first level within this three level social strategy framework.

Strategies for managing interactions: macro strategies

The second level within the framework concerns strategies related to learning management, planning and evaluation. It is helpful to think of these as macro strategies because of their organisational, overarching nature, much akin to the meta-social, meta-affective (Oxford 2017) or metacognitive (O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990) categories discussed in [Section 3.2](#). On this level, strategies for creating and managing opportunities to speak or write are more directly connected to the productive strategies group; however, they are also closely linked with managing anxieties related to speaking and writing, as well as organising oneself as to be able to find the motivation to make such plans. This demonstrates the interaction of strategy groups on and across multiple levels within the framework. More directly connected with receptive strategies is the management of resources i.e. finding content in the L2 that is personally relevant and a suitable level. Affective strategies such as motivating oneself to start watching a new television series in the L2, or remembering that it is important to tolerate ambiguity and allowing that to help to guide the selection of more challenging material, play an important role for receptive strategies too. Included within this level of strategies are also those for evaluation and reflection on learning, which learners can use during and after their L2 interactions. Learners can plan and reflect on the activities they select for themselves in the L2 using these macro strategies. For specific strategies related to the how-to of these activities, micro strategies come into focus.

Micro strategies for interactions

The third level within the framework depicts strategies for managing language use in action. It is helpful to view these strategies, in contrast to macro strategies, as micro strategies. They are those which learners use in the moment of the language activity. They align therefore very closely with the four functional skills of speaking, reading, writing and listening. Many of the strategies outlined in Cohen and Weaver's (2006) guide for strategy teaching are highly relevant here. A key point of difference within this study is the incorporation of strategies from the higher levels of the framework, such as affective strategies, as well as the differentiation between strategies for facilitating meaning and form focused learning. The strategies in question here concern primarily meaning focused learning, though knowledge of form remains an important element in language learning.

Once again, much overlap across and between categories and levels can be found. This overlap is useful and productive for language learners as strategies can assist with language learning across multiple skill areas. Strategies for speaking are highly relevant to strategies for listening, as are those for writing to those for reading. Speaking and writing strategies are more directly connected with those macro strategies related to planning productive activities, whereas reading and listening activities tend to be more directly connected to macro strategies for planning receptive activities. Strategies at this level are the actions which help learners to be able to use the L2 as part of various meaning focused activities. Whereas learners might have used macro strategies to select a YouTube video to watch, while they watch they can use micro strategies such as listening for key words and making inferences about unknown words as they listen to and watch the video. Learners might adopt speaking strategies such as using synonyms or redirecting the topic to something familiar to keep a conversation going. They might use reading strategies to help them to keep reading and try to follow what is going on in a book or an article without understanding all of the words. Learners can use writing strategies such as planning out a text before writing it or adapting and simplifying one's writing style to match the level of language proficiency in the L2. These strategies are highly practical in that they help learners to undertake the language tasks that they have planned out for themselves.

Social strategies for constructing identity and communities of practice

Viewing strategies broken down in terms of which kind of activity learners are planning for and acting out is advantageous because it enables strategy teaching with a specific meaning focused task in mind. It allows for the selection of relevant strategies from the macro and micro levels and for consideration of affective strategies. It also encourages broader thinking in terms of which additional strategies and activities could be interconnected. Understanding social strategies as a series of possible steps, whose sequence is not defined, which can be offered by the teacher and determined by the learner, works towards enabling the creation of communities of practice in which learners practise the L2. Strategies from all areas outlined within this framework need to be applied by students to build communities of practice that differ from those which they are used to and comfortable with. Strategies for interaction can help learners to step outside of their comfort zones, perhaps initially in passive interactions with texts, later

building networks and communities in which meaningful L2 exchanges can be fostered by the learners themselves, autonomously, outside of the classroom.

3.8 Social strategies: highly relevant for Anglophone language learners

A group of learners for whom social strategies, which foster agency and active organisation in seeking out opportunities for language use, are highly relevant is Anglophone language learners. Within this study, an Anglophone language learner is understood as a learner of a language other than English, who has a very strong command of English. This term actively avoids use of the problematic term of ‘native speaker’, as discussed in [Chapter 2](#), and seeks to include those whose language learning biographies are multilingual and multifaceted. English is growing as an internationally spoken language, meaning that learners who travel abroad frequently meet locals who speak English as well as or more competently than they are able to speak a particular L2. This has important implications for language learning for this particular group of speakers, both for their foreign language learning experience whilst still in an Anglophone country, and for their second language learning experiences abroad. This subsection discusses the challenges facing Anglophone language learners in these contexts and outlines the particular relevance of incorporating social language learning strategies into teaching practices for such learner groups.

3.8.1 Challenges for Anglophone learners of foreign languages in Australia

Foreign language learning will always encounter certain barriers compared with language learning in an environment where the language being learnt is an official language. However, Anglophones learning foreign languages in Australia face the particular challenges associated with the status of English as a global language. Lanvers et al. (2021) have pointed out that high English competency affects their language learning experience at a range of levels. At an institutional level, languages are often not prioritised within educational curriculums; at an interpersonal level, learners are potentially confronted with speech partners who are often more invested in practising their English, or using English to communicate more quickly and effectively, than they are in helping Anglophones learn their target L2. On an individual level, learners may struggle to find intrinsic motivation to learn a language because of a widespread attitude within society that ‘English is enough’ (Lanvers, Thompson & East 2021). Although the Australian language learning context is examined in greater depth as part of the discussion of context in [Chapter 4](#), it is key to note here that Anglophone learners face highly particular social challenges associated with speaking a language shared with many of the speakers of the

L2 that they are trying to learn. Anglophone learners are particularly at risk of remaining long term monolinguals (Lanvers, Thompson & East 2021).

An illustration of the difficulties faced by Anglophone learners in English speaking countries can be seen in Feick and Knorr's (2021) study, which investigated the e-tandem experiences of learners of German in New Zealand. These learners were allocated an online tandem partner, who was an English language teacher in training in Germany, and assigned a task focusing on intercultural communication, in which the learners needed to discuss set topics over a number of sessions. Decisions related to language choice were left up to the tandem groups. For the tasks they were carrying out, focus was on their discussions of intercultural themes, rather than on the language in which they chose to conduct them. They did, however, provide detailed reports of their language use and the strategic decisions they made regarding the use of either English or German. Out of 21 tandem groups only one group chose to speak only German whereas around one third of the groups chose to speak only English. The other groups developed systems and rules, i.e. strategies, to regulate switching between languages, according, for example, to time or topic. It is likely English was often chosen as the sole medium of communication within several tandem groups because it was the most efficient and simplest means of communication.

The phenomenon of English frequently winning out as the language of choice in multilingual encounters can be attributed in part to the maxim of manner, put forward by Grice (1975) as part of his conversational implicatures and cooperative principles for spoken communication. Grice suggests that interpersonal speech is guided by four key maxims: quantity, quality, relation and manner. Whereas the maxims of quantity, quality and relation relate to the content of what is being said, for example the informativeness, the relevance and the correctness, the maxim of manner refers to the way in which information is conveyed. Speakers are obliged to be 'perspicuous', meaning that speakers need to communicate their idea by the most clear, efficient, and straightforward means possible (Grice 1975, p. 46). Ambiguity and superfluosity are to be avoided. However, when speaking an L2, this is decidedly difficult to ensure. Thus when a group of speakers have more than one language available to them, it is not merely a choice associated with impatience or practicality to speak the language in which there is the greatest level of shared competency. This choice to speak English rather than an L2, often made automatically, or with minimal consideration, is one that follows the underlying

rules and patterns for ensuring clarity within spoken communication. Anglophone learners are particularly in need of social language learning strategies, because it is these strategies which enable them to become aware of and go against the implicit rules of communication which otherwise act as barriers to their access to the L2.

3.8.2 Continued challenges for Anglophone language learners abroad

The challenges for Anglophone language learners extend beyond those of the foreign language learning context when we consider second language and study abroad contexts. Anglophones on exchange will quickly notice that many higher education institutions in Europe operate partly or completely in English, both in terms of coursework and readings, and in regard to social groups connected to universities (Mitchell & Tracy-Ventura 2021). Anglophones face the challenge of asserting their desire to use the L2 rather than English in social situations as well as in service encounters. Mitchell et al. (2017) have investigated the language learning experiences of British exchange students in countries such as France and Spain. They found that study abroad was for all participants a bilingual or multilingual experience in which English always played a key role. Their results also reflected the need for Anglophone learners abroad to carefully consider how they could gain access to L2 speaking social networks.

Supporting learner agency through social language learning strategies

Entering L2 speaking communities of practice did not occur by chance for the Anglophone learners in Mitchell et al.'s (2017) research. Learners who made significant language gains during their study abroad experience were consistently those who developed their own strategies for gaining access to and participating in L2 speech communities. This did not mean that learners entirely avoided using English as part of their lives. Rather, learners found ways to strategically use their knowledge of English as currency to gain access to L2 speech communities. Learners were able, for example, to initiate language exchanges where they could offer their knowledge of English in exchange for an opportunity to practise the L2. Similar phenomena have also been reflected in a study by Klapper and Rees (2012) who found that learners who actively pursued interactions in the L2, for instance socialising in the L2 with flatmates, speaking the L2 with other international students and engaging with L2 texts independently, were able to make higher language gains than those who did not take these

initiatives. In both studies, Anglophone learners needed to show agency and persistence in order to gain access to opportunities to use their L2, despite being in a second language learning environment. This suggests that agency and autonomy are key factors in determining success and progress for Anglophone language learners abroad and that a similar pattern of naturally resorting to English as the default language of communication occurs not only in English speaking countries, but also abroad. Learning, teaching and implementing social language learning strategies for gaining access to L2 networks both in Australia and abroad are highly relevant for Anglophone learners. Without the active use of strategies for accessing and maintaining connections with L2 networks, Anglophone learners inevitably find their lives heavily dominated by English use.

The studies discussed above indicate that learners are capable of developing their own strategies for language learning, but they have also shown that many learners do not employ such strategies. Learners' ability to show agency through creating opportunities and networks to access the L2 is directly correlated with their language learning success. Thus, there is a strong argument to further investigate the potential of teaching social language learning strategies, particularly for Anglophone language learners. Teaching these strategies to these learners can help them to realise the importance of the language use choices they make, including those that may feel somewhat contrary to intuition or impractical. Furthermore, strategy teaching can assist them in making conscious choices that contribute positively to their L2 learning.

Chapter 4: Language learning contexts and research methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological approaches, environments and guiding research questions that have shaped this study. Initially, the three key research questions and the contribution that this study makes to existing research on language learning, identity and language learning strategies is outlined in [Section 4.1](#). [Section 4.2](#) examines the approaches to selecting language learning contexts in identity related research that have been taken up in other research projects, and discusses these approaches in relation to this study, and the choice to make a foreign language learning context its primary focus. Following this, [Section 4.3](#) provides an overview of the Australian foreign language learning context in terms of the linguistic landscape within the Australian community and the common pathways that lead students to decide to take up foreign language learning as part of their tertiary education. With the central social context for this research project thus established, [Section 4.4](#) gives an overview of the methodological approaches that frame the study's conceptual design and implementation. Finally, [Section 4.5](#) outlines the methodology and social context of data collected in an additional language learning context, a bilingually operating university in Berlin, Germany.

4.1 Research questions and contribution

This study sets out to investigate the connections between two key factors relevant to language learning: social strategies and identity construction. It considers these factors in relation to learner contexts, communities of practice and ecologies, therefore a range of learning environments are in focus as part of this study. As its central point of focus, this study investigates the strategy use and experiences of learners of German within an Australian tertiary context, considering their various in and out of class learning ecologies and how these interact with their construction of L2 identities. Emphasising the important role of context and simultaneously highlighting the potential for the integration of social strategies in a range of learning environments, this study also investigates the experiences of a separate learner group at an international university in Berlin, Germany. The data presented within this study provides insight into the ways in which social context interacts with the strategies learners can and are

willing to use, the identities they construct and the ways in which they use and learn language outside the classroom.

4.1.1 Research Questions

This study is guided by two central research questions which focus on three stages of inquiry. The first research question relates to learners' use of language learning strategies and their engagement with the L2 outside of class prior to or without explicit classroom strategy teaching. Learners' behaviours carried out at their own initiative are in focus here, and are viewed in relation to the degree to which their language learning and use choices are motivated by their desires to construct particular identities. The focus of the second research question is on the potential effect of explicit teaching of social language learning strategies within a tertiary classroom setting.

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between Anglophone learners' use of social strategies and their construction of identity within L2 communities of practice?

Research Question 2

What effect can the explicit teaching of social language learning strategies have on Anglophone learners' use of and engagement with the L2 and their construction of identity connected to the L2?

In its investigation of the above research questions, this study investigates students' language learning initiatives and strategies and how they are intertwined with identity, as well as the impact that strategy teaching might have on these behaviours, leading to recommendations for practical adaptations to teaching methodology in the concluding chapter. Based on the results of this study, pedagogical adaptations that teachers could make to promote the integration of language learning strategies in order to support meaningful use of the L2 and strong L2 learner identities are considered in the final chapter, with the discussion of the outcomes of this project. The data within this study is focused on Anglophone learners and the particular struggles that they are faced with in attempting to learn a language other than English. However, the results obtained are highly relevant for language learners in a range of contexts and environments.

4.1.2 Significance and contribution

As has been discussed throughout this and the previous chapter, research that takes identity as its focus (e.g. Allen 2011; Norton 2013; Norton Peirce 1995) has acknowledged the important role that social context plays in determining learners' opportunities to engage with an L2. It has emphasised that their opportunities are not defined only by what is physically available to them, but by their perceptions of the affordances offered by their environment (Lai 2015; Ushioda 2015). Identity research has also emphasised the importance of learners' social investment in language learning activities, which acts as a driving force, often stronger than that of one's motivation to learn (Norton 2013; Norton Peirce 1995). Researchers of learner autonomy (Benson 2011b; Huang 2013; Teng 2018; Toohey & Norton 2003) have likewise acknowledged the way in which identity and autonomy develop simultaneously and are intertwined with one another, as well as being socially situated. Further, research into language learning strategies and the ways in which learners use them has shown that their strategy use and choices are socially mediated (Kurata 2007, e.g. 2010; Taylor-Leech & Yates 2012), and stand in relationship with identity construction (Oxford 2017). Despite these clear connections that numerous, though often unconnected, research projects and papers continue to make with respect to language learning, identity and social language learning strategies, individually taken, there has been a lack of research looking specifically at the interconnections between these three elements. Furthermore, in the current literature, teaching methodology is often suggested as an area for further research or is addressed merely at the end of a research report by way of a few sentences containing general teaching tips.

There is a need for evidence based research to justify and support any proposed changes to teaching methodology. For visible, positive change in learners' experiences to occur, teachers need to be given clear guidelines for teaching social strategies which can help learners to structure their meaning focused learning outside of class. This study aims to draw on the wealth of knowledge already gathered through often isolated research on language learning, identity or social language learning strategies and to bring these elements together. It aims to deepen our understanding of the ways in which L2 learners' strategy related choices are influenced by their social context, the communities of practice within which they move and their identities in the L2. Further, this study investigates the effectiveness of teaching social language learning strategies which foster primarily out of class, autonomous and personally meaningful language

use. Based on strategy teaching outcomes and learners' own experiences with and use of strategies outside the classroom in both at home and study abroad contexts, this study also aims to provide suggestions for language educators wishing to integrate strategy teaching into their own language programs.

4.2 Approaches to selecting language learning contexts

Taking into account learning context is a central concern for sociocultural research, which understands both identity construction and language learning as being intertwined with the contexts in which they occur. This subsection initially looks at the approaches to selecting contexts for investigating language learning and identity adopted in previous studies and then offers a justification for the selection of a foreign language learning context for this study.

Research into language learning and identity has traditionally been categorised according to the context in which that learning takes place. Second language learning contexts have been a primary location for research on this topic, with many studies investigating the dramatic effects of power imbalances between migrant language learners and the L2 community and how this situation results in language learning becoming a 'site of struggle' (e.g. Clifton & Van De Mierop 2017; Norton 2000, 2013; Norton Peirce 1995) and a loss of L1 identities (e.g. Pavlenko & Lantolf 2000). Learners in second language learning contexts have been found to need to entirely reconstruct their identities, abandoning old identities for new ones connected with the L2 that allow them to assimilate into the L2 environment. Studies focusing on second language learning contexts have also highlighted learners' lack of access to L2 communities and the resulting difficulties in finding opportunities to speak the L2 (e.g. Norton 2000, 2013; Norton Peirce 1995; Taylor-Leech & Yates 2012). Song (2019) has further described how intercultural conflicts and misalignments of identities and norms between L1 and L2 cultures can lead to language learners' resistance to L2 learning and non participation. This research has demonstrated that language learning in second language learning contexts is a process that frequently demands transformations of many aspects of learners' identities. This is particularly the case when the L2 is the only potential for learners to communicate with and participate in the wider L2 community. Learners must make great investments in language learning so that they can convey themselves and their identities in the L2 and continue to function within their everyday lives. Second language learning contexts have been a focus of much identity related research because of the degree to which learners' identities are challenged when entering a new culture and learning to express themselves in an entirely new language.

4.2.1 Identity construction in second language learning and study abroad contexts

In second language learning contexts, language learning by minority language speaking communities has been the subject of a number of identity focused research projects. These are L1 communities that exist within the larger L2 speaking community. A study by Menard-Warwick (2011) has described the processes of English language learning and identity construction for Latino American women in California. Menard-Warwick observes that because these women's lives operate almost entirely within in their sizeable minority language speaking community, the identity construction that occurs in English, their L2, is very limited. This does not mirror the experiences of reconstructions of self, described in other studies of second language learning contexts. For the women in Menard-Warwick's study, learning English provides an opportunity to help their children and to gain access to the wider local community. However, there is no sense of desperation attached to L2 learning, as these women remain able to express themselves fully on a regular basis in their L1. Similarly, research by Goldstein (1997) looks at workers in a Portuguese textile company operating in Toronto, where Portuguese, rather than English, is the language of power. This is the case despite the situation of the workplace inside a broader community where English is a national language. Reflecting a similar pattern, Kurban's (2015) study, discussed in [Chapter 2](#), also focused on a minority language speaking community of Anglophone speakers in Turkey, who showed varying degrees of resistance to Turkish language learning. These learners constructed identities that were tied strongly to their native English speaker status. Access to L1 speech communities has a noteworthy impact on the L2 identity work that is required of language learners in second language learning contexts. These studies show that language learning contexts are multifaceted and that language learning and identity construction are largely influenced by the social networks and communities of practice which learners navigate in their day to day lives.

A number of previous studies into language learning and identity have taken as their focus the study abroad learning context. L1 speech communities have been shown to form within L2 contexts as part of study abroad programs, in a similar fashion to the practices of the minority language groups discussed above. It is often assumed that language learning as part of a study abroad program will lead to significant learning outcomes because the learner has the opportunity to become immersed in the L2. However, as is the case with second language

learning contexts in general, learners partaking in study abroad programs often need to show high levels of agency in order to access opportunities to speak the L2 (Kashiwa & Benson 2018). Learners do not always make the language gains that were anticipated as a result of the study abroad experience (Kinging & Farrell Whitworth 2005). Thus second and study abroad language learning contexts do not necessarily mean that a learner will have easy access to the L2 (van Lier 2004). No particular category of learning context can exclusively determine the access that a learner has to the L2. Each learning context differs according to location, to access to technology, and to the various language speaking groups that exist within that particular context. Within learning contexts, individual learners build up varying social networks according to their personal and professional interests. The nature of a context can imply some commonalities that can be present across similar contexts; however, it is clear that being within an L2 speaking environment guarantees neither access to nor motivation for L2 learning and constructing identity connected to the L2.

4.2.2 Identity construction in foreign language learning contexts

While the connections between language learning, identity and access to the L2 have been widely explored within second language and study abroad contexts, much less attention has been paid to these phenomena in foreign language learning environments. As has been mentioned, language learning in contexts of migration can often be an experience which destabilises an individual's identity. Block (2014, p. 25) points out that much identity work is done in connection to 'critical experiences', that is when one's identity is challenged or is 'in crisis'. This most frequently occurs as part of new experiences, which are plentiful in second language and study abroad learning contexts. Within foreign language learning contexts however, the learner is not taken out of their everyday context, culture and routine. Foreign language learning takes place as a part of a learner's everyday life, embedded within the familiar practice of study, which remains stable in format throughout schooling and into tertiary study. For this reason Block (2014, p. 164) argues that foreign language learning is an 'unfertile' setting for the construction of identity in relation to the L2. Nevertheless the foreign language learning context has been chosen as the central focus of this research project looking at language learning and identity, for a variety of reasons.

Arguments for and against researching identity in foreign language learning contexts

The decision to take a foreign language learning context as the central focus of this study was made in light of the poststructuralist perspective on language learning assumed within this research. According to the sociocultural and poststructuralist understanding of identity, identity is ongoing and continually changing across situations. This means that identity is not only formed as part of critical experiences but is continuously being shaped and changed as part of learners' everyday experiences. Language within this study is understood to be connected to the development of identity in any situation in which it is used as a method of self expression and communication between interlocutors. This situation does not need to be a critical or highly contrastive one, as suggested by Block for it to involve learner identities. Additionally, learners' decision to pursue foreign language learning often reflects their desire to attain a particular identity. For example, in Kinginger's (2004) study, a learner of French in the US chose to engage in L2 learning because she wished to join the prestigious imagined community of French language speakers. Though foreign language learning may rarely prompt learners to reconstruct their sense of self, it remains a more subtle act of identity construction, for example by contributing to world views, ways of thinking, general knowledge and engagement in new activities.

Lave and Wenger (1991) describe the ways in which identity is intertwined with learning, not only as part of formal learning at educational institutions but also as part of informal learning that takes place within everyday activities. Learning new discourses and practices is a form of identity work. Language learning by nature involves two activities: learning, and language use, both of which are understood to be connected directly with identity construction. This identity work manifests itself in different ways depending on the specific contexts in which it takes place. Regardless of context, identity issues are always at play and contribute to learners' behaviour in any language learning scenario. For example, consider a learner who uses the L1 rather than the L2 to tell a joke to a classmate in the language classroom. Although the learner is using the L1, this speech act is a decision not to use the L2. It has direct implications for L2 learning as well as for identity construction because it involves a choice between languages. Pellegrino Aveni's (2005) study has shown that learners' choices to use the L1 instead of the L2, or to avoid speaking altogether are often acts of self preservation. They often come from a

desire to present the self in a particular way, which is not always possible in the L2. A similar pattern has also been reflected in a study by Kohn and Hoffstaedter (2017), in which learners used an L2 as a lingua franca to communicate about everyday topics via online platforms. Learners felt a sense of freedom due to being able to use the language with another learner, rather than an L1 speaker, having fewer anxieties about making mistakes. Learners can be held back by concerns about self presentation in the L2, and within the classroom these concerns have the potential to be mitigated through methodological considerations.

The influence of context and of classroom teaching methodology

Albeit somewhat unintentionally, in his argument against identity research focusing on foreign language contexts Block (2014) points out that the limited opportunities for identity construction in the foreign language learning classroom are indeed largely the result of a lack of opportunities for meaningful interactions in the L2 in this context. He observes that in some foreign language learning scenarios which are meaning rather than form focused, there is a chance for identity construction in the L2. For example, an English language class organised by Japanese speaking students in which upper intermediate learners discuss feminist issues that are personally relevant to them could have potential for construction of identities in the L2 (McMahill 2001). Block also recognises a chance for identity construction in the L2 in his discussion of Thorne's (2003) study, in which learners of French as a foreign language use email and instant messaging to gain access to and interact with proficient French speakers, discussing topics such as films. In his observation of the potential of these two foreign language learning scenarios to connect with learner's identities through their use of the L2, Block has highlighted the issue of a lack of learner identity engagement in traditional foreign language learning teaching methodology. Thus, Block's view that foreign language settings allow for little scope for identity construction, a view which the paucity of studies devoted to this learning context might appear to confirm may in fact be more of a reflection on the outcomes of form focused teaching methodology. A focus on form is an understandable solution to the difficulties faced in relation to accessing opportunities to speak the L2 in foreign language contexts. However, a focus on form can mean that teaching concentrates less on the strategies that help to build personally meaningful connections with the L2 and develop learner autonomy through suggesting strategies to build these connections.

As has been pointed out by van Lier (2004), language programs, regardless of second, study abroad or foreign language learning context, should have as their goal of building a connection between learners' identities and the L2, drawing ties between the language and the self. In doing so, courses can aim to help learners to find their voice in the L2 and to be able to construct their identities through meaningful L2 interactions. Foreign language learning plays an important role in identity construction in instances of practical use of the L2; but on a broader scale, the act of foreign language learning has been shown to be considered by many learners as contributing to their sense of who they are, making them a particular type of person (Kinginger 2004; Schmidt 2014). With this in mind, this research project takes the often neglected foreign language learning context as its primary focus. It investigates student experiences within this context in which L2 identities are constructed in relation to L2 learning and use.

With the case for this study's focus on a foreign language learning context now established, the following subsection provides greater detail on the specific context of language learning at an Australian tertiary institution, which is the main focus of this project.

4.3 Foreign language learning in Australia

This subsection provides an overview of the broader community in which the language learning that is the main focus of this study has occurred. It outlines community attitudes and government language policy and how these have played out in approaches to foreign language teaching in both schools and universities.

4.3.1 Australia's linguistic landscape

Australia is often described as a multicultural country. Indeed over a quarter of Australia's population is overseas born (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2009) and given this, many people in the Australian community are bilingual or multilingual. Census data shows that over 20% of people speak a language other than English at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016, 2017). Even this number is likely to be an underestimate due to the approach to gathering data on languages spoken within the census. The use of a single census question to address multilingualism in the community as a whole has been acknowledged as an extreme simplification of a multifaceted issue (see Benson & Hatoss 2019; Clyne 2005; Fielding 2015). It assumes that the use of languages other than English is limited to the private domain and does not allow for elaboration on the potential for multilingualism outside of the home. This assumption is reflective of the monolingual mindset in Australia, which assumes English to be the central and most important language in the lives of Australians (Benson & Hatoss 2019; Chik, Forrest & Siciliano 2019).

Nonetheless, Australia shows itself through the census data to be a multilingual community, particularly within capital cities, in the majority of which approximately 35% of people report speaking a language other than English at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016). The languages reported as most commonly spoken at home include Mandarin, Arabic, Cantonese and Vietnamese. These languages are often referred to as community languages, that is, languages which are used by large migrant groups within the broader Australian community. Notwithstanding this diversity of language use, however, there is a disparity between the numbers in these multilingual community groups and the greater proportion of the Australian population that speaks only English. Almost three quarters (73%) of the Australian population reports speaking only English at home. Very few census respondents (3.5%) report speaking a language other than English but not speaking English well (Australian Bureau of Statistics

2016). These statistics suggest that the diversity that can be found within the Australian community is isolated, correlating with the concept of multiculturalism, rather with that of than transculturalism, discussed in [Section 2.2](#). Different cultures and community languages exist as closed circles, kept largely within the private domain. The richness of languages and cultures that exists within Australia often fails to interact with the mainstream monolingual culture.

4.3.2 Language learning at Australian schools

The isolation of migrant community languages from the broader monolingual community can further be seen in Australia's educational policy on language learning. There are two main avenues for language learning in Australian schools: as part of regular schooling, where students learn languages through limited timeslots each week for a part of their schooling, or as part of community language education (Fielding 2015). Community language education occurs outside of regular school hours and tends to be more intensive. Following the decision outlined in the White Paper (Australian Government 2012) to prioritise 'Asia literacy' within the Australian school curriculum, languages taught in South Australian government schools align somewhat with community languages, including Chinese and Vietnamese. However, these are offered alongside European languages such as French, German, Italian and Spanish, which are spoken by a significantly smaller percentage of the population. Other larger community languages such as Arabic are not taught in South Australian government schools (Department for Education 2021). Additionally, many schools only offer one language and there is often a lack of continuity between the foreign language learnt in primary school and the language(s) offered at high school level (Curnow et al. 2014). Further, there is currently no Australia wide policy for the teaching of languages in schools. The Australian Curriculum: Languages (Australian Curriculum and Assessment reporting Authority 2017) provides guidelines for language teaching from Reception up to Year 10. Studying a language is not compulsory beyond Year 8 in the majority of schools and even prior to that, time allocations are not mandated for any subject (see Kohler 2017). Schools are able to determine the time dedicated to language learning themselves (Department for Education 2020).

The approach to language learning in the Australian community has been as described instrumentalist (Cominos & Soong 2018; Mason & Hajek 2021), and as focusing on intercultural rather than intracultural, or transcultural, communication (Fielding 2015).

Language teaching in mainstream Australian schools has a tendency to focus more on languages and cultures that are ‘out there’ (see Cominos & Soong 2018), located abroad, separate from Australian community languages. In making this its focus, the wealth of languages that exist within the Australian community and the potential for local, transcultural interactions can be neglected (Benson & Hatoss 2019; Cominos & Soong 2018; Fielding 2015). Moreover, language diversity in the Australian community is seen much more as a threat to social cohesiveness than an asset to be supported through language education (Benson & Hatoss 2019; Chik, Forrest & Siciliano 2019; Fielding 2015; Gorfinkel & Gong 2019). In many instances, teachers, parents and students alike perceive languages education in Australia to be unnecessary or irrelevant (Curnow et al. 2014; Mason & Hajek 2021), a likely result of a commonly held belief within Anglophone communities that ‘English is enough’ (Lanvers, Thompson & East 2021). As a consequence, foreign language learning in Australia is often seen as ‘in crisis’ (Lanvers, Thompson & East 2021).

4.3.3 Language learning at Australian universities

The approaches to and attitudes towards language teaching and learning in Australian schools manifest themselves in various ways in schools and at the university level. Retention rates for school students from the point at which languages become non compulsory are low (Kohler 2017), meaning that fewer students entering the university system have a strong ability in a language other than English that they have learnt as part of formal education. A study by Gorfinkel and Gong (2019, p. 160) investigating attitudes to foreign languages at Australian universities found that languages other than English were perceived as being used only in private spaces or spaces ‘preserved for fun activities’. Language learning at universities in Australia and the UK has a tendency to frame language as a supplement to degrees, without acknowledging the wide range of professional skills that come with language proficiency (Liddicoat 2021; Liddicoat & Crichton 2008). Languages offered at Anglophone universities are ‘possible choices for interested students’ (Liddicoat 2021). In other words, languages other than English are not seen as essential, and are something that can be learnt out of personal interest, because English is enough. This rhetoric is reflected in Australian students’ reported motivations for choosing to learn German at university because they see it as contributing to their personal development (Schmidt 2014).

The prevailing attitudes towards foreign language learning in Australia therefore demonstrate a distinct lack of focus on the benefits to be derived from the creation of communities of practice in the L2 locally, and enabling learners to construct identities through their use of the L2. Foreign language learning at an Australian university was therefore selected as the central context for this project as this is a setting in which there is great untapped potential for learners to develop language skills which are simultaneously practical and personally meaningful. The section that follows outlines the methodology adopted in this research project to investigate language learning, identity and learners' related strategy use.

4.4 Research methodology

Decisions made regarding research methodology rely on much more than simple practical considerations. Although they are informed by unavoidably practical considerations, research methodology choices also have important implications for the types of results that are found through data collection. Methodological choices act as a lens through which both participants and research outcomes are understood (Benson 2019). This lens has the power to define what is seen and what remains unnoticed (Norton & Early 2011; Norton & Toohey 2011). With this in mind, this subchapter sets out the research contexts and participants and then describes the data collection methods and approaches adopted for this study, giving due attention to the theoretical motivations for the methodological choices that have been made.

4.4.1 Research participants and institution

The central focus of this study is on the experiences of German language learners studying at an Australian tertiary institution. Over the period of one semester in 2019, a combined total of 29 students spread across two intermediate B1 level classes (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* 2019) partook in this research project. The majority of participants were either first or second year students, entering the class through either having studied German in high school, or having completed first year beginners German the previous year at university. Although the course was directed at the B1 level, this mixture of student streams meant that, in reality, the language proficiencies in the class were more varied, with approximate levels ranging from A2 to B2. Most students were aged between 18 and 24 years and had lived in Australia for most of their lives. All students were Anglophones with a strong command of academic English, most also speaking English as an L1. The researcher was also a teacher of both classes and as such was able to build rapport with the students throughout the course of the semester. The tertiary institution where data was collected operates primarily in English and offers a selection of foreign languages as subjects, which can be undertaken as electives within most degree programs. In degrees such as the Bachelor of Arts or the Bachelor of Languages, students can complete a minor or major sequence in their chosen language. The Diploma in Languages also enables students to undertake a major in a language as adjunct to their Bachelor degree. This is a typical set of structures for the inclusion of languages within degrees at Australian universities.

4.4.2 Ethical considerations

This research project received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) to undertake the activities outlined in this chapter. All participants were given a participant information sheet and were made aware that they could opt out of the research project at any time. Each participant agreed in writing to their participation and to allow the audio recording of interviews. All data in this project has been deidentified. All names used in referring to interview data are pseudonyms. Students who did not participate in the project were excluded from the researcher's diary keeping and from observational data.

4.4.3 Methodological approaches and research data

Taking up the understanding of language learning as a complex process that involves the whole person (Benson 2019; De Fina 2015; van Lier 2007), as well as the various social contexts that make up a learner's communities of practice (Norton 2013), this study has sought to use a methodological approach that best reflects these complexities. This research looks at the relationship between three factors involved in language learning: use of language, learner identities, and the teaching and use of social strategies. Each of these factors is socially oriented and motivated. However, a focus on language use, as well as on the teaching and use of learning strategies also implies an element of focus on specific activities and behaviours occurring within social contexts. Thus, the research methodology for this project must allow for the practical as well as social elements involved in language learning to be brought to light. The data obtained through this study seeks to reflect learners' experiences of language learning, and also to report on how these experiences are translated into learners' reported actions and behaviour within their everyday communities of practice. As such, this study focuses on a mezzo level of inquiry, which, as suggested by Holliday (1999), is the most appropriate level of inquiry for investigating activity within communities of practice, or small cultures as he refers to them. Located between the micro level, which looks closely at single individuals rather than the connections between individuals, and the macro level, which takes a broader perspective, focusing on institutions and 'large cultures', the mezzo level allows the researcher to observe the activities that occur among members of communities of practice. Rather than seeking to define or label groups, mezzo level research observes activities and routines that develop between and within groups of people. This approach aligns with a concept of culture

and identity as existing within everyday communities of practice, whose nature is ever changing.

The role of the researcher and of researcher identity, in this case as a language teacher but also a doctoral student and a learner of German, having learnt German at the same Australian university and then lived in Germany for a number of years, is acknowledged as playing a part in the shaping of the research project itself and in the data that has been gathered as a result of the research (De Costa & Norton 2016; Menard-Warwick 2011; Norton & Early 2011; Norton & Toohey 2011). Following an emic approach (see Peterson & Pike 2002; Pike 1985), the researcher is understood as a social participant, operating within several of the communities of practice relevant to the participants involved in this study, particularly those of the language learning classroom. As an insider, the researcher has the advantage of having a deeper understanding of the social dynamics of the settings in question. The social histories, experiences and knowledge of both the researcher and the participants have had a degree of influence on the collection and analysis of the data generated by this project. This does not make the data less valid: in fact, acknowledging this aspect of social research and taking into account the important role of the researcher and the research methodology they select is an important step towards providing a more holistic picture of the data and of the particular learning situations and phenomena under investigation.

An action based, mixed methods approach (see Creswell 2003), using both qualitative and quantitative data, has been selected for this research project because of the multifaceted nature of questions related to identity and their connection to the practical elements involved in language teaching and learning. One advantage of the mixed methods approach is that it brings multiple perspectives to the ways in which research questions can be considered and investigated. Additionally, mixed methods allow for improved validity of results, as this approach allows for the cross referencing and triangulation of data (Creswell 2003; Dörnyei 2007; Flick 2011). Various data collection methods have formed the basis of this study, including interviews, questionnaires, field notes relating to interviews and informal conversations, and teacher/researcher diary keeping. The considerations involved in developing and carrying out each of these data collection methods are outlined in the following subsections.

Interviews

Interviews are an effective tool for gathering social data and have been used in a range of studies looking at language learner identity (e.g. Cruickshank 2015; De Costa 2016; Kinginger 2004; Menard-Warwick 2011; Norton 2000, 2013; Pellegrino Aveni 2005). A common format for interviews is that of the narrative, whereby learners tell the researcher their life story as it relates to their language learning experiences. Bamberg (2004) describes this form of storytelling as ‘big stories’. Narrative interviews and autobiographies have shown themselves to be an effective format for gathering information about how learner identities develop over time, and for investigating how learners perceive the events and experiences that have influenced their language learning throughout their lives (e.g. Atay & Ece 2009; Kashiwa & Benson 2018; Kinginger 2004; Pavlenko & Lantolf 2000). Important in identity research are learner perceptions of themselves, their life experiences and how these relate to language learning. Rather than looking to outline factual details of learners’ life events, the focus brought through the interview data in this study is on how learners have processed life experiences related to language learning and how they have made them part of their knowledge and their concept of self.

In contrast to focusing solely on learners’ ‘big stories’, this study looks additionally at learners’ ‘small stories’ (Bamberg 2004, 2006; Georgakopoulou 2007). Instead of being a summary or overview of life events, small stories come out of a range of occurrences from the everyday. Small stories might take the form of a description or a retelling. Small stories can come out of informal conversations, chit chat, or brief transactions with a stranger. As outlined in Chapter 2, these everyday events, though perhaps mundane, contribute significantly to the work of identity construction and reflect the communities of practice within which we participate. Therefore, the interviews in this research project sought to elicit learners’ large and small stories relating to their language learning, allowing the researcher to gain information on areas of life outside of the classroom which are traditionally difficult to access.

The interviews in this project were semi structured and conducted one on one with the researcher in a quiet space at the university. Interview outlines were created according to the guidelines provided by Dörnyei (2007) for each interviewee group. Interview questions were categorised into topic groups relevant to the research questions of this study. The interview

outlines for each participant group can be found in [Appendix B](#). The researcher ensured that each topic was discussed within the interview but did not necessarily ask every single question. Participants were allowed to spend more time in the interview on discussing issues or describing experiences that were most important to them. Field notes were taken during and after each interview. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed shortly after. They were then coded thematically according to the guidelines provided by Brosius et al. (2016).

The interviews in this study are conceptualised as social events and interactions between the researcher and the participant (Deppermann 2013). The participants' utterances occur within the context of this conversation and as such, the data from interviews is presented in the context of the interviewers' questions and comments that led to that the participant's statement. Interview data can be best understood and interpreted by the reader when presented with information that gives context to utterances, instead of viewing them in isolation. This factor has been kept in mind with the presentation of interview excerpts in the presentation and discussion of results in Chapters 6 and 7.

Transcription Conventions

Interview data has been transcribed according to conventions for simple transcription outlined by Dresing, Pehl and Schmieder (2015), modified and reduced slightly for practical purposes. Transcription conventions used in this study are outlined in **Figure 4.1** below.

// overlapping speech
/ unfinished sentence
[...] omitted speech
[] additional information
(inc.) incomprehensible speech
() extra auditory sounds or movements, e.g. laughing or gestures
CAPSLOCK emphasis
<i>Italics</i> midsentence code switching
(...) pause, full stops indicate number of seconds

Figure 4.1 Transcription conventions

Questionnaires

The use of questionnaires and more generally a focus on quantitative data have in recent times been both criticised and avoided in the area of identity research, and more generally in socially oriented studies in applied linguistics. Benson (2019) has highlighted some of the issues in previous studies that use questionnaire methodology to categorise learners according to certain psychological or behavioural traits (Gardner 1985; Horwitz 1987; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990). Such questionnaires included items whose selection determined an outcome regarding what type of learner the particular participant was, or what personal attributes that learner had. This assumes that learner characteristics and identities are fixed and quantifiable and does not align with the sociocultural approach to identity taken up in this study. Benson further points out that although this avenue of research was referred to as identifying 'individual' differences, the result of such methodological approaches was in fact a loss of learner individuality, traded for the possibility of making generalisations about a nonspecific 'language learner'. In such cases learners are seen as objects of research and of associated experiments and as such their agency and individuality are removed (De Fina 2015).

Despite the problematic nature of using questionnaires to gather information on learner identities, they nonetheless remain a powerful tool for gathering information on learner backgrounds, behaviour and habits in a systematic form that allows for an overview of commonalities and differences within a student group. A number of socially oriented studies looking at learners' behaviour outside of class use questionnaires as a method of gathering behavioural and attitudinal data on an area of learners' lives that is difficult to access directly (e.g. Lai, Schum & Tian 2014; Lamb & Arisandy 2020). A number of research projects investigating language learning and identity have incorporated some form of questionnaire to gather more general student data, although numerical questionnaire data is rarely reported on in detail as part of the results (e.g. Norton 2000, 2013; Pellegrino Aveni 2005).

The decision to include questionnaires in this study was made with considerations to their strengths as well as their weaknesses as instruments of data collection. The purpose of the questionnaires in this study was not to measure learners' motivation or individual characteristics relating to their personalities, identities or learning styles. Instead, the questionnaires sought to gather data on patterns of behaviour relating to language learning outside of class, on existing strategy use, and on attitudes towards language learning and strategies, as well as on the potential effect of the strategy teaching on these attitudes and

behaviours of explicit strategy teaching. Further, this data has been triangulated with the responses given on the same topic areas as part of the interviews.

The questionnaires were developed according to the guidelines provided by Dörnyei (2003) for researching language learning. They included Likert scale items and multiple items on the same topic, which were able to be grouped together as ‘factors’ in the analysis phase. As well as Likert scale questions the questionnaires also included comments sections and open ended questions so that students could clarify and expand on their responses where desired. Participants in Australia completed a questionnaire before and after participating in a strategy teaching experiment, an action research element of this research project detailed in the next section. The pre and post questionnaires were identical, except for the inclusion of questions on biographical information in the pre questionnaire, and questions reflecting on learning throughout the semester in the post questionnaire. The questionnaires used in this study can be found in [Appendix A](#). A total of 37 students completed the initial pre strategy instruction questionnaire. The post strategy instruction questionnaire was completed by 29 students: 15 students in the experimental group and 14 students in the control group. Their questionnaire responses were used for statistical analysis and comparisons between responses to the pre and post questionnaires.

Comments and open ended questions in questionnaires were analysed using thematic coding that aligned with the coding used for interview data (see Brosius, Haas & Koschel 2016). For the analysis of Likert scale data from the pre and post questionnaires, individual questionnaire items (variables) were grouped thematically into factors, representing themes relevant to the theoretical framework within this study. An overview of the variables and factors can be found in [Appendix A](#). Questionnaire data has been analysed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics. To analyse the pre and post questionnaire data, initially unpaired *t*-tests were conducted to ensure the similarity and comparability of the two class groups. Following this, paired *t*-tests were conducted to identify changes that occurred throughout the semester across the two groups and to highlight differences between the experimental and control groups’ behaviour and attitudes outside of class. The standard deviation and mean value for factors were calculated and viewed in relation to the *t*-test results. Questionnaire analysis is discussed in greater depth in [Chapter 5](#).

Teaching social strategies

Whilst students' existing behaviours, drawn out through both questionnaires and interview data, are of interest in the project, a key consideration is the potential for meaningful change in learners' approaches to language learning. Strategy teaching, as discussed in [Chapter 3](#), has been identified as having the potential to direct learners to become more autonomous, and in doing so, to make their own learning activities more personally meaningful, thus connecting more directly with learner identities. This research project was based on action research involving a strategy teaching experiment. The focus of the strategy teaching was on social language learning strategies, as defined in [Section 3.7](#). The strategy teaching therefore included not only strategies for developing productive skills (speaking and writing); but also strategies for managing receptive use of language such as listening to music, or finding books to read. The strategies aimed to use class time to develop students' out of class learning behaviours and to help them select personally meaningful out of class learning materials.

One of the two classes at the Australian university was selected as the experimental group and the other class acted as a control group. Neither group was aware of whether they were in the experimental or control group. Both groups completed the pre and post experiment questionnaires. Beginning in the fourth teaching week of the twelve week semester, and ongoing until the tenth teaching week, the experimental group participated in weekly strategy teaching sessions. This was in accordance with Oxford's (1990) suggestion that strategy teaching should be ongoing, rather than a topic broached on a single instance. Each session lasted approximately 10-15 minutes and served as part of the lesson, usually at the end of class, whereby an adjunct approach to strategy teaching was taken up (see Cotterall & Reinders 2004). As part of this approach, strategy teaching was taught separately from teaching on language form, to allow learners to focus on the strategies, and to give them the opportunity to discuss and consider new strategies in the learning activities they completed outside of class, following the lesson. In the control group, the equivalent time was devoted to an additional form focused exercise, for example a grammar exercise, or a short writing task using a grammar point that had been in focus during the lesson. Aside from the strategy teaching sessions, the content of both classes remained the same.

The strategy teaching sessions used the structure set out by Oxford (1990) and Cotterall and Reinders (2004) as a guide. This involved the phases of knowledge activation, strategy presentation, strategy use (as part of a homework task), and strategy evaluation (in the

following strategy session). Within the language classroom language learning was seen as a form of polylinguaging (Jørgensen & Møller 2014), and the L1 was approached as an asset and a tool, rather than being considered inevitably detrimental to L2 learning (van Lier 2011). Thus, a flexible attitude towards the use of either English or German in these sessions was adopted. Learners were encouraged to speak in German where possible but were able to answer in English if they wished. They were also encouraged to use a combination of both languages as much as possible. Discussion questions were presented on PowerPoint slides and/or handouts in German, with English translations provided either verbally or in written form, depending on the complexity of the particular discussion question. An overview of the teaching methodology and content of each strategy teaching session is given in **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.1 *Strategy teaching sessions overview*

Session focus	Classroom and homework activities
Overview of strategies: strategies for the four skills: reading, speaking, listening, writing	Small group discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strategies do you know of? • What strategies do you use? • Which resources are available to you? Students gather knowledge on one of the four skill areas and then each group shares knowledge with the rest of class.
Reading strategies: macro and micro strategies	Small group discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What books have you read in German? • How did you go about reading them? • How far did you get and what happened? Handout: books available in German at the university library (macro strategy – helping students to find resources) Handout: strategies for reading (macro and micro strategies) Homework: find a book to read in German, read it and answer the following questions (in German): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which book did you choose and why? • Which goals did you have and did you achieve them? • How did you go about reading the book? • Did you find any new words that you liked?

	What did you learn? What would you do differently next time?
Reading strategies review	<p>Students discuss briefly what they have been doing with the reading task so far, to be continued after the break. This means students have two further weeks to complete the reading task.</p> <p>Homework: continue with homework task from the previous week.</p>
Reading and other receptive strategies	<p>Students discuss experiences of reading a book in German and bring the books that they read with them to class.</p> <p>Students reflect on the process of reading in German and the strategies they used, rather than on the content of the book.</p>
Speaking strategies: macro strategies	<p>Small group discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you do to speak German outside of class? • Who can you speak German with? • Where and when? • What topics can you talk about? <p>Students discuss macro strategies for finding opportunities to speak German outside of class. Strategies included: being proactive, finding proficient German speakers, finding a tandem partner, language swaps, speaking with other students, the German club</p> <p>Homework: create an opportunity to speak German outside of class – with someone you know who speaks German, it can be someone from class. Try to hold a conversation for ten minutes. If you switch to English, initiate switching back to German. Plan what you will talk about. Meet over coffee and make it a positive experience. Some example conversation topics: Books, TV shows, podcasts you like, favourite foods, what you did on the weekend, describing your family or friends, differences between Germany and Australia.</p>
Speaking strategies: micro strategies	<p>Small group discussion – reflection on homework task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who did you speak with? Where? When? How long? • Did you make it to the whole ten minutes? • Which problems did you have and how did you solve them? • How did you keep the conversation in German? • Did you switch between languages? If yes, what made you switch? • What would you do differently next time?

	<p>Discussion as a class focusing on: interesting ways of creating opportunities to speak, good conversation topics, problems and solutions (i.e. strategies), strategies for keeping the conversation going in German.</p> <p>Students are given a handout with micro speaking strategies (many of which they discussed in their reflection on the homework task).</p> <p>Homework: complete the same homework task as the previous week (finding someone to speak German with for 10 minutes) and try to incorporate the micro strategies.</p>
<p>Affective strategies: controlling speaking anxiety</p>	<p>Small group discussion:</p> <p>Reflection on speaking homework task: difficulties and strategies used.</p> <p>Brainstorming about anxiety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When do you feel anxious or stressed about speaking German? • What do you do to make yourself feel less stressed? <p>Following discussion, suggestions of strategies for controlling anxiety related to speaking. Emphasis and discussion focused on: mistakes are good.</p>

A central aim of teaching social strategies was to provide additional structure for the meaning focused learning that students engaged in independently, outside of the classroom. The strategies and homework tasks students learnt and practised as a result of the teaching sessions were designed to set out structured behavioural patterns in which students sought out personally meaningful content in German. Additionally, the strategies and homework tasks sought to encourage students firstly to practise speaking German with one another, using each other as a resource for learning. Secondly, they aimed to help students reflect on their learning and to consider the potential power of the actions that they take outside of class for expanding their language repertoire and building language knowledge that most closely relates to their personal interests and goals. Finally, the combined effect of becoming more comfortable speaking with one another and exchanging experiences and reflections on learning contributes to the construction of a community of practice in which German, alongside English, is a habitual language of communication.

Regarding the quantitative data included in the study, one might question the potential for the use of students' grades in making comparisons between the academic outcomes for students who received strategy teaching versus those who did not. The assessment tasks for the

university language course in question largely focus on testing students' grammar knowledge and knowledge of written standardised language forms, a traditional teaching approach that is common within university language courses (Feick & Knorr 2021; Kashiwa & Benson 2018). This data on grades was not included in the study primarily because this study sets out to investigate the relationship between learners' identities and the behaviours that they engage in to further their language learning. A continuation of language learning is, within this study, not understood as being necessarily represented by positive academic outcomes, but rather by learners' ongoing use of the language in their lives, long term, outside of the classroom. Furthermore, learners' grades do not reflect their identities, though they might give clues as to certain learner characteristics such as confidence, personal organisation, or theoretical understanding of language. However, as previously discussed, this study does not set out to categorise learners by these characteristics. Additionally, learners' academic outcomes do not give clear information about out of class learning activities beyond whether or not they have completed the set, form focused coursework, as this is the focus of what is being assessed. Therefore the method of gathering qualitative data through semi structured interviews with course participants was chosen. This data was complemented with quantitative data gathered through a pre and post experiment questionnaire which allowed for numerical comparisons to be made between groups and which specifically focused on the language learning behaviours in question within this study.

Diary keeping

As a complement to the data gathered from the questionnaires and interviews, the researcher engaged in diary keeping throughout the strategy teaching sessions. This form of data collection allowed for observation of further small stories, that is, brief interactions and fleeting comments occurring within informal exchanges, which took place in the classroom. Diary studies have been shown to be an effective form of research into language learning, though most often they have been from the perspective of the language learner (e.g. Cruickshank 2015; De Costa 2016; Kashiwa & Benson 2018; Pellegrino Aveni 2005; Schmidt & Frota 1986; Schumann 1978).

A diary outlining teaching methodology and the students' reactions to strategy teaching sessions was kept. This data served as complementary to the students' reflections on strategy teaching in interview and survey data, offering the additional perspective of the language

teacher and researcher. Diary keeping data was collated and coded thematically, following the same code structures as were created for the interview data.

Summary of research activities in the foreign language learning context

Data gathering at the Australian university began with the researcher, and teacher of the German classes, keeping a diary in which classroom events relevant to the research were recorded. In the third week of the twelve week language course, participating students completed an initial questionnaire. In the fourth week, weekly strategy teaching for the experimental group began. Strategy teaching continued until week ten, after which a total of 29 students from both the experimental and control groups completed a follow up questionnaire. Following the completion of the post experiment questionnaire, in weeks eleven and twelve of the course, 25 students took part in semi structured interviews. An overview of these research activities is given in **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2 *Overview of research activities in Australia*

Research activities undertaken at an Australian university (January-June 2019)
1. Participant recruitment
2. Pre strategy teaching questionnaire completed by 37 students
3. Strategy teaching and researcher diary keeping
4. Post strategy teaching questionnaire completed by 29 students
5. Semi structured interviews carried out with 25 participants
6. Interviews transcribed and thematically analysed

4.5 A complementary context: learning German at an international university in Berlin

Though it is not always the case, the language learning journey ideally is not confined to the home university learning environment. Many students choose to spend time in a country where the L2 that they are learning or have learnt is used, for example, on exchange or as part of further studies, work or leisure. Applied linguistics literature has typically differentiated between second language, foreign language and study abroad learning contexts, tending to make comparisons and contrasts between these settings rather than looking at these various learning environments as an interrelated whole. It is argued here, however, aligning with views expressed by Kashiwa and Benson (2018) in their study of tertiary learning of English across Chinese and Australian contexts, that language learning across (and between) foreign language, second language and study abroad settings should be understood as part of an interconnected continuum.

With this in mind, interview and participant observation data was collected from a separate group of Anglophone learners of German in Berlin. Though these learners did not all speak English as their L1 and came from a range of backgrounds, all had a strong command of academic English. They also were attempting to learn German whilst studying primarily in English, within a community with high English competency. Though somewhat counterintuitively, the complementary context of learning German in Berlin in many ways mirrors that of the learners in focus in the Australian context. Despite being a second language learning context, the prevalence of English at the university in Berlin means that many parallels exist between the experiences and struggles of these learners and the challenges faced by learners in the Australian foreign language learning context. Investigating the experiences students of German at an English speaking tertiary institution abroad, within an L2 environment provides information as to the challenges and possibilities that might lie ahead for the Anglophone learners in the Australian context in this study. It also provides insights into the potential for the implementation of strategy teaching in such contexts where English is a common language between learners and L2 speakers.

This additional context was explored to shed light on the degree to which social strategy teaching similar to that undertaken in the Australian context might also be relevant and useful for the Anglophone learners in this second language learning context. It was not within the

scope of this research project to undertake strategy teaching in the German context. However, interviews were carried out with language learners regarding their identity construction and the language learning strategies they employed without specific strategy instruction. These interviews offered useful insights as to the similarities and differences of the struggles faced by Anglophone language learners in this alternative setting. The learners in Germany provided complementary data that could be triangulated with interview data gathered from learners in the Australian context, particularly those in the control group who did not receive any strategy instruction.

The following subsections provide further details as to the linguistic features of the community of Berlin and give information on the participant group, tertiary institution and methodological considerations for this element of the research project.

4.5.1 The linguistic landscape of Berlin

In contrast to the majority of people in Australia who are monolingual, many people in Germany are bilingual or multilingual, as is the case across much of Europe. A recent Germany wide micro census indicated that almost three quarters (71%) of the current population reports having knowledge of English (Adler 2019). In Europe there is a strong emphasis on language learning in the education system, with particular focus on English. Almost all (96%) upper secondary students across Europe learn English as a foreign language and around two thirds (62%) of German upper secondary students learn two or more foreign languages (Eurostat 2020). Thus, a large proportion of the population, particularly among the younger generations in Germany, is able to speak English as a foreign language.

Berlin is home to a particularly young population, with more than half (55%) of the community aged under 45 years (Berlin-Brandenburg office of statistics 2020). As well as being young, the population of Berlin is also highly international with 22% born outside of Germany, a divergence from the average international population across Germany of just 14% (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). Because of the young and international nature of the city, English presents itself frequently within Berlin as an alternative method of communication to German. There is much potential for the use of English as a lingua franca in communications that might otherwise have taken place in German. This prevalence of English as part of the international community together with the knowledge of English by German L1 speakers has

important implications for Anglophone learners in this context and other highly international language learning contexts.

4.5.2 Research participants and institution: the German context

A major university in Berlin where academic English is commonly used was the location of data collection. The university, like many others in Berlin, operates bilingually, with the working language for university classes being determined according to specific study areas. Many degree programs have English as a prerequisite for entry or have a strong tendency to draw on English language materials as part of course readings. The university in focus offered a high number of exclusively English language and internationally focused degree programs.

At the time of data gathering, the university was running preparatory intensive German classes prior to the beginning of the winter teaching semester. Because of the orientation towards English at the university, many of the students enrolled in the German classes were not required, and in some cases not allowed, to use German as part of their academic studies. Three different classes at the university were observed on multiple occasions, ranging from levels A2 to B2. During this phase field notes were taken, and the researcher was able to build rapport with class participants and teachers. Participants had the option to sign up to partake in an interview.

One particular level became the main focus of interviews, a class referred to as the '*Brückenkurs*', that is, a course designed to bridge the gap between A2 and B1, for students who were not quite ready to enter the B1 level classes. The students participating in the '*Brückenkurs*' were found to be most similar in terms of language level to the group of learners who participated in the strategy teaching experiment in Australia. Additional interviews were also carried out with a smaller number of students from B2 level classes.

The learners at the university in Berlin were from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. However, all who participated in interviews regarded themselves as having a very strong command of English and were completing their studies largely or entirely in English.

4.5.3 Data collection methods in the German context

The methods of data collection largely parallel those used in the Australian context, though on a smaller scale. Interview data was the primary form of data collected in the German context.

A total of 16 learners and one language teacher participated in interviews. As in the Australian context, interviews focused on learners' small stories related to their language learning, their use of strategies outside of class and the degree to which they connected their language learning and use with their personal identity. The interviews were semi structured, audio recorded, transcribed and coded thematically. To complement the interviews, participant observation data and field notes were also collected. Classroom materials were collected and analysed in order to determine whether they included any form of strategy instruction. This data also provided information about the format and structure of the language classes. A summary of the research activities carried out in this additional learning context is provided in **Table 4.3**.

Table 4.3 *Overview of research activities in Germany*

Research activities undertaken at a university in Berlin (July 2019)
1. Participant recruitment
2. Participant observation in language classes, collection of classroom materials
3. Semi structured interviews carried out with 16 German language course participants
4. Semi structured interview carried out with one language teacher
5. Interviews transcribed and thematically analysed

Chapter 5: Questionnaire analysis: learners' motivations and changes in use of language learning strategies

As has been outlined in [Chapter 4](#), a mixed methods approach to data collection has been taken up in this study because it allows for multiple perspectives on language learning phenomena. This chapter focuses on data gathered through the pre and post teaching experiment questionnaires. Firstly, the out of class learning behaviours of the whole learner group prior to any strategy teaching are investigated. Following this, changes in strategy use and out of class learning activities between the control and experimental groups are explored.

5.1 Motivations to learn German in a tertiary context

This subsection uses data gathered from both the experimental and control learner groups prior to the strategy teaching experiment to investigate motivations for learning German and how these motivations interact with the social construct of investment in language learning. Both learner motivation and investment play an important role in determining learners' choices associated with engaging with the L2 outside of class.

5.1.1 Language learning as the attainment of knowledge

A focus of the pre experiment questionnaire was to gather information on learners' motivations for learning German at university. **Figure 5.1** displays learners' agreement with statements about their motivations for studying German, categorised as either knowledge-attaining motivations, or social and practical language use motivations. Motivations were not mutually exclusive. Learners simply rated their agreement with each individual motivational item.

Practical and social motivations for language learning include having family or friends who speak the language, intending to live or study in Germany in the future or wanting to learn because of potential future job opportunities. Motivations associated with seeing language learning as the attainment of knowledge or facts, rather than as something explicitly practical, include wanting to know another language, and learning as part of personal development. Learners' responses showed that for the majority (88%) of learners, the decision to learn German was strongly motivated by a view of language as knowledge, and as information. Implied in this motivation for learning is an understanding of language as a valuable asset,

whose value can be symbolic rather than defined through practical displays of knowledge in language use.

In contrast, learners' social and practical motivations were less consistent across the group. Slightly over half (53%) of learners agreed that they were motivated to learn because of personal connections or a desire to live or study in Germany. These results suggest that the majority of the learner group had a strong desire to know an additional language in a symbolic sense. To a much lesser degree, learners were motivated by a clear and direct desire to use the language in a practical way within their present or future lives.



Figure 5.1 2 Learners' motivations for studying German: knowledge related and practical or social factors (N=37)

This trend in terms of motivation towards language learning as knowledge rather than as a practical tool can be seen particularly clearly when comparing learners' agreement with the individual questionnaire items: 'personal development' and 'living in a German speaking country', depicted in **Figure 5.2**. Almost all (89%) participants agreed that they were learning German for their own personal development, whereas less than one third (32%) agreed that they were learning because they wanted to live in a German speaking country. About half (52%) responded to 'living in a German speaking country' with neither agree nor disagree, indicating that they likely had not yet decided what their specific intentions were for their future

use of the L2. These results are consistent with the results obtained by Schmidt (2014), who found that ‘personal growth’ was a major motivating factor for learners of German at an Australian tertiary institution.

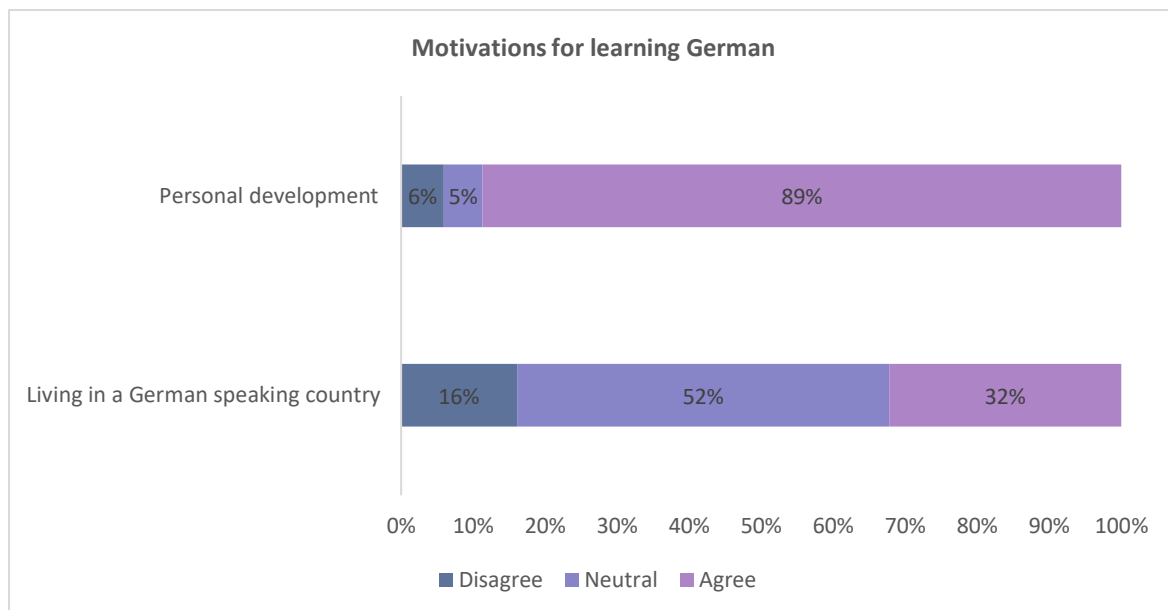


Figure 5.2 A comparison of motivations for studying German: personal development and living in a German speaking country (N=37)

The construct of motivation provides a basis for understanding some of the actions that learners take to further their language learning, as well as which aspects of language learning are most important for them. Learners’ responses suggest that, for many within this group, language learning at university is strongly associated with the acquisition of knowledge, like much of learning within academia overall. Such responses are perhaps to be expected within the Australian foreign language learning environment, which is physically distant from areas in which German is an official language. Language for this learner group is likely to be more abstract than it is practical, something that one knows rather than specifically something one uses.

This has important implications for how these learners carry out their language learning activities, particularly those that they engage in outside of the classroom. This way of viewing language and its impact on out of class behaviour is drawn out further through the interview data by individual learners, discussed in detail in [Chapter 6](#).

5.2 Behaviours and beliefs about learning before strategy teaching

5.2.1 Out of class learning behaviours

In the initial questionnaire, learners from both the experimental and control groups were asked about how often they engaged in a range of out of class learning activities. **Figure 5.3** shows the pre experiment responses to individual questionnaire items of all participants combined. These responses show that particular activities such as ‘reading books, news articles, or blogs’, ‘listening to the radio or podcasts’, and ‘writing to friends’ are carried out rarely by the majority (57%-65%) of students outside of class. In contrast, the majority of learners engage occasionally or frequently in formal learning activities such as ‘reviewing grammar sheets’ (62%) and ‘memorising vocabulary’ (76%). Learners appear to be spending more time on formal learning activities than on meaning focused activities.

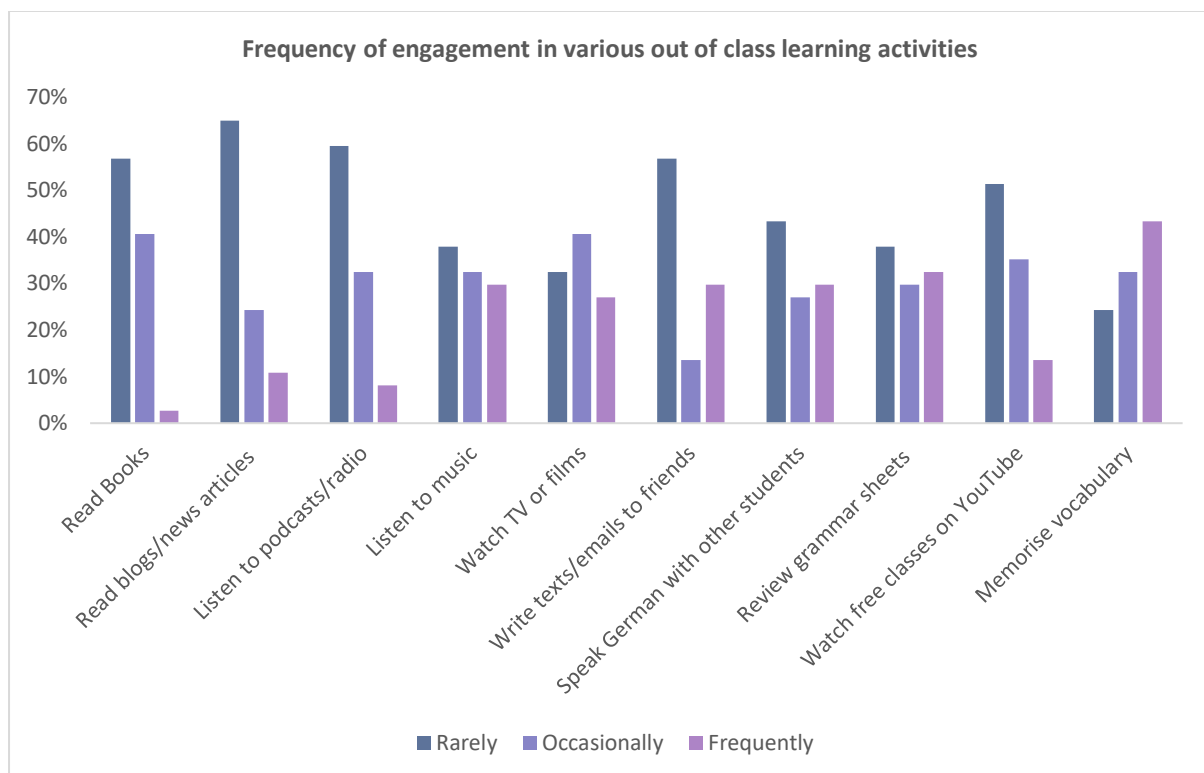


Figure 5.3 Frequency of engagement in various out of class learning activities (N=37)

Form focused out of class activities are most often assigned by the teacher and align closely with assessment tasks and topics covered in class. For such activities, the locus of control lies with the material and indirectly with the classroom teacher, despite the fact that it is the student who carries out the work independently outside of class. For learning activities such as ‘watching free classes on YouTube’, which are likewise form focused, the locus of control lies to a greater degree with the learner. The learner actively and autonomously seeks out content to build on the learning they have completed in class. Over half (51%) of students reported engaging in this activity rarely. Additionally, learners’ approach to out of class learning correlates with the focus in course content and assessment tasks on grammar and formal structures rather than on naturalistic learning.

An overview of the trend towards greater engagement in form focused out of class learning activities can be seen in **Figure 5.4**. On average, half (50%) of learners report engaging in meaning focused activities rarely. Less than one fifth (19%) of learners engage in these activities frequently. In contrast, almost a third (28%) of learners carry out form focused out of class activities frequently. Without any strategy intervention, learners appear to be more likely to engage in out of class learning that is directly related to coursework, or for which the course provides an explicit structure to carry out those activities.

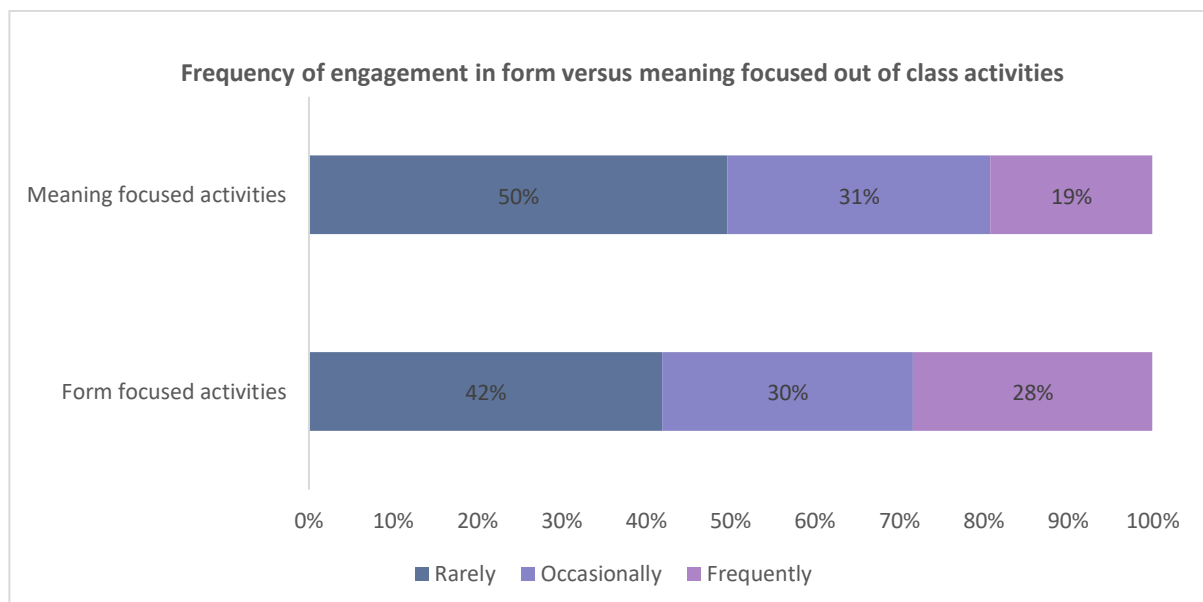


Figure 5.4 *Frequency of engagement in form versus meaning focused out of class activities (N=37)*

5.2.2 Use of strategies in out of class learning and beliefs about language learning

Using strategies outside of the classroom

Prior to the strategy teaching experiment, learners from the control and experimental groups were asked about how frequently they use macro and micro strategies as part of their out of class learning. Their responses are represented in **Figure 5.5**. The majority (60%) of the learner group use micro strategies frequently (e.g. ‘trying to guess meaning from context’, or ‘changing the topic to something I can talk about’). However, for macro strategies, that is organisational and planning strategies, the majority (54%) of learners report using them either occasionally or rarely, with less than half (46%) using macro strategies frequently. These responses offer insight into which strategies learners are using intuitively and which have the potential to be made a greater focus through strategy teaching. The results suggest that learners naturally employ a number of micro strategies to enable themselves to interact with and use German in out of class language use situations. However, these learners are less frequently using macro strategies to manage and create opportunities for out of class language use and to evaluate their out of class learning.

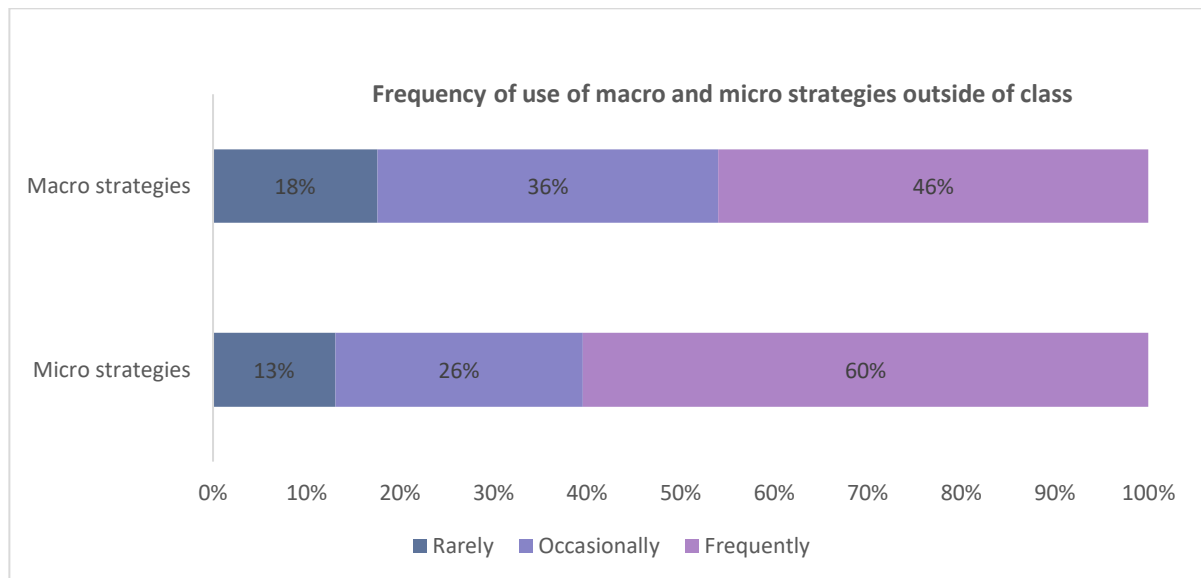


Figure 5.5 Frequency of use of macro and micro strategies outside of class (N=37)

Strategies are often implemented intuitively by learners to aid the process of language learning; however, it is precisely because learners often adopt strategies intuitively that they tend to use them in an inconsistent and unconscious manner (Oxford 1990). Learners may not choose the strategies that will allow them to achieve their language learning goals most directly and effectively. For example, learners whose learning goal is to be able to speak German well might intuitively focus on ways to speak German in class fluently with other classmates, but often do not seek out opportunities to speak outside of class.

Beliefs about language learning

Students in both groups/the entire learner group were asked to rate their agreement with a range of statements relating to their beliefs about language learning, prior to the strategy experiment. These statements, summarised in **Figure 5.6**, expressed either autonomous or non autonomous learning beliefs such as, ‘I have my own goals for this language course’, an autonomous belief, or ‘the teacher sets out what I learn’, a non autonomous belief.

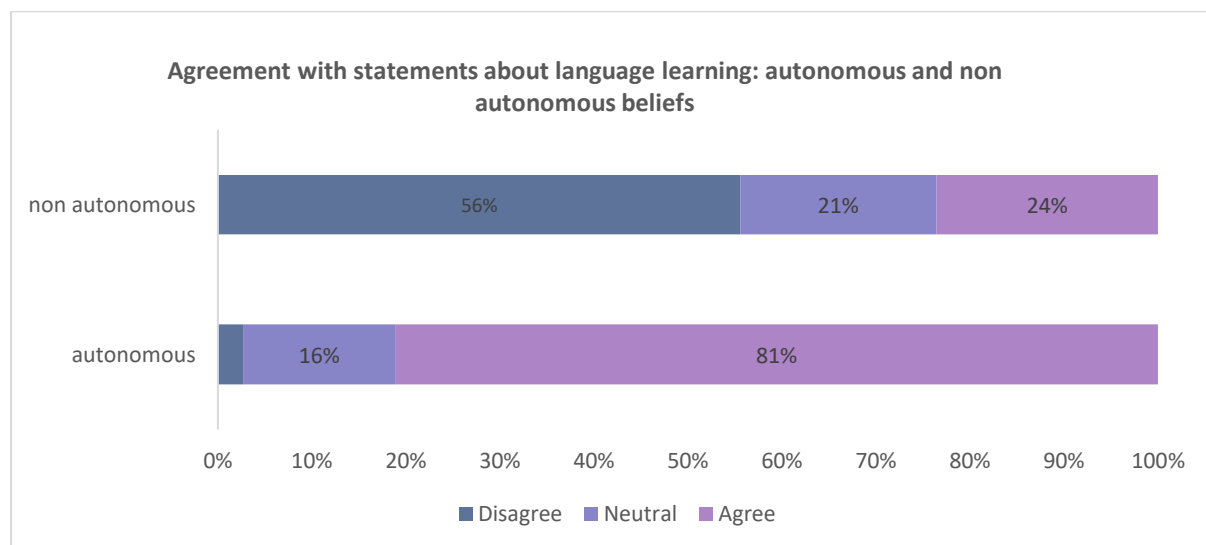


Figure 5.6 Agreement with statements corresponding to autonomous and non autonomous beliefs about language learning (N=37)

Overall, the majority (81%) of learners agreed with statements endorsing autonomous beliefs about language learning. However, they are more divided (24% agreement, 21% neutral) in their agreement with non autonomous statements about learning. This suggests that learners shared similar opinions and beliefs about what their role as students entailed, but were

somewhat divided on what specifically was the role of the teacher in terms of determining the language content to which they had access.

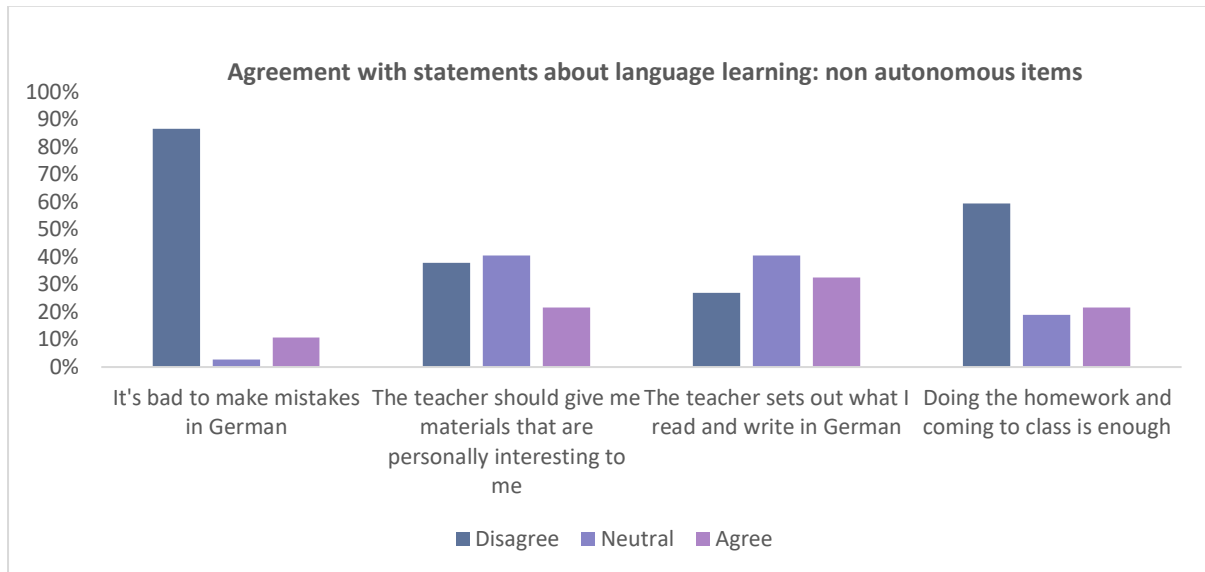


Figure 5.7 Agreement with statements about language learning: non autonomous items (N=37)

Figure 5.7 shows that learners are particularly divided in their responses to items relating to the role of the teacher, as well as to the amount of out of class work that should be required of them. In contrast, learners disagree almost unanimously (86%) with the statement ‘it’s bad to make mistakes.’ This statement is non autonomous in that it reflects a hesitance to use language freely in a naturalistic way, in a sense taking control over one’s own language use. Learners’ responses to this statement reflect a willingness to experiment with the language. However, learners’ varying beliefs about the degree of autonomy expected and required of them as part of their language learning could potentially be shaped through strategy teaching to promote autonomous learner beliefs.

These findings relating to beliefs about language learning therefore suggest that there is potential in strategy teaching to aid learners in their choices of types of language learning strategies, helping them to select strategies that align most directly with their language learning goals. Additionally, strategy teaching has the potential to encourage learners to take control of their own learning to a greater degree in terms of encouraging them to seek out their own language learning resources which correspond with their personal interests.

5.3 Learners' out of class behaviours and beliefs post strategy teaching: a comparison

So far this chapter has discussed trends in terms of motivations, beliefs about learning and out of class learning behaviours across the learner group as a whole, prior to the strategy teaching intervention. This section now looks at changes in the behaviours and beliefs following the strategy teaching experiment, making comparisons between the experimental and control learner groups.

This section uses a combination of inferential and descriptive statistics to analyse questionnaire data. In order to make comparisons between the questionnaire responses of the control and experimental groups, initially a series of unpaired *t*-tests were carried out to confirm that the two groups were not statistically different from one another. After this had been confirmed (see **Table 5.1**), questionnaire items covering similar themes were grouped together into factors (see [Appendix A](#)). The numbers 1 to 5 were used to code learners' responses to Likert scale questions, with 1 as the most negative response (e.g. strongly disagree), and 5 as the most positive (e.g. strongly agree). These values were added together for each factor within the pre experiment and post experiment questionnaires. The mean response value and standard deviation were then calculated for each factor for both groups for each questionnaire (pre and post) to allow for a comparison of responses between the groups before and after strategy intervention in the experimental group. These values can be seen in **Table 5.1**. Higher mean values imply both a more positive response to that variable, as well as in some cases a higher number of questions addressing the themes of that variable within the questionnaire. What is of greatest interest is not the size of the mean response value itself, but instead the change in learners' responses pre and post experiment. The *t* and *p* values in the table represent the degree and statistical significance of change in learners' responses pre and post experiment, respectively. These values were gathered through a series of paired *t*-tests, carried out on the pre and post experiment values for each factor given by each individual participant. *p*-values < .1 are regarded as relevant within this data analysis and are indicated with an asterisk.

The sections that follow describe the analysis of the data represented in **Table 5.1**, elaborating on the ways in which the data changes within experimental and control groups across the teaching semester, represented by the pre and post teaching experiment questionnaire responses.

Table 5.1 Analysis of pre and post strategy teaching intervention questionnaire responses for experimental and control groups

Variable	Experimental			Control		
	Pre	Post	t (p)	Pre	Post	t (p)
	M (SD)	M (SD)		M (SD)	M (SD)	
Enjoyment of form focused activities	15.67 (2.29)	13.93 (2.63)	3.45 (.004)*	15.79 (2.39)	15.71 (2.4)	0.17 (.865)
Enjoyment of meaning focused activities	20.67 (3.06)	19.6 (3.94)	1.89 (.08)*	20.07 (2.81)	19.14 (3.55)	1.16 (.27)
Enjoyment of speaking assessment activities	6.27 (2.34)	6.33 (2.16)	0.15 (.88)	6.86 (2.18)	5.79 (1.81)	4.02 (.002)*
Engagement in meaning focused activities out of class	22.2 (4.04)	23.53 (4.34)	1.15 (.27)	18.64 (4.8)	18.43 (4.59)	0.23 (.82)
Engagement in form focused activities out of class	10.0 (2.73)	10.2 (2.11)	0.74 (.74)	11.86 (3.9)	11.93 (3.71)	0.11 (.92)
Strategy use overall	55.13 (4.24)	57.53 (4.6)	1.72 (.11)	52.71 (5.04)	50.86 (5.75)	1.70 (.11)
Use of speaking strategies	32.93 (3.47)	35.2 (2.14)	2.59 (.021)*	31.0 (3.46)	30.43 (3.92)	0.48 (.64)
Use of reading strategies	11.2 (1.70)	11.07 (1.44)	0.23 (.82)	11.21 (1.31)	10.71 (1.77)	1.10 (.29)
Use of macro strategies	11.0 (1.96)	11.27 (2.31)	0.51 (.62)	10.5 (1.91)	10.71 (1.77)	0.34 (.74)
Autonomous learning beliefs	12.07 (1.67)	12.4 (1.59)	0.61 (.53)	12.5 (1.29)	12.43 (1.6)	0.22 (.83)
Non-autonomous learning beliefs	17.73 (3.47)	15.4 (3.83)	2.08 (.05)*	18.43 (2.85)	19.0 (4.15)	0.53 (.61)
Practical motivation for language choice	15.27 (2.34)	15.27 (2.09)	0.0 (1)	15.14 (3.35)	15.0 (2.69)	0.12 (.82)
Social motivation for language choice	19.4 (4.7)	19.24 (4.56)	0.18 (.88)	19.79 (4.59)	19.43 (4.45)	0.32 (.76)
Overall confidence using German	12.47 (3)	13.2 (2.37)	1.20 (.25)	14.0 (3.59)	13.93 (4.01)	0.10 (.92)
Overall comfort speaking German	18.47 (3.62)	17.33 (5.01)	1.29 (.22)	18.64 (2.71)	17.71 (4.51)	1.29 (.22)

5.3.1 Changes in learner autonomy and strategies throughout the semester

The strategy teaching intervention focused on developing individual strategies for specific skill areas such as speaking and reading, as well as developing autonomous learner beliefs that have the potential to help learners to reflect on and take charge of their own learning.

Speaking strategies were a key focus within the questionnaires because these strategies are intuitively connected with social language use. Learners in the experimental group reported a significant increase in the frequency of their use of speaking strategies (6.5%, $p = .021$), whereas no significant change was observed in the control group (-0.2%, $p = .640$). This result, shown in **Figure 5.8**, suggests that the teaching of strategies for speaking encouraged learners to use these strategies outside of the classroom more frequently than they had been doing prior to the strategy intervention, and, when accounting for the nonsignificant decrease in frequency shown in the control group, 6.7% more frequently than they would have if they did not participate in the strategy teaching intervention.

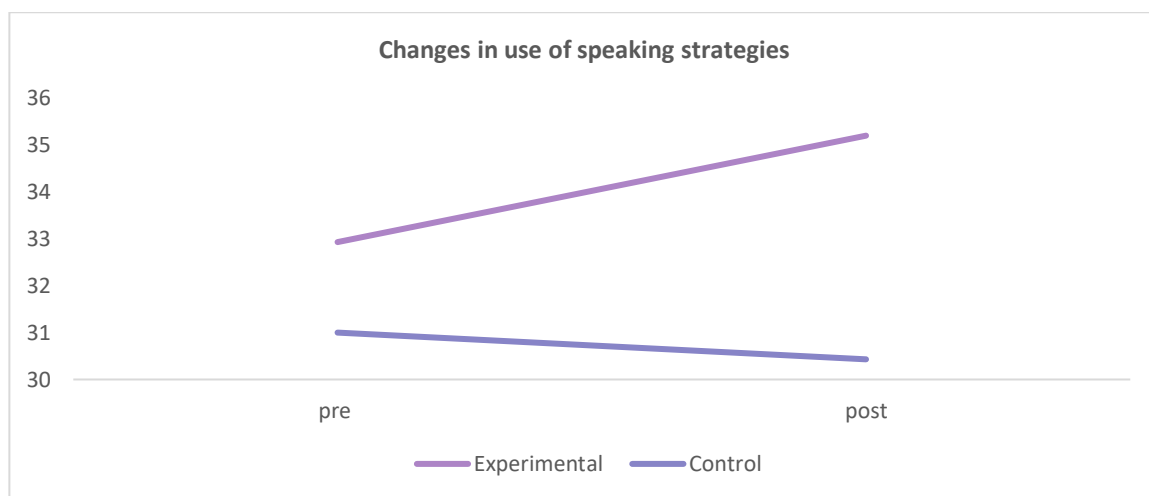


Figure 5.8 Changes in learners' use of speaking strategies throughout the semester: a comparison of experimental ($N=15$) and control groups ($N=14$)

In further support of the positive effect of strategy teaching on learners' frequency of use of strategies more generally, **Figure 5.9** shows that learners in the experimental group report a notable increase in their strategy use overall (4.35%, $p = .108$). Learners in the control group, however, show a trend towards a reduction in the frequency of their use of strategies overall

by the end of the semester (3.51%, $p = .113$), and although neither of these changes is statistically significant due to a relatively small sample size, this indicates a relative increase in frequency of 7.9% in the experimental group.

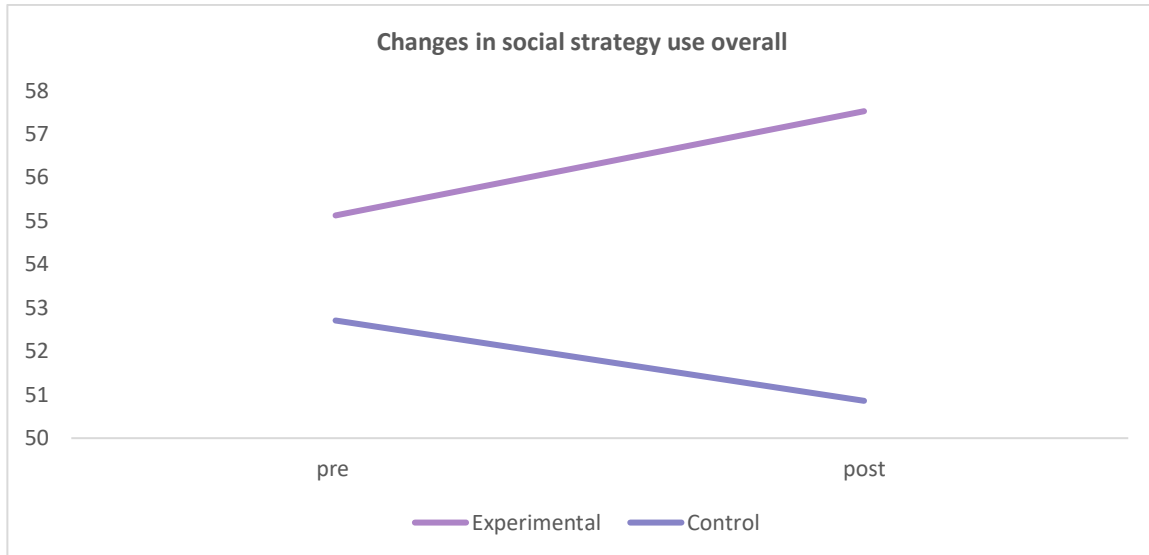


Figure 5.9 Changes in learners' use of social language learning strategies throughout the semester: a comparison of experimental ($N=15$) and control groups ($N=14$)

In line with this trend, learners' non-autonomous beliefs about learning, such as that the teacher should set out all content for learning, significantly decreased (13.14%, $p = 0.05$) within the experimental group from the start of the semester to the end, whereas a much smaller change was observed in the control group (3.09%, $p = .605$). These results are depicted in **Figure 5.10**. This trend suggests that the strategy teaching, which focused on building learner autonomy and encouraging learners to choose out of class learning materials that are personally relevant, had an impact on learners' beliefs about language learning, such that those students who received the intervention were less likely to externalise the responsibility for their learning than those learners in the control group.

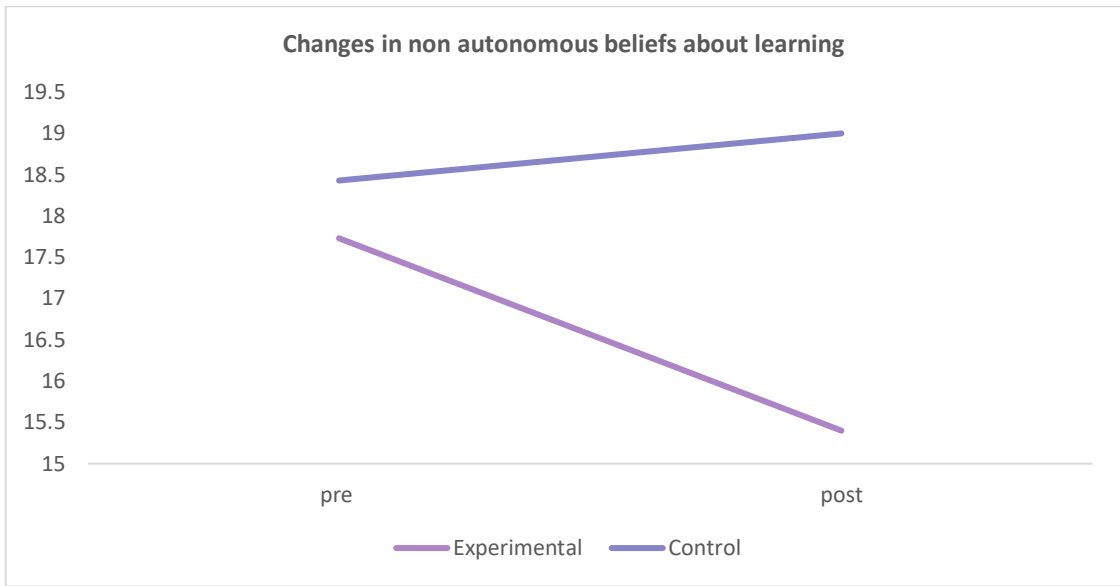


Figure 5.10 Changes in learners' non autonomous beliefs about language learning throughout the semester: a comparison of experimental (N=15) and control groups (N=14)

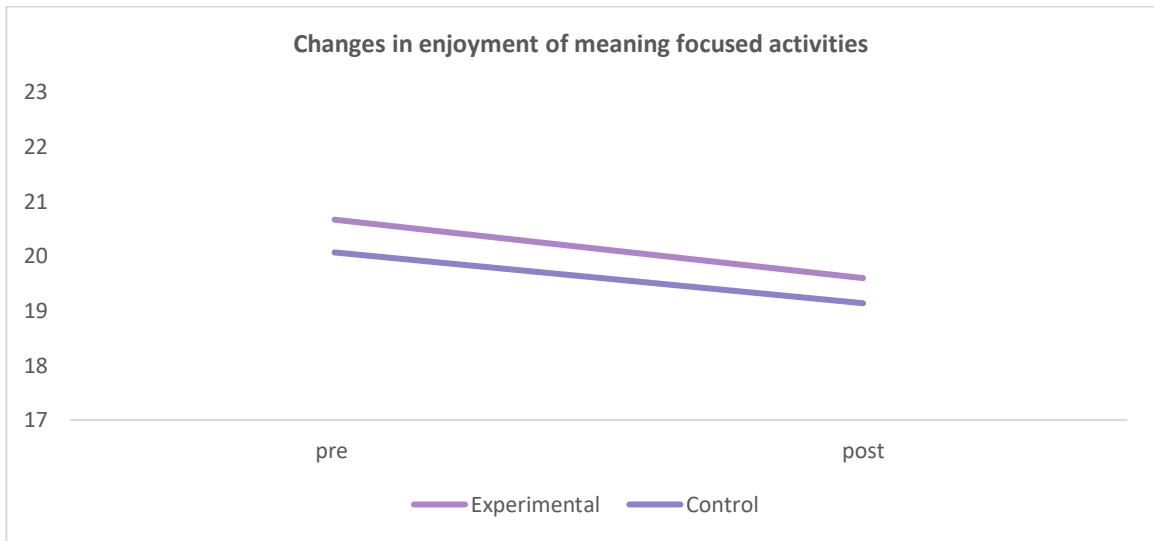


Figure 5.11 Changes in enjoyment of meaning focused activities from the beginning to the end of the semester: a comparison of experimental (N=15) and control groups (N=14)

5.3.2 Changes in learners' enjoyment of meaning and form focused classroom activities

Previous research has established that learners' overall enjoyment of tertiary education typically decreases throughout the course of a semester (e.g. Kahu, Nelson & Picton 2017). This is understandable considering potential clashes between learners' course expectations and the reality of the course, as well as the stress that is associated with assessments towards the end of a course. Participants within both groups in this study follow the patterns established in previous research, reporting less enjoyment of meaning focused activities towards the end of the semester, compared with the beginning, regardless of the strategy teaching intervention. This change can be seen in **Figure 5.11**.

Interestingly, however, as is demonstrated in **Figure 5.12**, enjoyment of speaking assessment activities across the semester decreased significantly within the control group (15.23%, $p = .002$), but remained stable amongst the experimental group ($p = .882$), therefore suggesting that the intervention protected against reduction of enjoyment in such activities. Given that students' overall enjoyment of courses typically decreases throughout the semester, a notably lesser decrease implies a potentially positive effect of the strategy teaching. The speaking assessment activities consisted of an oral presentation and a role play, which students prepared and performed in front of the class. As such, these assessment activities had a stronger focus on meaning than on form, though learners' grammatical accuracy was also assessed. The strategy teaching sessions, with their focus both on strategies for speaking and on management of anxiety, which is often associated with oral presentations, potentially helped learners in the experimental group to experience a smaller reduction in enjoyment of such activities than those in the control group.

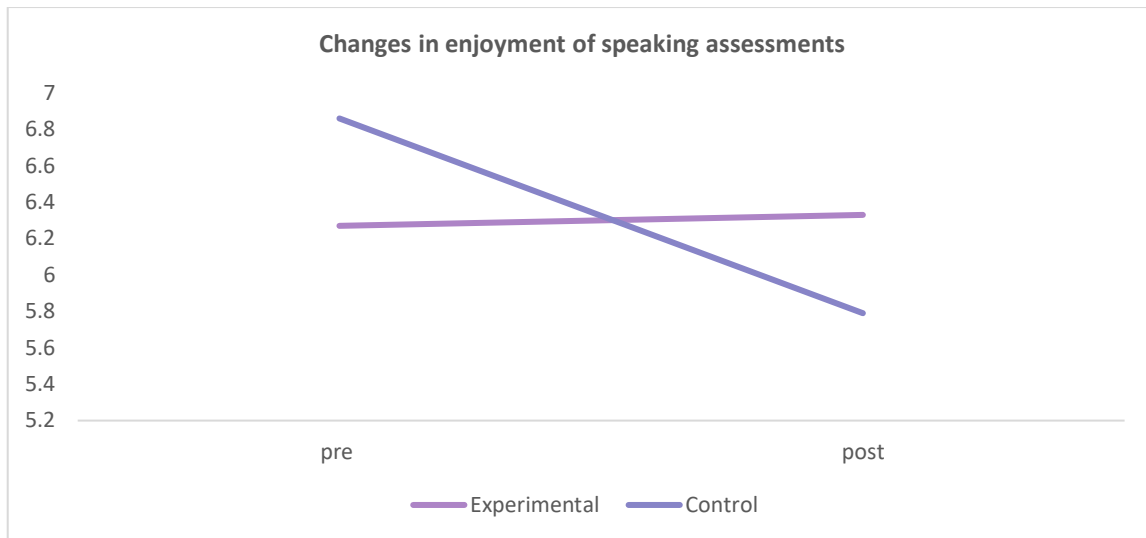


Figure 5.12 Changes in enjoyment of speaking assessments from the beginning to the end of the semester: a comparison of experimental (N=15) and control groups (N=14)

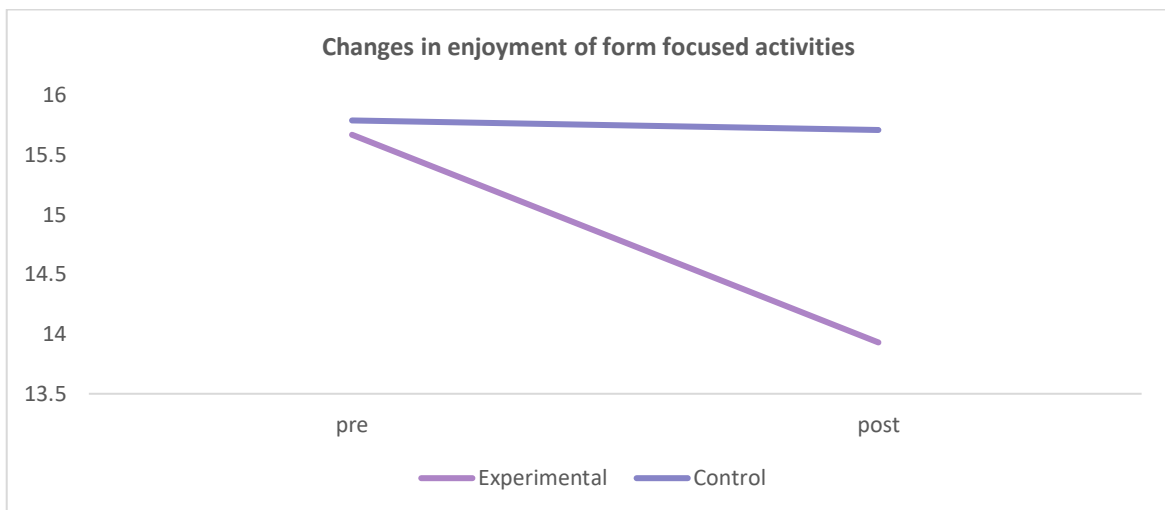


Figure 5.13 Changes in enjoyment of form focused activities from the beginning to the end of the semester: a comparison of experimental (N=15) and control groups (N=14)

An additional somewhat unexpected finding, which can be seen in **Figure 5.13**, was that learners in the experimental group reported a significant decrease (11.1 %, $p = .004$) in their enjoyment of form focused activities, whereas the control group's enjoyment of such activities did not change ($p = .865$). This could potentially be attributed to the emphasis on meaning focused learning within the strategy teaching received by the experimental group, whereby the

increased value put on meaning focused learning had the unintended result that students placed less value on form focused activities. This result requires further attention through future studies to attempt to uncover its cause.

Overall, this data supports a claim that strategy teaching elicits a positive attitude towards meaning focused learning activities across the course of one semester. It suggests that strategy teaching, particularly teaching those for speaking, has potential to help students enjoy speaking activities, including speaking assessments, to a greater degree.

5.4 Learners' reflections on out of class learning and strategy development

The post strategy teaching questionnaire included a section of questions which allowed learners from both groups to reflect on their learning experiences and strategy development throughout the semester. This subsection presents the results from this section of the questionnaire and provides a comparison between the responses of the experimental and control groups, focusing on the difference in answers between the groups, rather than on the change pre and post teaching experiment.

Participants' responses to questionnaire items on similar themes were grouped into factors (see [Appendix A](#)). Consistent with the other parts of the questionnaire, the numbers 1 to 5 were used to code learners' responses to Likert scale questions, with 1 being the most negative response and 5 the most positive. These values were added together for each factor and the mean response value and standard deviation were then calculated for each factor for the experimental and control groups respectively, allowing for a comparison of responses between the groups. The results from this analysis can be seen in **Table 5.2**. In focus is the difference in responses, in terms of broad agreement or estimated time spent on an activity, between the control group and experimental group on the defined factors. The *t* and *p* values in the table represent the degree of difference between learners' responses in the control and experimental groups and the statistical significance of that difference. These values were attained through a series of unpaired *t*-tests, carried out on the values for each factor given by each individual participant. As in the previous subsection, *p*-values < .1 are regarded as relevant within this data analysis and are indicated with an asterisk.

In addition to the statistical analysis for the follow up items in the questionnaire, participants' responses were merged into positive and negative responses, changing the 5 point scale to a 3 point scale. For agree-disagree questions, the values for 1 and 2 (representing strongly disagree and somewhat disagree, respectively) were merged to represent 'broad disagreement'. The value 3 represented a 'neutral' response and the values 4 and 5 (representing strongly agree and somewhat agree, respectively) represented 'broad agreement'. For time related questions, the value 1 represented 'no time' spent weekly on a particular activity. Values 2 and 3 represented 'around thirty minutes' and the values 4 and 5 represented 'one hour or more' per week of engagement in a certain activity or activity type. The average response value for each

factor for the experimental and control groups respectively was calculated and is represented in **Table 5.3** and **Table 5.4**.

Table 5.2 Analysis of learners' reflections on their learning and strategy use throughout the course: a comparison of experimental (N=15) and control groups (N=14)

Factors	Experimental	Control	t (p)
	M (SD)	M (SD)	
Time on meaning focused activities outside of class	20.6 (3.94)	17.36 (4.83)	1.987 (.057)*
Time on form focused activities outside of class	9.33 (2.85)	10.36 (3.48)	-0.904 (.377)
Time spent overall on out of class activities	29.73 (4.35)	27.71 (6.4)	0.999 (.326)
Development of receptive strategies	8.2 (1.08)	7.79 (0.89)	1.12 (.273)
Development of affective strategies	7.87 (1.64)	7.43 (2.24)	0.603 (.552)
Development of productive strategies	14.87 (3.16)	12.21 (3.21)	2.24 (.030)*
Development of macro strategies	7.2 (1.47)	6.5 (1.87)	1.123 (.271)
Development of strategies overall	38.13 (5.42)	33.93 (5.32)	1.87 (.072)*

Table 5.3 Time spent on activities outside of class: average number of students and percentages of experimental (N=15) and control (N=14) groups

	Meaning focused activities				Form focused activities				Overall			
	EXP		CTRL		EXP		CTRL		EXP		CTRL	
One hour or more	3	20%	2	14%	2	13%	4	28%	3	20%	2	14%
Thirty mins	9	60%	8	57%	9	60%	7	50%	9	60%	8	57%
Less than 30 minutes	3	20%	4	28%	4	27%	3	22%	3	20%	4	29%

Table 5.4 Agreement with statements about strategy development for out of class learning during the semester: average number of responses and percentages of experimental (N=15) and control (N=14) groups

Receptive Strategies				Productive Strategies				Affective Strategies								
	EXP		CTRL		EXP		CTRL		EXP		CTRL					
Agree	13	80%	11	78%	10	67%	6	42%	12	80%	10	72%				
Neutral	2	13%	2	14%	3	20%	3	21%	1	7%	2	14%				
Disagree	1	6%	1	7%	2	13%	5	37%	2	13%	2	14%				
Macro Strategies							Overall Strategies									
	EXP			CTRL			EXP			CTRL						
Agree	9		60%		7		50%		11		73%		8		57%	
Neutral	4		27%		1		7%		2		13.5%		3		21.5%	
Disagree	2		13%		6		42%		2		13.5%		3		21.5%	

This combination of methodological approaches has been used to provide a more general statistical overview, as well as more detailed insights into the specific dynamics of this learner group as a whole. The results of this analysis are discussed in the subsections that follow.

5.4.1 Time spent on meaning focused activities outside of the classroom

The post experiment questionnaire sought additional information about the amount of time that learners spend engaging with different types of language learning activities outside of the classroom. The purpose of this section of the questionnaire was not to compare amounts of time spent on activity types at the beginning and end of the semester. Instead, this section of the questionnaire investigated in greater depth the amounts of time learners spent on certain activity types with greater specificity and thereby allowed for a comparison of behaviours of the two learner groups at the end of the semester.

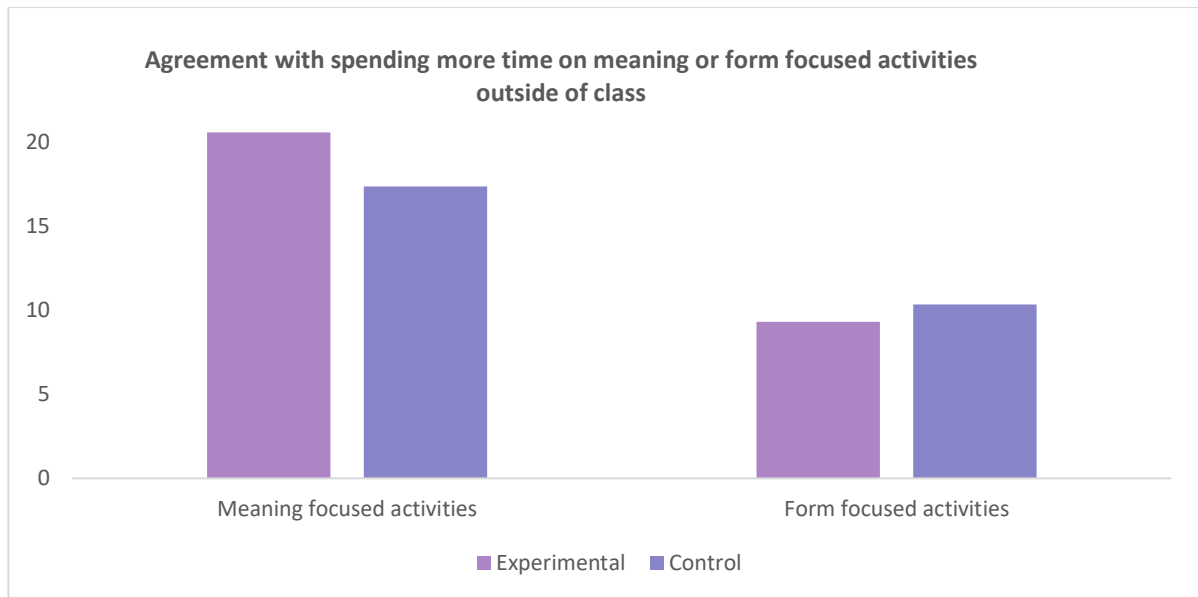


Figure 5.14 Mean response values representing frequency of engagement in meaning focused out of class activities: a comparison between experimental ($N=15$) and control ($N=14$) groups post strategy intervention

Figure 5.14 depicts that learners in the experimental group report spending significantly more time on meaning focused learning activities such as watching television or films in German, speaking German with other students, or listening to music in German, than learners in the control group ($p = .057$). This is represented also in **Table 5.3**, which shows that a 20% of learners in the experimental group spend an hour or more weekly on meaning focused language activities, compared with only 14% of the control group. Following a similar pattern, learners in the experimental group also report spending less time on form focused activities such as memorising vocabulary and reviewing grammar sheets compared with the control group, though this difference was not as stark ($p = .337$). This corresponds also with the decrease in enjoyment of form focused activities at the end of the semester, observed earlier in **Figure 5.13**.

This trend can be seen also in **Figure 5.15**, which shows that a greater proportion (80%) of the experimental group report spending half an hour or more weekly on meaning focused activities. In contrast a lesser majority (68%) of the control group report spending around half an hour weekly on this form of activities.

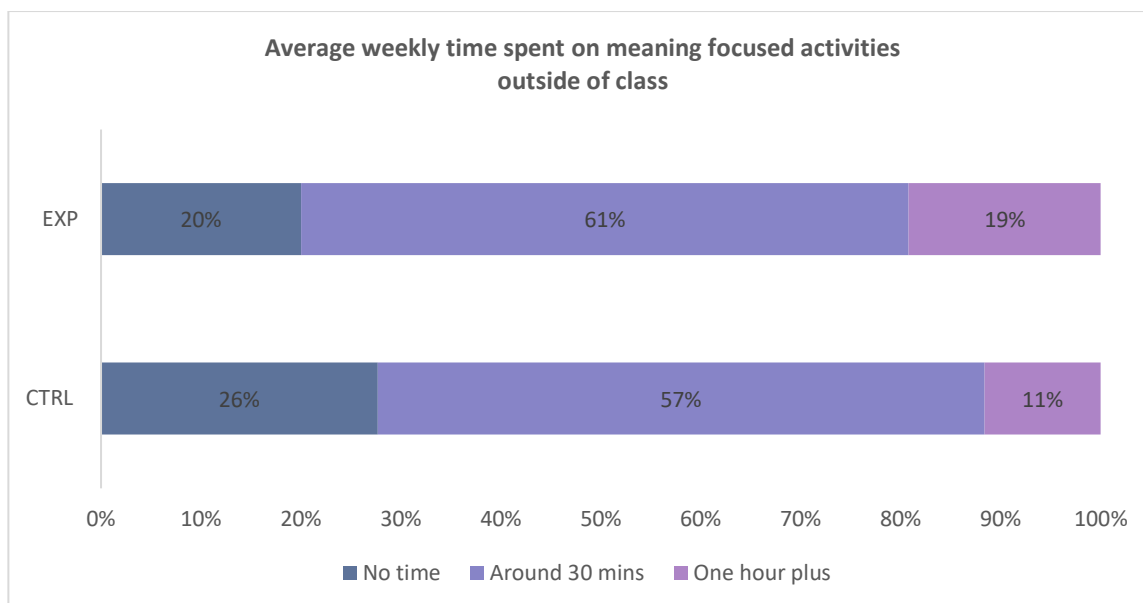


Figure 5.15 Average time spent weekly on meaning focused activities outside of class: a comparison of experimental (N=15) and control (N=14) groups

Additionally, within the control group only slightly more than one tenth (11%) report spending one hour or more on meaning focused activities. In the experimental group almost one fifth (19%) engage for more than one hour weekly in this activity type. This suggests that at the end of the semester the experimental group engaged in significantly more meaning focused out of class learning activities than the control group. These outcomes support the hypothesis that the teaching of social strategies which focus on meaning focused out of class learning can prompt learners to engage in more of this type of out of class activity.

5.4.2 Development of social strategies throughout the semester

The post strategy teaching questionnaire investigated learners' agreement with statements about their development of different types of social strategies (productive, receptive, affective and macro) throughout the semester. This allowed for insight into the degree to which learners in the control group reported developing their own strategies, and which kind of strategies they tended to develop without any specific strategy instruction. It also provided an indication as to the possibility of learners developing strategies for language learning in a more directed way.

Figure 5.16 shows learners' average agreement with having developed a range of types of

social strategies throughout the semester. On average across the four strategy types, stronger agreement with strategy development is expressed by learners in the experimental group, with a significant difference in agreement with these statements between the two groups (11.66%, $p = .072$).



Figure 5.16 Learners' agreement with statements about their social strategy development according to types of strategy throughout the semester: a comparison of experimental ($N=15$) and control ($N=14$) groups

This pattern in responses can also be seen in **Figure 5.17**, which shows that on average almost three quarters (73%) of learners in the experimental group express agreement with having developed social strategies throughout the semester. Only slightly over half (57%) of the control group express agreement with the development of social strategies overall throughout the semester. This outcome not only suggests that learners who participated in the strategy teaching sessions use strategies to a greater extent than those in the control group, but indicates that they are also more consciously aware of their strategy use and therefore able to report it in the questionnaire.

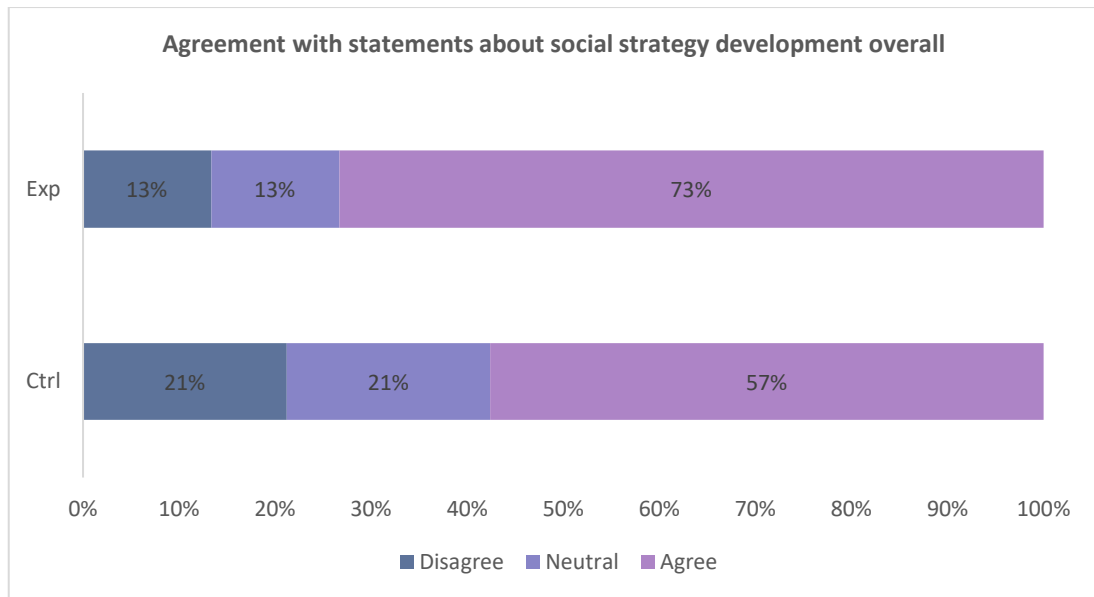


Figure 5.17 Learners' agreement with statements about their social strategy development overall throughout the semester: a comparison of experimental ($N=15$) and control ($N=14$) groups

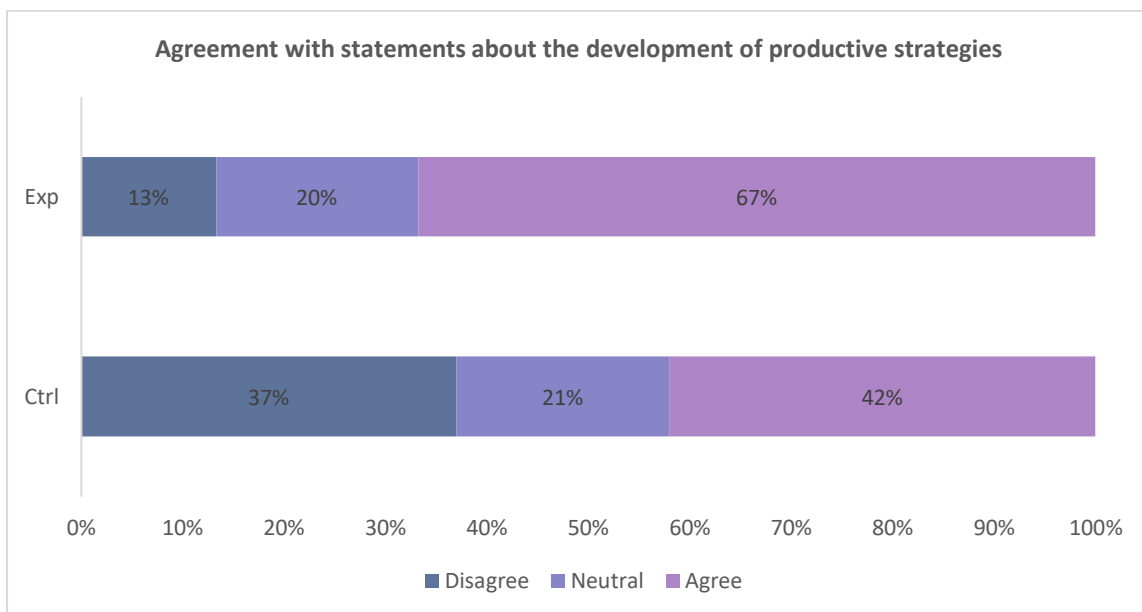


Figure 5.18 Learners' agreement with statements about the development of productive strategies throughout the semester: a comparison of experimental ($N=15$) and control ($N=14$) groups

Learners in the experimental group express overall greater agreement with having developed social strategies throughout the semester. They show particularly strong agreement with having developed productive strategies. **Table 5.2**, along with the data depicted in **Figure 5.16**, show a significant difference in learners' agreement with statements about their development of productive strategies, compared with learners in the control group ($p = .03$). Confirming this point, **Figure 5.18** shows that an average of more than two thirds (67%) of the learners in the experimental group showed broad agreement with having developed productive strategies throughout the semester. Less than half (42%) of learners in the control group responded in broad agreement to statements about their development of productive strategies. Thus, the strategy teaching intervention nearly doubles the likelihood of learners feeling as though they have developed productive strategies over the course of the semester. Additionally, more than a third (37%) of learners in the control group broadly disagreed with having developed strategies throughout the semester, compared with only 13% of the experimental group. These responses align with a focus on spoken interaction during numerous strategy teaching sessions. They suggest that explicitly discussing strategies for speaking German had a positive effect on learners' use of strategies for speaking, as well as writing, outside of the classroom.

In addition to looking at statistics and mean responses for defined factors within the questionnaire, it is of interest to review a number of individual questionnaire items regarding strategy development that received decidedly different responses between the two groups. A focus of the strategy teaching sessions was to encourage learners to consider each other as possible language learning resources and to create opportunities to speak German with one another outside of class. Learners were given small non assessed homework tasks requiring them to create situations in which they could practise their German, with the suggestion of speaking with each other. One questionnaire item focused on how much time learners spent speaking German with other students outside of the classroom each week at the end of the semester. **Figure 5.19** shows that after the strategy teaching sessions, almost all (93%) learners in the experimental group report speaking German with other students for at least 30 minutes per week. In contrast, comparatively fewer (71%) learners in the control group report speaking with other learners outside of class for half an hour or more weekly, with almost one third (29%) of learners in the control group reporting not speaking with other students at all.

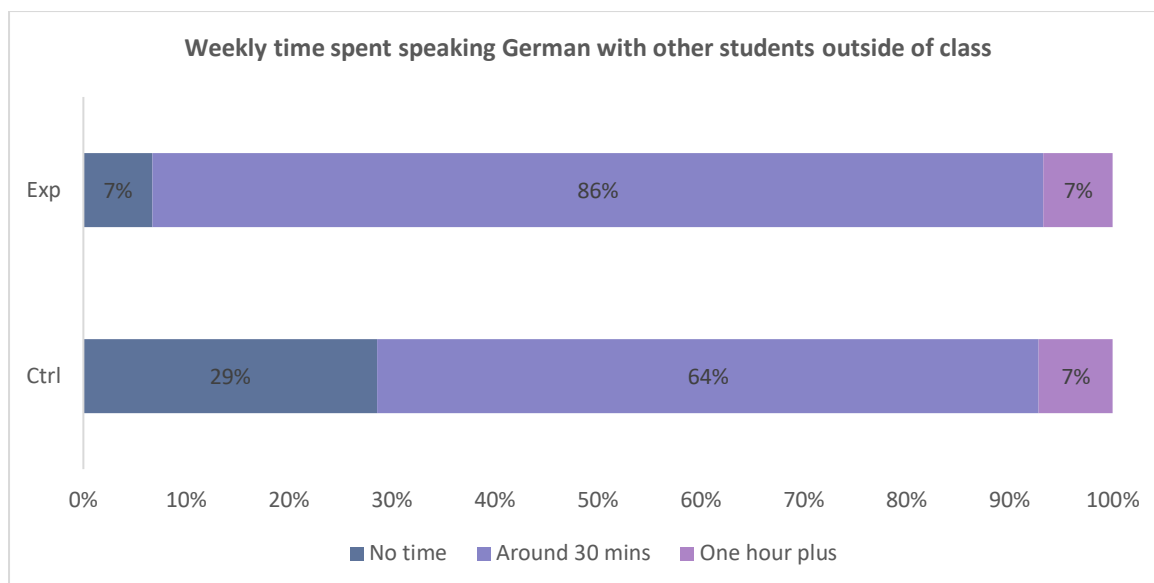


Figure 5.19 *Weekly time spent speaking German with other students outside of the classroom: a comparison of experimental (N=15) and control (N=14) groups*

The difference in responses suggests that strategy teaching has been effective in encouraging learners to actively create German speaking communities of practice amongst themselves. Learners in the experimental group appear to have been prompted by the strategy teaching sessions and the associated homework tasks to speak German with other students outside of class. One can infer that strategy teaching was positively associated with an increase in the awareness of the potential to use other students as a language learning resource.

Figure 5.20 shows a clear contrast in learners' responses to the questionnaire item 'I have developed strategies that have helped me to learn outside of class'. More than a quarter (27%) of learners in the control group broadly disagree with this statement, indicating that, without any explicit strategy teaching, they had not developed strategies for out of class learning as a result of the course. Within the experimental group, there was almost unanimous (93%) agreement with this statement, with no disagreement at all.

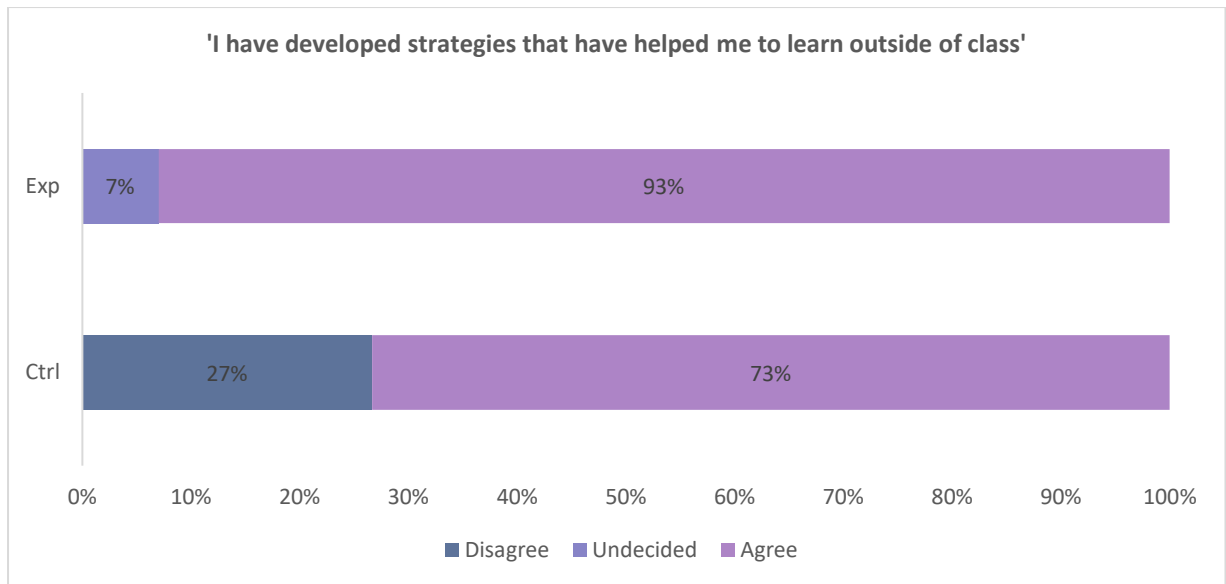


Figure 5.20 Learners' responses to the item: 'I have developed strategies that have helped me to learn outside of class', a comparison of experimental (N=15) and control (N=14) groups

These results speak strongly for strategy teaching in that they indicate that it has the potential to make learners more aware of strategies they may already use intuitively and more directed in their use of them. Many learners in the control group (73%) reported developing strategies for learning outside of the classroom throughout the semester, despite not receiving explicit strategy instruction. It is therefore apparent that learners do frequently develop and use language learning strategies without instruction. However, many learners are not actively developing their own out of class learning strategies without strategy instruction. The zero disagreement amongst the experimental group further suggests that strategy instruction can be particularly relevant for learners who are not naturally reflective or aware of their own learning practices.

Figure 5.21 shows learners' responses to the questionnaire item 'I have created opportunities to practise speaking German'. Less than half (47%) of learners in the control group agree with this statement. In contrast over two thirds (72%) of learners in the experimental group agree that they have created opportunities to practise speaking the L2 outside of class. This further supports the data in **Figure 5.20** and the notion that the strategy intervention did prompt learners to act autonomously and create opportunities to use the language in a meaning focused way outside of the classroom.

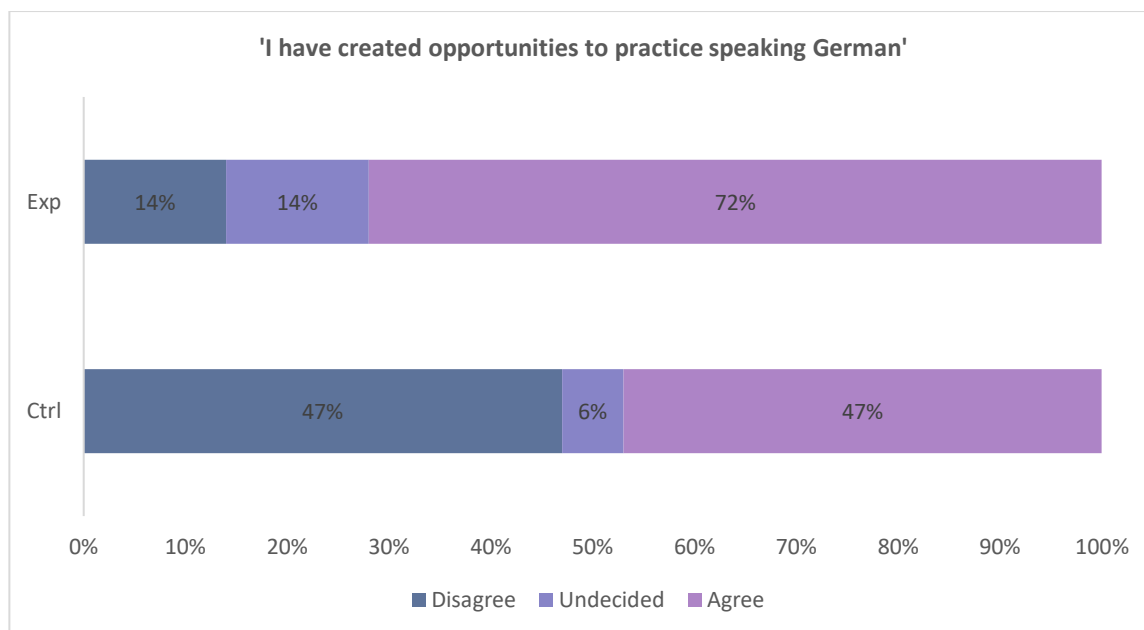


Figure 5.21 Learners' responses to the item: 'I have created opportunities to practice speaking German', a comparison of experimental (N=15) and control (N=14) groups

Along with the Likert scale questions, the post strategy teaching questionnaire also included a number of open ended questions, one of which was: 'What has been the most useful thing you have learnt this semester?' This question did not relate specifically to any single strategy but sought more generally to have students reflect on their learning throughout the semester and on what practical language and language learning skills they would be able to take away from the course. It also provided some insight into what students considered to be most important in language learning. An interesting contrast in the style and focus of answers emerged between the experimental and control groups. A selection of responses to this question, some slightly abbreviated, by learners from both groups, representative of the trends in responses between the groups is given in **Table 5.5**. The full table of responses can be viewed in [Appendix B](#).

Table 5.5 Selected responses to the open ended question: ‘What has been the most useful thing you have learnt this semester?’ from learners in the experimental (N=15) and control groups (N=14)

Experimental Group	Control Group
Being prompted to read in German was really helpful. Being held accountable to have conversations in German was also really good.	Grammar! Because it has helped me speak more fluently. [...]
I am now able to speak about various topics I wouldn't have been as comfortable speaking about in German before.	Learning to confidently write in Präteritum and new ways of learning and consolidating vocabulary.
That it's okay to switch back into English when unsure of what words to use.	I have learnt that even if you make mistakes, people can understand you. [...]
[...] Being able to make friends and learn together is essential and the best part of any course as they are the people who can help you and practise with.	Sentence structure and tenses. If I understand the formula or system, inserting the variables is just a matter of choice (and learning lots of vocab).

Of the 15 responses from the experimental group, seven related to either strategies or meaning focused learning. Three related to vocabulary learning and five related to learning new grammar points. For the 14 learners in the control group, only one student mentioned something related to meaning focused learning, namely learning that when you make mistakes, you can still be understood. Aside from this comment, all other responses related either to grammar and form focused learning (8 responses) or to vocabulary learning (5 responses). This noticeable difference in the focus of the responses of the control and experimental groups suggests that the strategy teaching was useful to learners, in some cases with strategies explicitly being listed as the most useful thing having been learnt in the semester. Furthermore, the difference in focus of comments, namely the stronger emphasis on meaning focused language use, suggests that the strategy teaching had the intended impact of helping students to adapt the way they think about language learning, by leading them to include social and meaning focused language use as a valuable method for language learning, rather than considering only traditional learning methodologies. Finally, learners in the experimental group overall wrote longer, more detailed responses to this question, suggesting that they were more willing and able to reflect on their own language learning than those in the control group. Many learners in the control group responded with short one or two word answers to this question, whereas learners in the experimental group tended to write more extensive answers.

This indicates greater reflection on learning throughout the semester, which was strongly encouraged and highlighted as part of the strategy teaching intervention.

Learners' use of language learning strategies with and without strategy teaching: a summary

Overall, the responses gathered from the questionnaire suggest that the strategy teaching had an impact on the way learners think about language learning, on which activities they believe are important for language learning and on how they go about their out of class learning. Key changes following strategy teaching in the experimental group were observed in speaking strategy use and in the enjoyment of speaking activities. A number of other important differences following strategy teaching were observed among the students in the experimental group. They spent more time on meaning focused out of class activities, they engaged in the use of more productive strategies, they developed more strategies for out of class learning overall, and they reported creating more opportunities to speak than learners in the control group. These outcomes suggest that the strategy teaching did in fact have a desirable effect on how learners approach their out of class learning, in terms of both encouraging autonomous beliefs about learner roles within the process of learning, and motivating learners to engage more frequently in meaning focused out of class language use.

Chapter 6 will look at the data gathered from the semi structured interviews with students, held in close proximity to the completion of the post strategy teaching questionnaire with students from both learner groups. Interview data provides more detailed insights into individual learners' out of class learning behaviours and the ways in which their learning choices are connected to issues of identity construction.

Chapter 6: Interview analysis: connections between learners' strategy use and identity construction in the L2

6.1 Overview of focus participants

A total of 25 interviews were carried out with learners from both the experimental and control groups. Presented in this section is a selection of the stories and responses from 12 of those 25 interviews. The interviews selected were those that provided clear representations of common themes that revealed themselves during the interview process.

A brief description of each of the focus participants is provided in **Table 6.1**. All names used are pseudonyms. An asterisk (*) after a student's name indicates they were part of the experimental group.

Table 6.1 *Background information on focus interviewees*

Focus interviewees
Adam is a high achieving student in all skill areas of German, who has learnt the language throughout high school and is continuing with his first semester at university. He plans to become a German teacher. (Control group)
Camille feels proud of being able to speak German. She discusses a lack of opportunities to speak German outside of class and she has developed a number of her own strategies to resolve this issue. (Control group)
David has grown up in a multilingual environment. His degree program requires him to take three semesters of language courses. He is in his third semester of German, having started to study the language at university as a beginner and does not plan to continue beyond the required three semesters. (Control group)
Erin's* immediate family speak German and some family members live in Germany. She grew up in Australia attending a German-English bilingual primary school. She is learning German with the intention of living and working in Germany. (Experimental group)
Jamie has German family connections. Her partner is German and so she is highly invested in being able to speak German with her partner as well as with members of her family. (Control group)
Sally* studied German through part of high school. She is interested in visiting Germany and in the possibility of working in Europe in the future. (Experimental group)

Focus interviewees (continued)
Steve's* university studies have a language and education focus. He wants to live and teach in Germany. (Experimental group)
Louise has learnt German in school and is continuing with her language learning at university. She has a German background and generally enjoys learning languages. (Control group)
Olivia has ongoing connections with Germany in her personal life. She intends to further her studies in Germany. Her approaches to learning German tend to be very oriented to traditional learning, focusing on using apps and practising grammar. (Control group)
Tessa* is completing a degree in the sciences. She has plans to visit Germany in the future. (Experimental group)
Kris* has gone to great efforts to continue studying German throughout high school including learning remotely and organising her own exchange. She has German speaking grandparents and places a high value on developing her language skills in connection with her family. (Experimental group)
Saskia* is of German background and the language plays a big part in her life. She speaks German regularly with her mother and other family members but struggles in class with written work and grammar. (Experimental group)

Interviews were conducted after the completion of the strategy teaching sessions, thus this information is relevant in terms of how learners think about applying strategies outside of class, with and without explicit strategy teaching. However, the main focus of the interview data is not to compare responses of the experimental and control groups, but rather to see how learners' strategy use is connected to their investment and identities associated with language learning. Sections 6.2 through to 6.3 focus on learner identities and investment in relation to their out of class engagement with German. Section 6.4 focuses on the social strategies that learners employ as a result of these investments and provides a summary of the results gathered from the interviews in the Australian tertiary context.

6.2 Learner identities and investment in language learning

A key focus of the semi structured interviews that were carried out towards the end of the semester was to investigate the connections between learners' identities and investment, and the strategies that they employ as part of their out of class learning. This subsection looks at social aspects of learners lives which have an impact on their motivations to learn German and their choices related to language learning outside of class. As has already been touched on in Chapter 5, learners have differing perspectives on the value of the choice to learn a language at university. In some cases, learners see knowledge of a foreign language as a social asset. In other cases, learners choose to learn German in connection with their multilingual identities. Learners' investment in certain social relationships outside of the classroom also has an impact on the way that they choose to engage with the language outside of class. For some students, relationships act as a key motivating factor, for others investment in relationships acts as a major barrier to language use. This section discusses the way in which investment in particular relationships or aspects of language learning can influence the kinds of out of class learning activity learners are willing to undertake.

Another important aspect of investment connected to learners' out of class choices and strategies is that of the future self and imagined communities. Learners have a variety of goals and plans for their use of German in their future, connected with imagined selves and imagined communities which they will operate in. This also affects the way in which they engage with German outside of the classroom.

This subsection provides insights into the multifaceted construct of learner investment and how it interacts with learner identities to define a range of social choices they make about their language learning.

6.2.1 Investment in language learning as knowledge

Questionnaire data has suggested that many learners are invested in and motivated by the idea of language learning as something largely conceptual, as the attainment of knowledge or linguistic facts. Learners are often invested in language learning as a social, identity constructing gesture. This motivational factor for language learning was echoed in the interviews.

For many students, language learning is a decision with moral implications, an action which helps them to avoid the ignorance that they associate with being an ‘English speaking white person’, or with being on your ‘English high horse’ as is expressed by Louise in Interview Excerpt 1 and by Tessa in Interview Excerpt 2.

Interview Excerpt 1 Louise: ‘not being on your English high horse’

- 1 I: What do you like about learning German?
- 2 R: [...] It’s so valuable to not just be on your English high horse and be like not trying to understand any other languages in the world.

Interview Excerpt 2 Tessa*: ‘I don’t want to be another one of those’

- 1 I: Why is [learning a language] important?
- 2 R: Because I feel like especially white people/ English speaking white people, they just don’t really get it. I know a lot of people who don’t speak English [as a first language], they all speak English because it’s the universal language. I feel like we’re missing out. So I don’t want to be another one of those. I want to/ And it’s fun.

Many learners expressed a view of language learning as an important act of resistance to the potential complacency and lack of cultural awareness that are often associated with English speaking countries and monolingual communities. Furthermore, as indicated in Interview Excerpt 3, learners expressed the belief that people in Australia more particularly need to make a special effort to engage in language learning. Erin implied that not enough Australians had made the effort to learn an additional language. Having this motivation does not preclude learners from having other more use oriented motivations, but in many of the interviews, learners’ investment in this aspect of language learning, directly connected with identity construction, came through as a central driver for their decision to learn a language.

Interview Excerpt 3 Erin*: ‘more Australians should learn languages’

- 1 R: [German] is a really good language to learn. I think more Australians should learn languages full stop but that’s just me.

Learners are also aware that this concept of languages is shared by many other people, particularly potential future employers. In Interview Excerpt 4, Sally describes the validation given by future employers, as well as that which she receives from other people because her

language ability is a ‘fun fact’ about herself (line 2), as two key motivations for continuing to learn German.

Interview Excerpt 4 Sally*: ‘it will look good for employers’

- 1 I: What do you like about it? What’s good about knowing a second language?
- 2 R: [...] I feel like I just like having a second language. It’s kind of like a fun fact. And it will look good for employers, especially with international relations. And I just like knowing that you can understand people other than your own language.

From a similar perspective, in Interview Excerpt 5, Camille, whose parents did not speak English as their L1, reflects on the value that she herself and her family place on the knowledge of an additional language as a form of cultural capital. For both Camille and Sally, language learning has value as something that other people recognise and is therefore a part of their identities in interaction with others. This occurs through the ability to make others aware of one’s language ability, rather than specifically using the language or sharing the language with a particular group of people.

Interview Excerpt 5 Camille: ‘it makes you smarter and more educated’

- 1 R: Hopefully [German] will come in handy somehow. Even if it’s just/ But if it doesn’t, I’m happy to just know it. I’m just happy to know another language. I feel/ It’s really good. My mum thinks it’s amazing to know as many languages as possible. She’s like, ‘It makes you smarter and more educated.’ I’m just really happy to learn it.

Learners’ reflections on language learning expressed in the interviews correspond, as was the case with the questionnaire findings, with the results of Schmidt’s (2014) research, which found that Australian learners of German were strongly motivated to learn by personal development. German language knowledge is considered strongly symbolic and conceptual rather than something whose value is first and foremost practical. Though learners have the potential to access German speaking communities online, in the immediate local Australian community there is very limited access to German speech groups. Rather than being something learners explicitly need within their daily lives, language learning is connected to imagined future selves or to symbolic acts of identity construction.

6.2.2 Investment in language learning as family heritage

Although German speaking communities are somewhat scarce in Australia, there are strong historical and cultural ties with Germany because of Australia's immigration history, notably in South Australia. Many of the participants within this study had German family ties and this was a strong point of motivation for their choice to learn the language. However, in many cases learners were driven more by the attainment of symbolic knowledge of language, rather than by the specific goal of speaking German with family members. Often it was learners' grandparents or great grandparents who were German speaking and learners' parents did not speak the language at all.

Interview Excerpt 6 Kris*: 'no one speaks German but me'

- 1 R: So I'm the only one in the entire family who studied German at school and kept it up. Everyone else just didn't. But my mum, she spoke German up until she was like 4. But when she started school she got teased. So then she blocked that out again and never did it. So it's really weird that I've got my mum and my aunt. Both of them don't speak German. And then all of us kids on both sides, no one speaks German but me.
- 2 I: Except you, wow. Good on you for doing it.
- 3 R: The legacy! (laughs)
- 4 I: Do you hope one day that you'll/ Do you have an intention to try and speak with your grandparents ever? Or do you think it'll just stay kind of/
- 5 R: I do. (...) But I think I sort of have to ease into it. Because now they're like, 'Oh Kris is not going to speak German to us.' So if I just went and did it, it could be a little bit weird.
[...]
- 6 R: My grandparents are German but I don't speak German to them. I find it quite intimidating and my *Opa* is actually Austrian so occasionally he will talk sort of Austrian and then I won't quite understand. It'll be slightly different. He's sort of like, 'Come on! You need to speak it back!' But it's intimidating.

Such a scenario is described by Kris in Interview Excerpt 6. Kris discusses how her mother's side of the family immigrated from Austria. Her mother grew up speaking German but was made fun of in school at a young age so stopped speaking the language. Kris emphasises that she is the only one in her family, aside from her Austrian grandparents, who can speak German. She specifically refers to her decision to learn the language, though somewhat jokingly as 'the legacy' (line 3). This nonetheless reflects an element of pride, achievement and importance placed on the act of language maintenance that she is carrying out through her efforts to learn German. Paradoxically, however, she expresses hesitance towards speaking German with her

grandparents. For Kris, the value of language learning appears to be more in the gesture of the learning of the language itself and the cultural knowledge that comes along with it, than it does in attaining the ability to interact with her grandparents in German. An additional factor in her reluctance to speak with her grandparents is her inability to speak their particular dialect, meaning that, although her competency in standard German was far above average within our class group, she might still struggle to comprehend some interactions with her grandparents. The element of self presentation within highly valued relationships is an important factor that plays a role in Kris' language use choices.

Interview Excerpt 7 Saskia*: 'I just want to be able to talk with my family'

- 1 I: What do you want to do with your German skills?
- 2 R: I just want to be able to talk with my family.
- 3 I: Do you have grandparents as well?
- 4 R: Yeah my mum is the only one not in Germany in the whole family. So I've got cousins, aunts, uncles.
- 5 I: And do you talk to them at the moment a bit in German?
- 6 R: Yeah. I call my *Oma* and *Opa* every Sunday and I have a group chat with my cousins. [...]
- 7 I: Did you set any specific goals for yourself at the start of the semester?
- 8 R: Just to see how it goes because it's the first time I'm learning German at a higher level.

Saskia is another student who has a family connection to the German language. She talks about her mother being the only person in her family who is not presently in Germany. German language is prominent within Saskia's everyday life. She refers to speaking in German regularly with family members who live in Germany, as well as with her mother. Despite her ongoing and frequent use of spoken language, Saskia struggles with the university German course. She reflects positively on her abilities in the areas of listening and speaking but she sees her lack of formal education in German grammar and standardised written German as problematic. Her struggle to acquire this aspect of standardised language, despite having enough language competency for a large part of her communications to be carried out in German, reflects the issues that arise from the narrow focus of much classroom teaching on standardised, written language and the learning of grammar, as explored by Davies (2013),

Holliday (2008) and Van Lier (2004, 2011). Saskia's strong ability to use German in her daily life goes largely unrecognised within the tertiary German language classroom. Her investment in language learning is clearly connected with her family, her identity and the very tangible desires she expresses about speaking with her family and living in Germany in the future. The German language and culture are most certainly a strong part of her identity, but it is possible that her struggles within the language course cause a clash between this identity and her ability to express those elements of herself within the classroom context.

6.2.3 Investment in multilingual and transcultural identities

Another learner with close family connections to Germany is Erin. Her identity as 'half' German was a clear motivating factor in her choice to learn German. Her ability to speak German and participate in German culture in connection with her family showed itself to be something on which she placed high value. Erin describes herself as existing between cultures and the associated national identities. In Interview Excerpt 8 (line 5) she describes a scenario in which she met German speaking people whilst travelling. When asked the question, 'Are you German?', she describes her difficulty in giving a straightforward answer. She strongly identifies as Australian, having grown up in Australia and having used English as a primary language in her life and education. However, she also identifies strongly with her German family and heritage, thus finding herself in a third place (De Fina 2016; Kramsch 1993; Sandhu & Higgins 2016), having a transcultural identity (Welsch 1999, 2010, 2011). Similar to Saskia, Erin also has difficulties with the grammar focus of the language class, despite being highly competent in her spoken German. Rather than feeling overwhelmed by the new information, however, her attitude is one of curiosity and acceptance. The gaps in her knowledge of the language appear less as clashes with the German parts of her identity and more as opportunities to strengthen this part of the self.

Interview Excerpt 8 Erin*: 'it's half of who I am'

- 1 I: What made you decide to learn German?
- 2 R: At primary school it was only German that we could learn. And I wanted to anyway. It's half of who I am so I thought I'd learn how to do it.
[...]
- 3 I: Do you feel like you're the same person when you speak German as when you speak English?

- 4 R: Yeah. I guess because/ I guess it's a bit different because I feel like I'm German anyway in a way. It feels like it's a part of me. [...] Like it is my culture anyway. It doesn't feel so different. It's not like it's a big foreign concept or anything.
[...]
- 5 R: So I spoke all this German and I think perhaps I have the look of maybe a German and they're like, '*Bist du Deutsche?*' And then I'm like, 'Yes? No? Yes? Sort of?' And there was this one couple in particular that just sat themselves down at my table with their child and asked me if I was German. I was like, 'I'm no I'm not German but you know, I can talk German.'

A number of learners in the class had been learning German throughout their schooling prior to joining the class. Even for those without a close family connection to the language the knowledge of German had become a clear part of their identity because of their long term language learning.

Interview Excerpt 9 Sally*: 'I try to bring it into my everyday vocabulary'

- 1 I: Do you feel like you're the same person when you speak German as when you speak English?
- 2 R: I think so. I kind of throw it into my English every so often. I'll say like *Dankeschön* or *guten Morgen*, I kind of throw it in. (laughs) I try to bring it into my everyday vocabulary, I've kind of just picked it up over the years.

The integration of German into learners' identities is exemplified in Sally's response to the question of whether or not she feels like the same person in both English and German. Her response reflects that she has incorporated her knowledge of the German language into her English language use, 'I kind of throw it in' (line 2). Here she refers to speaking German with other English L1 speakers, including those who do not have a knowledge of German. This is a form of polylinguaging (Jørgensen & Møller 2014) whereby the two languages are being seamlessly blended together. Additionally, this form of language use is an act of identity construction, whereby Sally is asserting her knowledge of the German language as an important part of her identity.

Speaking German with non-German speakers was a practice that a number of interviewees engaged in. They particularly expressed a feeling of confidence when demonstrating their knowledge of German to people who did not speak the language. Exemplifying this in Interview Excerpt 10, Camille speaks about how she feels when she speaks in German with

her parents. Her parents are not able to communicate or respond in German, instead they are able to listen and appreciate her learning and increasing ability to speak German. Additionally, because of their lack of German knowledge, they are not able to make any negative judgements regarding the accuracy of her speech. Thus, Camille says that she feels more confident speaking German with non German speakers but that she feels ‘insecure’ speaking with those who do speak German. This insecurity is based on a concern that other German speakers might ‘know more’ of the language than Camille (line 4), and therefore be able to notice her mistakes. Speaking with her parents is a low risk interaction in which Camille can demonstrate her language ability and her identity as an intelligent, hard working university student without the risk of criticism of her grammar.

Interview Excerpt 10 Camille: ‘if I make a mistake they don’t understand’

- 1 I: Do you feel like you’re the same person when you speak German as when you speak English?
- 2 R: Yeah? I don’t think that it changes except for that I feel a bit smarter. (laughs)
- 3 I: When you speak which one?
- 4 R: When I speak German because I feel like I know something more. Especially, for example my parents at home they are asking/ Because they don’t speak German so they’re just like, ‘Can you speak to us a bit in German? What have you learnt?’ And then I feel smart because I also know that they don’t understand and if I make a mistake while I’m saying something they don’t understand. (laughs) They don’t know! But yeah, it makes me feel smart. But obviously speaking English I know what I’m saying for sure so speaking German makes me feel a little bit insecure when it comes to speaking with people that know German or people in my class. Because I’m like they might know a bit more than me so I can’t just say/ (laughs) When it comes to speaking with people that know German then I’m a bit less confident with German. But I feel a bit special to know the language.

A similar approach to speaking German outside of class is taken up by Kris who, in Interview Excerpt 11, discusses saying German phrases to her boyfriend who is a non-German speaker. She reports doing this frequently, making it a part of her everyday language use. She emphasises that this is the only situation outside of class in which she is willing to speak German (line 3). For her, it is important that the other person does not speak German so that she can have a sense of power over the situation as the person possessing socially valuable language knowledge. She refers to her German use as ‘mocking’ or ‘funny’, also implying a need to deviate from her English personality to incorporate her German use. Both Camille and Kris are high achieving students, particularly in the areas of grammar, writing and speaking.

Nonetheless, they express clear feelings of uncomfortableness at the possibility of speaking German with other highly competent speakers.

Interview Excerpt 11 Kris*: 'I definitely don't do any speaking unless it's in a mocking way'

- 1 R: As weird as it sounds, I feel like when I spoke German especially when I speak German here, I also turn way more confident than I am. Like/ And I don't know whether that's a bit more of a power play like I might be around my boyfriend and joke with him and be like, '*Sei nicht so dumm!*' and then (laugh) just like randomly talking to him or if/
- 2 I: And he doesn't speak German?
- 3 R: Yeah he doesn't. And then so for me it's just funny. I can say whatever I want. [...] But I definitely don't do any speaking unless it is like, in a mocking way in a situation where people can't understand me. // (laughs)
- 4 I: (laughs) // Okay so it's not a conversation in German. It might just be like saying something to your boyfriend.
- 5 R: Yeah [...] I slip in random things. Like the most insignificant stuff.

A similar sentiment is described by David in Interview Excerpt 12, who reports only ever speaking in German to demonstrate his language knowledge 'at a party or a bar' (line 2). This form of speaking outside of the classroom does not occur as part of a conversation in German but instead is a display of language ability, and as such also of an element of one's identity, for others who can appreciate it without the need to interact in the L2.

Interview Excerpt 12 David: 'most of my speaking happens in class unless I'm trying to show off'

- 1 I: Do you ever try and speak German with people from class like maybe before class or meeting up or anything like that?
- 2 R: Not really, no. I feel like most of my German speaking happens in class unless I'm trying to show off at a party or a bar or something and there's this like, yeah okay. It's mostly in class.

David, Kris, Sally and Camille are alike in that their knowledge of the German language acts as a form of symbolic cultural capital. As such they demonstrate transcultural identities and it is these identities on which they place a high value because they separate them from the perceived ignorance of persons who remain monolingual. They each discussed different scenarios in which they demonstrated their knowledge to non German speakers as an act of assertion of this part of their identity. The speech partners with whom they performed their

language ability were of social value in different ways. For Kris and Sally, it was important that those close to them understood this important part of their identities. Camille saw value in the identity associated with language learning assigned to her by her parents. David and Sally both described the value that new acquaintances potentially assign to language ability, as being something interesting about one's self that sets one apart from the crowd. In each of these scenarios, identity construction played a direct role in learners' choices to speak outside of class and ultimately led them to speak in the extremely low anxiety scenario of speaking as a demonstration, rather than as part of a conversation.

6.2.4 Investment in relationships as a motivation for and a barrier to language learning

A clash between learners' investment in the conceptual idea of language learning as knowledge, and the practical realities of language learning and use outside the classroom was discussed by a number of learners. This included Kris, who, as previously discussed in Interview Excerpt 6, struggled with the idea of speaking with her grandparents in German, despite the fact that they were a primary motivation for her decision to learn the language, along with her German heritage. Interview data within this study strongly implies that a clash of areas of investment occurs when learners are personally invested in a relationship which holds the potential for interactions in the L2 but which operates habitually in learners' L1. The greater the degree of social investment in a relationship, the less willing learners often appear to be to speak the L2 with the other person(s). This can likely be attributed to a conflict involving language identities, and the ability to portray a particular version of the self in the L2, as has been discussed in Pellegrino Aveni's (2005) research into language learning and the self. This is also a feature of the habitual way communities of practice function and of their connectedness through language. Social relationships form their own unique communities of practice in which members have particular identity roles and ways of doing things, particularly ways of expressing one's self through speech. A change in language implies a change in power dynamics, particularly if a person who was previously speaking their L1 with an L2 speaker becomes the L2 speaker who speaks with a more competent and knowledgeable L1 speaker. The discourse and the associated knowledge of discourses immediately shift when switching

to an alternative language in which the members of the community of practice have different levels of competency.

In Interview Excerpt 13 Jamie describes her hesitance to speak German with her in-laws and in general outside of the classroom. Throughout the interview she talks about the classroom as a space in which she feels safe and can make mistakes and ask questions. In contrast to this, outside of the classroom she feels self conscious and concerned about the way in which she comes across to other people. Her concern lies most directly with being perceived as unintelligent, and connectedly with her German ability being underestimated or viewed in a negative way. She is concerned that people will think that ‘she can’t speak German’ (line 3).

Interview Excerpt 13 Jamie: ‘I don’t want to embarrass myself’

- 1 I: What made you decide to learn German?
- 2 R: My sister-in-law is German so my brother speaks German. He went over and met her in Germany. Now they have two kids. And they’re raising them bilingual. So I wanted to speak German with them.
[...]
- 3 I: What stops you from speaking German more?
- 4 R: Not knowing how to express myself and use the words that I would usually use and making mistakes. I don’t want to say something/ Embarrassment. I don’t want to embarrass myself. (laughs) [...] I hate it when people think I’m dumb. So, I don’t want to say a huge sentence and then kind of stall or stutter or mumble over my words in German. And they’ll be like, ‘Ha ha she can’t speak German.’ (laughs) I think that stops me from wanting to speak.
[...]
- 5 R: Like over Easter I went home and my sister-in-law’s parents were over from Germany and they were like, ‘You’re learning German! Speak to us in German!’ And I was like, ‘No.’ Like I can’t do it. I’d try and then I was like no I can’t do it. I was so afraid of them like laughing at me. So, didn’t want to do it at all.
[...]
- 6 I: Do you feel like you’re the same person when you speak German as when you speak English?
- 7 R: NO. No. I feel like I’m a different personality. But mainly because I don’t know how to express myself, how I am in English in German because I don’t know you know the equivalent of how I speak in German.

Jamie's investment in the identity she is able to present to her immediate family and in-laws is so great that she feels unable to speak German with them because of her concern about the identity she will be able to present in the L2. This is connected to the identity associated with the act of being able to speak a language as an asset, as discussed earlier in this chapter, and also with a general ability of being able to express one's self in a particular way. Jamie also describes feeling a lack of ability to express herself with the particular kinds of words and colloquialisms that identify her speech in English (line 6). This suggests, in keeping with a conclusion drawn in Piller's (2002) research, that much of one's identity is conveyed through ways of speaking such as accent and register, rather than specifically the words that one uses.

6.2.5 A lesser self in the L2

This frustration with the inability to control self presentation through the particularities of language use in the L2 was a common theme among a number of learners. Each learner had different elements of their identity that they most prominently felt could not be conveyed fully in German because of their lack of both vocabulary and more general knowledge of colloquialisms and *ways of speaking*.

In Interview Excerpt 14, David describes a clash between his abilities in spoken German and his desire to provide complex academic responses to questions in class on the topic of German literature (line 1). Academic ability is a key element of David's identity and one in which he is highly invested. This leads him to resist opportunities to practise speaking in the classroom because speaking in German does not allow him to convey this part of his identity sufficiently.

Interview Excerpt 14 David: 'like a dumbed down version of myself'

- 1 R: I come from a literature background basically so if I ever want to explain anything it's basically English. [...] So for example, with the *Die Verwandlung*, with the reflection questions, it's like, 'What do you think Gregor feels about this and this?' And it's like okay well, obviously it's a text so it's metaphorical/ [...] When I just speak German it's super/ I feel like it's super simple sentences. Like oh, 'He's sad.' But in English it's sort of like more complex sort of elements.
[...]
- 2 I: Do you feel like you're the same person when you speak German as when you speak English?
- 3 R: No! I feel like I'm like a super dumbed down version of myself when I'm speaking German.

Speaking German holds David back from expressing complex thoughts aloud. Because he is not able to express himself using an academic style as he does in English, David describes feeling like a ‘dumbed down version’ of himself when speaking German (line 3). This sentiment is echoed in Interview Excerpt 15, where Steve describes not being able convey his full self and personality in German (lines 1 and 3). Specifically, he says that it is not the simple meanings of words and sentences that are missing from his language ability in German, but rather a particular way of speaking that he connects directly with the self (line 5). Rather than being linked to the ability to participate in academic discourse, for Steve the part of the self that is lacking in the L2 is connected to humour and an ability to make small, witty, off handed comments.

Interview Excerpt 15 Steve*: ‘I can’t be Steve’

- 1 R: I get frustrated with German because I can’t be Steve because I don’t have the vocabulary or the German skills to do that.
- 2 I: Do you feel like you’re the same person when you speak German as when you speak English?
- 3 R: Nup! I’d be like 5% of the Steve that I am in English.
- 4 I: What’s different?
- 5 R: [...] I don’t know, just jokes or just how I/ I don’t know/ You know. Maybe portray things that aren’t necessarily data and informative or I don’t know just banter/

Jamie, Steve and David are connected in their description of a frustration with a perceived inability to communicate the self fully in German. For each of these learners there is a different part of the self that they are most concerned with not being able to communicate, but the effect for each learner is the same: a barrier towards speaking in German is created through this perceived shortcoming. Particularly for Jamie and David, this discrepancy between the L1 self and the L2 self that they are able to communicate is connected to significant language speaking anxiety, discussed further in [Section 6.3](#).

6.2.6 Investment in imagined communities: native speaker standards

Learners described their investment in their future selves existing within imagined communities in which German played a key role. Steve, in Interview Excerpt 16, describes his plans to become a teacher of German and the associated need he feels to improve his German

in order to be able to be perceived both by himself and others as a good German teacher. He discusses feeling 'intimidated' and embarrassed at the thought of not being able to speak fluently in front of a German native speaking school parent. Steve is invested in the social identity of becoming a 'good' and competent German teacher and this motivates his language learning choices. This investment, simultaneously motivated by social pressures and an anxiety about potential shortcomings of his language abilities, motivates both his continued studies in German and his desire to return to Germany for an extended period of time.

Interview Excerpt 16 Steve*: 'if you can't talk that fluently it's embarrassing'

- 1 R: I don't think I'd teach [German in Australia] without going back [to Germany]. Because I guess I'd be a little bit intimidated that some/ One of my students could go, 'Oh my mum's German!' And then they'd come in and if you can't really talk that fluently it's embarrassing right? I guess at least you're better than the students you're teaching. But I'd like to be at least half confident so when a parent comes in, or a relative who is German/

In Interview Excerpt 17, Adam describes a similar desire to enter a German-speaking community of practice with the goal of achieving native speaker language ability. Adam also is studying to become a teacher of German. His investment in language learning is supplemented by an additional goal of passing as a native speaker. His desire is to spend time in Germany and be accepted within this imagined community as a fellow L1 German speaker. His language anxiety corresponds also to this investment in language learning, thus he is not afraid of making mistakes in the language classroom but instead describes being afraid in situations with L1 German speakers of his mistakes giving away his true identity as an L2 German speaker.

Interview Excerpt 17 Adam: 'I would try and pretend that I actually live there'

- 1 R: I would even go as far as saying I'm not foreign. I would try and pretend that I actually live there for a while and see if they notice. Because that's what I want to do, I want to see if they could work out that I'm not actually from Germany. I think that would be quite funny to see. 'You're from Australia? What? I didn't expect that!' That's kind of a reaction I want to see at some point. But that's kind of why I'm afraid of making mistakes because I don't want them to find out because I feel like that's kind of embarrassing. Over there I want to present myself as if I was German myself, even though I'm not.

Language learning for both Steve and Adam is driven by a desire to be accepted within German speaking communities of practice, imagined communities associated with their future selves. Both learners place a high value on achieving fluency in speaking in German, with Adam in

particular aiming to attain speech indiscernible from German L1 speakers. For both learners, part of this value is associated with a kind of moral responsibility held by teachers to teach their topic well and to a high standard, which in this case also corresponds to standardised versions of the language.

6.3 Grammar, identity and anxiety

Throughout the interview process, many learners described a clear connectedness between attempting to learn and use ‘correct’ grammar, and a feeling of anxiety that often led them to avoid engaging with the language both inside and outside of the classroom. The connectedness of grammar and learner anxiety will likely not come as a surprise to anyone who has taught or learnt a foreign or second language. This issue, discussed in greater detail in [Chapter 2](#) as well as by Leo van Lier (2004, 2011), showed itself to be highly relevant for the learners in this study. Furthermore, the anxiety associated with the issue of speaking with correct grammar in the L2 is also connected to learners’ sense of self and a desire to present themselves in a particular way, which their lack of command over the grammar of their L2 prohibits them from doing.

When asked about goals for the course and about which language skills they wanted to work on the most, many learners responded with ‘grammar’. This focus on grammar as a learning goal also corresponds to a focus on grammar within the course itself. Much of the course content is divided by grammar topics and students’ overall grades are also determined primarily by their grammatical ability. Course assessment consistently prioritises grammatical accuracy, with specific grammar testing as well as a separate grade for grammatical accuracy within each free speaking or writing assessment task. It is therefore logical that learners’ concerns about the course, which impact on their out of class language use, are closely tied up with their evaluation of their own grammatical ability. The data within this research project cannot determine whether learners’ grammar anxiety, or ‘grammarphobia’, as van Lier (2011, p. 2) refers to it, is produced by the assessment structure within the course. However, it is reasonable to assume that the assessment focus on grammatical correctness perpetuates learners’ feelings of anxiety about their potentially ‘incorrect’ attempts at engagement with German.

In Interview Excerpt 18, Kris describes feeling ‘almost terrified’ of grammar (line 2), implying that this fear is associated with making a grammatical error. She describes brief moments of language use ‘without complete fear’ (line 2), suggesting conversely very strong feelings of anxiety associated with the thought of making a grammatical error. Such feelings are directly connected with anxieties about an ability to have control over the way in which one is presenting the self to others.

Interview Excerpt 18 Kris*: 'it almost terrifies me'

- 1 I: Is there a specific skill like reading, writing, speaking or listening that you would like to improve or wanted to improve at the beginning?
- 2 R: Grammar is a big one for me. That I feel like it doesn't terrify me but almost terrifies me. (laughs) Like I said like if there's a listening activity I'm still a bit more of, 'Yep this seems normal.' Sometimes I feel like I can process a few sentences without complete fear.

Interview Excerpt 19 Camille: 'we're worried we're wrong'

- 1 R: Because although we do get a lot of time in class and we get a lot of speaking, we're asked a lot what do you think and so on, we don't always speak. Because we're worried we're wrong, like I'm scared to speak up. It would be, I think, much better because say I caught up with one of my friends from class and we prepared before class, then I would be more confident to speak because we both can't be completely wrong. (laughs)

Demonstrating a similar feeling, in Interview Excerpt 19, Camille describes how her anxiety about making a grammatical error holds her back from speaking in class. Elsewhere in the interview she also talks about this fear holding her back from speaking outside of class in a similar way, with the exception of speaking with people such as her parents who do not speak the language and thus cannot perceive any mistakes she might make, as discussed earlier. Camille also describes her anxiety about speaking in class in first person plural, rather than singular, insinuating that this anxiety is something mutually shared with other classmates. She also discusses preparing more thoroughly before class as a potential solution to this issue, whereby she could essentially greatly lessen the risk of making mistakes in class.

Within the interview data a trend of learners comparing themselves to other learners emerges. This tendency is aptly described by David in Interview Excerpt 20 as 'imposter syndrome' (line 2). The words 'intimidating' (line 2) as well as a belief that one 'should know' certain words or phrases (line 4) appeared throughout a number of interviews. A range of language learning experiences and competency levels exists within the class, and learners who had begun learning German at university rather than during high school frequently expressed feelings of insecurity in their German ability, primarily derived from their comparisons of themselves with other members of the class. Without specifically being informed of what knowledge is assumed and what is in focus, learners draw their own conclusions based on the observations of others in the class group. David explains how his feeling of imposter syndrome and not being at the level he 'should' be at holds him back from speaking. Rather than finding strategies to continue

speaking German, the social pressure created by the perceived gap between David's German language ability and what it 'should' be leads him to 'end the conversation' (line 4). Noteworthy also is that David was in the control group and did not participate in the strategy teaching sessions. In this scenario, the social investment in the ability to portray oneself as competent wins out over the investment in learning language.

Interview Excerpt 20 David: 'a bad case of imposter syndrome'

- 1 I: Do you find it easy to work with other students in class?
- 2 R: I have a pretty bad case of imposter syndrome, so sometimes it's a bit intimidating.
[...]
- 3 I: What's your attitude towards making mistakes when you speak?
- 4 R: Try your best to avoid making them? [...] I feel like it does [stop me from speaking]. For example, when I speak German I speak really slow. I have to think about it a lot before I actually make a sentence [...] to the point where I basically end the conversation. [...] It sort of displays that you can't really think of a word that you probably should know [...]. It's like, oh, I probably should know this word but I don't.

This conflict of investments, in self presentation as well as in a desire to practise the L2, is illustrated in Interview Excerpt 21, in which Jamie expresses her understanding of the importance of making mistakes for language learning, but 'hates doing it' (line 2). Jamie's particular dislike of making mistakes while speaking is centred around self presentation, as she states: 'I don't want other people to know that I made a mistake.' When speaking, there is usually a larger audience, for example classmates, whereas in writing the audience is smaller, usually only one person. The risk of presenting the self in an undesirable way in the L2 is therefore greater and also more direct in speaking than in writing. Like David, Jamie compares herself to other students in the class and describes the perceived gap in competency as a factor which negatively affects her motivation to participate in the classroom (line 2).

Interview Excerpt 21 Jamie: 'I don't want other people to know that I made a mistake'

- 1 I: What's your attitude towards making mistakes when speaking?
- 2 R: I don't wanna do it! (laughs) So that will stop me from actually saying something. Like I don't wanna stuff up so I won't say it. But I know in/ Deep down that making mistakes is how I'm going to learn how to do it but I hate doing it. I hate making mistakes. (laughs) And I hate/ especially in speaking because I don't want other people to know that I made a mistake (laughs). [...] There are a lot of people who I sit with/ [...] I think they've got

parents or they've been to Germany. So sometimes I feel really / I feel the gap a lot more and then I feel discouraged and I feel like, 'I'm not as good as they are!'

Although learners clearly find grammar a highly useful tool for communication and a valuable element of their language learning, as was made clear through the questionnaire (see [Appendix IV](#)), paradoxically grammar is also described by almost all learners as being the most challenging part of L2 learning. Presenting the language of the so called 'native speaker' to learners as the standard for which they should aim reveals itself within the interview data as problematic for learners as they express the difficulties they face in completing an ultimately impossible task (Davies 2013; Holliday 2008; van Lier 2011).

6.4 Anglophone learners: challenges and strategies

Each learning context presents its own specific challenges for learners, along with particular learning opportunities. This section firstly looks at some of the challenges to learning German in an Australian tertiary context. It then outlines the social strategies learners employ to engage with the L2 outside of the classroom.

6.4.1 Challenges to language learning within an English speaking context

The reality of the issue of difficulties in language learning experienced by learners in Anglophone countries, discussed in [Section 3.8](#), made itself apparent in the interview data. Learners described difficulties continuing their studies in German throughout their schooling. Kris, in Interview Excerpt 22, describes learning German via phone call for a significant period during her schooling.

Interview Excerpt 22 Kris*: 'the only one doing German'

- 1 R: In Year 11 I did open access which was hard. Because I was the only one doing German at my school. I had a half an hour phone call a week and that was it.

Similarly, Camille explains in Interview Excerpt 23 that she was pleased to be able to study German at university after being forced to stop during high school as the language was no longer offered at her school. These comments paint a picture of a struggle for continuity and limited choice in languages education within schooling in Australia, affirming observations made in the report *Review of Languages Retention from the Middle Years to the Senior Years of Schooling* (Curnow et al. 2014).

Interview Excerpt 23 Camille: 'the school just discontinued it'

- 1 R: I learnt German a bit in Year 8, about a semester or so and then a bit in Year 9 but then they discontinued it in high school so I couldn't do it/ [...] There weren't enough students/ [...] Then we couldn't make a class for it, so the school just discontinued it.

The challenges for language learning that begin during primary and secondary education are carried into the tertiary realm, where learners are grouped together with students of a range of proficiency levels because student numbers do not allow for separate level classes, or mid way entry points for learners who have some background knowledge but are not ready to enter the

intermediate level. These structural issues exacerbate the issues of anxiety experienced by many learners because of the range of proficiency levels within the class group.

A further challenge faced by Anglophone learners, confirmed by the interview data is that of having English as a shared language. Both Louise, in Interview Excerpt 24, and Steve, in Interview Excerpt 25, describe a frequent, automatic, often unconscious and unintentional switch to English by either themselves or their classmates, with which they express some frustration or regret. Louise describes her reason for switching to English as ‘wanting to talk as friends’ (line 2) and also emphasises the way in which language choice is strongly task and situation bound. During class, language learning activities are completed in German, however as soon as an activity is finished, Louise, who did not receive strategy instruction, observes that she switches back to English largely automatically.

Interview Excerpt 24 Louise: ‘I just talk to them as friends’

- 1 I: When you switch to English why do you switch?
- 2 R: Probably to make jokes or to comment on what we’re doing. I’m not sure. I just talk to them as friends. You know what I mean. I probably shouldn’t (laughs).
- 3 I: But is it sometimes things you could say in German but then you just don’t?
- 4 R: I think so. I don’t make the decision like, ‘Could I say this in German? Probably not.’ I don’t know. It’s definitely like, ‘Oh we’ve done the activity now, time to speak English.’

Interview Excerpt 25 Steve*: ‘people continuously send the language back to English’

- 1 I: Do you find it easy to work with other students in class?
- 2 R: Yes and no. I think yeah/ I don’t know. Sometimes yes. It just all depends on the person. Sometimes people continuously send the language back to English. Even if the intention is to speak German and I know it’s so much easier to just say something in English but sometimes people just naturally revert back to English, which isn’t helpful at all.

This comment by Steve, who participated in the strategy sessions, offers an interesting perspective, in comparison with that of Louise. He describes his frustration with the code switching habits of some of his classmates. Clearly code switching and the convenience of speaking the L1 rather than the L2 continue to be an issue for learners despite the strategy instruction; however, these comments suggest that the strategy instruction potentially influenced learners to consider non task related conversations with their classmates as potential opportunities to practise German. Steve’s observation that other learners in the class frequently

revert back to English (line 2) indicates that he has recognised the need for an intentionality behind language choice because the easiest and most natural language choice is most often not the one that supports learning the L2 (Grice 1975). The next subsection looks at the strategies learners in both the experimental and control groups employ to engage with German in a meaningful way outside of the classroom.

6.4.2 Social strategies in an Anglophone context

Learners discussed a range of approaches to using and engaging with German outside of class. They outlined a number of similar strategies that they had developed of their own initiative in response to their Anglophone learning context. These included finding ways to speak, with other people as well as with oneself, and finding ways to engage through receptive activities. Learners, to differing degrees, were able to recognise the affordances existing within their learning environments, some seeing other L2 learners including their family as potential sources of knowledge, and others finding creative ways to engage in non-judgemental context with familiar L2 speakers.

Recognising affordances: opportunities to speak

In many instances, learners, particularly those within the control group, did not always recognise the affordances within their language learning environments. Learners in the experimental group did not always describe dramatic changes in their out of class learning behaviour as a result of their explicit strategy instruction; however, their perceptions of affordances and language learning opportunities certainly differed from those of the control group. In Interview Excerpt 26, Louise discusses her habits of code switching between English and German before and after German lessons. She describes switching to English as soon as the class has ended and appears to be realising the possibility of continuing practising German outside of class for the first time during the interview. Her comments reflect the difficulty of modifying habitual language practices within communities of practice and the need for deliberate action in order to do so.

Interview Excerpt 26 Louise: 'it would be weird for me to start talking German'

- 1 I: What about the time before or after class when you're with other students but it's not the lesson yet, do you ever speak German?

- 2 R: NO! I've never even thought about it because it's automatically like, 'Class is over!' And we're just talking so I feel like it would be weird for me to start talking German (laughs). But like that's a good idea. [...] They'd be like, 'Are you trying to practise your German on me?' And I'm like, 'Yes!' (laughs) I really should!

She reflects on how her speech partners might negatively react: 'Are you trying to practise your German on me?' (line 2). This indicates that Louise's social investment in her friendships outside of class and in maintaining the established practices within those communities of practice is something that she is invested in, which has potential to conflict with her desire to seek out opportunities to practise German. Strategy teaching plays an important role in helping learners to recognise the affordances offered by their in class and out of class learning environments.

Creating safe spaces for language use

Highly important for language use outside of class is the perception of a space being safe and free of judgement. A feeling of safety allows learners to speak freely and to use the L2 creatively, without being concerned about self presentation and the grammatical errors that will inevitably accompany their creative attempts at language use. For many learners, it appeared to be the case that they had not yet found or been able or motivated to create such a safe space. However, many learners spoke about the habit of speaking with oneself in the L2 as a strategy for engaging with German outside of class in a very low pressure context. In Interview Excerpt 27, Camille explains how she 'practises with' herself (line 2) because she does not have someone to practise with. Worthy of note is that her perception of not having someone to practise with is based on a desire to practise exclusively with an L1 speaker, rather than seeing other class members as potential resources. However, this strategy was also mentioned by other learners who engaged more actively in speaking with other L2 speakers outside of class. Camille emphasises the sense of safety in practising speaking with oneself: 'there's no one there to be embarrassed of' (line 2).

Interview Excerpt 27 Camille: 'practice with yourself'

- 1 I: What advice would you give to someone who was starting to learn German at the uni?
- 2 R: [...] If you're here to learn German as a language, then you've gotta do a lot on your own. As I was saying, I was speaking to myself in my head, you know practise with yourself. If you don't have someone to practise with, practise with yourself. [...] It's very helpful for me, literally speaking with myself in German. And there's no one there to be

embarrassed of. I'm just speaking to myself. If I get it wrong, it's only in front of me.
(laughs)

In other interviews learners discussed their attempts at carrying out their everyday activities such as grocery shopping in German. All learners who discussed this somewhat alternative social strategy for language learning believed that it was effective and motivating for their language learning. As well as helping them to practise and solidify newly learnt vocabulary and grammar, it also allowed them to build confidence in using the language.

A further safe space discussed in the interview data was that of learners' L2 family members. A number of participants described speaking regularly with close family members who had also learnt German as an additional language. This is expressed by Olivia in Interview Excerpt 28. Olivia states that her mother is the only person she speaks German with regularly outside of class (line 1). She describes their conversations as being relatively short, simple and light hearted in nature. Other learners who spoke German with L2 learner family members gave similar descriptions of their conversations, often jokingly referring to the incorrectness or incompleteness of their German knowledge collectively as a family. This offers an interesting contrast to the speech communities of learners with German backgrounds discussed earlier. It is interesting that the family, in the case of taking up opportunities to speak with other L2 speakers, appears to be perceived as a significantly less judgemental space than speaking with classmates who are also learning German.

Interview Excerpt 28 Olivia: 'just simple stuff'

- 1 R: [My mum is] kind of the only person outside of the class that I'd speak German with. Because she's the only person that knows any. Yeah we speak when we have time and remember it. I mean it's usually when I come out of German I'm just thinking in German.
- 2 I: And you guys will keep speaking for a while in German?
- 3 R: For a little while. Not for a huge/ Maybe 5 minutes. I mean we don't have hugely long conversations in German but it's like, 'I'm going to go and take the dog for a walk.' And we'll say that in German so that he doesn't understand 'walk'. Or, 'Have you made dinner yet?' 'Yes I have.' So like just simple stuff like that.

Speaking German with family members in informal but still regular instances is an example of polylinguaging, and of learners integrating their language knowledge into their everyday life. Informal engagement with family members does not require learners to make plans or go out

of their way significantly to create opportunities for language use. The family is also perceived by learners as an extremely low stakes environment in which they can use the L2 without concerns about their self presentation. In a safe environment with familiar interlocutors, learners can interact freely without worrying that their identity will be portrayed contrary to their intentions. Learners found it motivating and enjoyable to speak German with family members and they also felt that it helped them to improve their language skills.

Engagement in receptive out of class activities

Learners in both the experimental and control groups discussed a range of receptive, meaning focused out of class learning activities that they engaged in. Kris in Interview Excerpt 29 describes irregularly engaging in some meaning focused receptive activities outside of class such as listening to music and watching German films. Her main focus, however, remains on the coursework. This was the case for the majority of learners in both groups, though there was great variance from learner to learner. Many learners discussed watching German language YouTube series or watching German language television, however many also expressed difficulties in finding content that was at an appropriate level for them to be able to comprehend. Future strategy teaching might make this issue a key focus. Such receptive out of class activities have the potential to engage learner identities because they allow learners to seek out resources that align with their own personal interests and their day to day lives.

Interview Excerpt 29 Kris*: 'German music in the background'

- 1 I: What do you do to learn German outside of class?
- 2 R: Occasionally I'll watch German movies with subtitles? I've also/ I started this like way back, of listening to German music. And some of the music I've found has been awful. (laughs) But I still just like do it anyway. Even if I'm studying German at home. I'll put really quietly German music in the background. [...] But yeah that's sort of the only things that besides the practical studying-wise.

An excellent example of a learner who created his own receptive community of practice with the direct intention of furthering his language ability is Adam. In Interview Excerpt 30, Adam describes how he strategically chose to learn through engaging with German language video games. This strategic learning behaviour was carried out completely independently of any strategy instruction, as Adam was in the control group. He demonstrates a high degree of autonomy and certainly the locus of control for language learning has been taken up by him.

He does not expect the teacher to set out what he learns and the ways in which he uses German. He takes knowledge from class and uses his own clearly thought out strategies to build on it. Adam describes his use of video games for learning (line 1 and 3).

Interview Excerpt 30 Adam: 'I chose games that have lots of dialogue'

- 1 R: So I kind of figured that entertainment worked best and because I'm a nerd I naturally gravitated towards video games. So, I would play through video games that I was familiar with in English, I'd just switch the language over to German. [...] It has worked pretty well and also solidified adjective endings and all these grammar constructs that hadn't really been covered in depth in the past for me yet. So, it was very helpful.
- 2 I: So, I don't play video games. Can you explain to me what that looks like?
- 3 R: I chose games that have lots of dialogue, lots of speaking, lots of reading you have to do so you can understand, and story driven kind of things. To progress you actually have to understand what's going on.

He specifically seeks out games that are rich in dialogue, through which he practises his listening skills. Adam makes an effort to pay attention to new vocabulary and understand meanings from context, and also makes notes of grammatical structures such as adjective endings while playing the video games (line 1). In seeking out German language video games, Adam has overcome a number of issues faced by Anglophone learners in particular. Firstly, he has created a safe, low stakes environment for language practice, but one that is richer in new information, vocabulary and structures than, for example, speaking with oneself. Secondly, he has found a solution for the issue of a lack of direct access to face to face German speaking communities in Australia by engaging with an online community. Finally, Adam has made his out of class learning personally meaningful by finding a way to engage with German that aligned with his own interests and hobbies and thereby he is building his identity in German.

This learning behaviour demonstrates the powerful impact that autonomous out of class learning behaviours can have on language learning and learner engagement. Though this action was entirely learner initiated, strategy teaching has the potential to guide other less self motivated learners to carry out similar actions to further their language learning.

6.4.3 Identities, investment, and strategies for Anglophone learning contexts: a summary

This chapter has investigated the connections between learner identities, out of class learning behaviours and strategies, and learners' various social investments. Interview data has

supported questionnaire data in indicating that learners' investments and motivations for choosing to learn language have a significant impact on the way they approach their language learning. This is particularly relevant for learners' choices about how they use the language outside of class. The identities of many learners within this group have strong connections to the German language through family connections to the German language. Such family connections act as a major motivating factor in their decision to learn the language and invest socially and mentally in L2 learning. However, for learners with family connections to the German language, this does not exclusively have a positive effect on their willingness to invest in using the language socially. In many cases investment in family relationships and a concern with self presentation led learners to resist opportunities to use German outside of class.

A focus on grammatical accuracy and standardised language within the university language course, common within similar academic contexts for language learning, revealed itself as a major source of anxiety for learners. Anxieties about the formal correctness, particularly of spoken language are directly connected with a desire to present the self as competent, as one who is academically capable and knowledgeable, in front of family, friends and classmates. This reflected the importance of strategy interventions such as the one in this project to help to provide strategies for dealing with anxiety. It also highlighted the desirability of adopting a broader picture of language learning and language use, rather than one that is narrowly focused on grammatical correctness.

Learners described a range of strategies that they had developed, both in the context of the strategy instruction and as a result of their own initiative, through which they had devised creative ways to engage in a meaningful and personally relevant way with German. These included both productive strategies such as speaking with classmates or family members who also speak German as a second language, and receptive strategies such as playing video games or listening to music. However, many learners, particularly those in the control group, also failed to recognise other class members as potential learning resources. Additionally, many learners had developed their own semi-communicative strategies such as speaking with themselves in German in their heads, or speaking German with non-German speaking friends or partners. Such receptive approaches to language use reflect again learners' socially motivated anxieties and hesitations to use the L2 outside of the classroom. Learners showed a strong desire to find low risk ways to engage with German outside of the classroom. For some

this was speaking with others who did not understand German, such as parents or partners, for some it was speaking with other German L2 family members, and still for others this was simply speaking in one's own head. This reflects the importance of a comfortable, safe environment in which one can practise the L2, where there is a low risk of presenting the self in an undesirable light.

Overall, the interview data demonstrates that learners are highly influenced by the social situations in which their language learning occurs. Their engagement with the L2 is impacted by their own desire to construct particular identities as well as the way in which they perceive the identities of others in relation to their own. Additionally, interview data reflects the resourcefulness of students and their ability to make efforts to further their own language ability. It shows that there is a great potential for continued strategy instruction to help learners to develop their out of class learning behaviours in a strategic way.

Chapter 7: Strategies and identity construction in a German tertiary learning context

Language learning is greatly influenced by the context in which it occurs. Chapters 5 and 6 looked at learning German in the English speaking tertiary context of an Australian university. This chapter now takes an alternative, complementary English speaking tertiary context as its focus: that of language learning at a university in Berlin, where English is both a shared and frequently used language between learners of German and their interlocutors. The foreign language learning experience of learners at their home institutions often leads Anglophone learners to carry on their language learning within a country in which the language is spoken, in this case, in Germany. As has been discussed in greater detail in [Chapter 4](#) research has highlighted issues of access to the L2 faced by learners participating in study abroad programs (e.g. Kashiwa & Benson 2018; Kinginger 2004, 2010; Kinginger & Farrell Whitworth 2005; Mitchell, Tracy-Ventura & McManus 2017; Pellegrino Aveni 2005). Additionally, as has been discussed in [Chapter 2](#), due to the ease and affordability of travel and advancements in technology, the lines between second and foreign language learning environments are becoming increasingly blurred. In many countries, and particularly in the context of many European universities, not to mention other institutions and companies, English is the language used to carry out a significant proportion of communication.

This chapter looks at the impact on learner strategies and identity construction of in-country language study, but in a setting where, as is commonly the case in Germany, many of the local speakers of the L2 share the learners' high level of competency in English. In so doing, it will highlight the similarities and differences in comparison to the experience of learners of German in the Australian tertiary context. This will serve to make clearer the challenges and possibilities that need to be considered by Anglophone students who might undertake similar in-country language study following the completion of a language course at an Australian tertiary institution. In particular focus in this chapter is the role that identity plays within this alternative context in determining learners' choices to engage with the L2, that is to resist or create opportunities to use the L2, and in influencing the strategies they choose to employ.

7.1 Interviewees and interview data

A total of 16 interviews were carried out with learners from three university language courses. As has been described in greater detail in [Chapter 4](#), the courses ranged from the level A2 to B2. The majority of the students interviewed were participating in the A2-B1 level bridging course. The learners interviewed were completing bachelor or master programs at a university in Berlin, or were completing semester abroad as part of a study exchange program. They had been living in Berlin for at least 6 months. Of the 16 interviews carried out, data from 8 interviewees is presented in this chapter. The responses of these interviewees are exemplary of individual experiences, and reflect recurring themes from the interviews. Background information regarding the 8 focus interviewees, such as their home country, motivations and attitudes towards studying German, is provided below in **Table 7.1**. Numerical data presented within this chapter has been attained through note taking on learners' responses to individual interview questions that each learner was asked.

Table 7.1 *Background information on focus interviewees from a university in Berlin*

Focus interviewees
<p>Andy's home country is the US. He has family connections to Germany. His studies are completely in English. Andy does not intend to stay long term in Germany and will return to the US upon the completion of his studies. (Level A2-B1)</p>
<p>Jessica is completing a master's degree in English literature. The US is her home country. Her goal, whether she chooses to stay in Germany or go back to the US, is to be able to translate German literature into English. (Level A2-B1)</p>
<p>James is participating in an exchange as part of his degree at an Australian university. He has family connections to German. German traditions have been a part of his life growing up, however he began learning the German language in a formal university context while studying in Australia, because his degree required him to learn a language. (Level A2-B1)</p>
<p>Beste is enrolled in a master's degree at the university in Berlin. Her home country is Turkey. She has also spent time living in the US as a child. She has found a Turkish speaking community in Berlin and since finding this community feels less motivated to practise German. (Level A2-B1)</p>
<p>Defne comes from Turkey and is completing a master's degree. Her studies do not require her to speak German. She has a German partner but English is their language of communication. (Level A2-B1)</p>

Focus interviewees (continued)

Sofia is completing a master's degree and comes from Russia. She has situated herself within an international, English speaking community within Berlin. She is undecided about her plans for what she will do once she has completed her degree.

(Level A2-B1)

Mariana has spent a lot of time in English speaking countries. She originally comes from Brazil. She is enrolled in a master's program. She feels a connection with Berlin and wants to stay long term. She struggles with finding L2 speech partners.

(Level A2-B1)

Antwan is completing his master's within the sciences and comes from Panama. His degree is mainly in English but also requires a small amount of German. His university life and friendships operate in English, however he has sought out German speaking communities separate from his university life.

(Level B2)

7.2 A transcultural context: forming transcultural identities

With every language use context come different ways of speaking, bringing into focus different elements of one's identity. Language use, language choice and language learning in an L1 context such as one's home country are all subject to change in an L2 setting. The context of a university in an international city such as Berlin is one in which people from many cultures and backgrounds meet. Berlin is a city in which the reality of transculturality can clearly be observed, as many communities of practice form amongst students from a range of backgrounds. In Interview Excerpt 31, James describes how his learning of the L2 in Berlin has been accompanied by changes to his way of speaking and his identity within the L1. He describes himself as having become an 'international person', and as such, is describing a third place identity (De Fina 2016; Kramsch 1993), one which is not tied to a particular place or home, but which is instead identified by its status as existing between cultures.

Interview Excerpt 31 James: 'an international person'

- 1 R: I feel like maybe the way I speak in general has changed. Because a lot of the time if I'm not speaking German, I'm speaking with someone who doesn't speak English as their first language. I think living in Australia and even in my hometown in Australia, you speak in a certain way. I feel like I speak a bit more as an international person now. I don't take for granted that the things I say are really clear. I feel like here in Germany I speak differently, in all languages.

This change towards becoming an 'international person' is connected to a change in the way that he speaks English. He talks about not 'taking for granted' that what he says will be understood, particularly in regard to the use of his Australian dialect. He observes that elements of the discourse that he shared with members of his communities of practice in Australia, such as words, phrases and ways of speaking, are not able to be used or do not communicate the same meanings with members of his new communities of practice in Berlin. For James, his ways of speaking and the type of person he perceives himself to be are connected. Learning German within the highly transcultural context of Berlin revealed itself through the interviews with Anglophone learners more generally to be a process which engaged and challenged many aspects of their identities.

The coming together of many cultures has important implications for language learning, particularly for Anglophones. Anglophones, to a much greater extent than speakers of other languages, often find that their L1 can be spoken or at least understood by a significant number

of people in the foreign language community they are frequenting. This subchapter looks at the effects that this has on social interactions for L2 learners, and the degree to which this impacts on learner identities and the strategies learners will employ to pursue their L2 learning within this international context.

7.2.1 Investment in learning within the German context

Choices associated with language learning and language use are often closely tied to the wish to present the self in a particular way, as well as to desire to invest in becoming a particular type of person (van Lier 2004). For learners in the Australian university context, this was often connected to gathering symbolic knowledge, which learners perceived as allowing them to become more empathetic and culturally aware people. The nature of learners' investment in language learning whilst studying in Berlin shifted somewhat because they were met with the L2 as part of their everyday lives. Many of the learners in the Australian context struggled to find everyday German speaking communities of practice in which they could participate. In contrast, learners in Berlin encountered German on a daily basis. However, the ability to speak English, shared between these learners and a large majority of their L2 speaking interlocutors, complicated their motivations and investments in L2 learning. Shared knowledge of English provided learners with an opportunity to avoid speaking German. Likewise, it allowed L2 speakers within the community to avoid speaking with an L2 learner, because they could simply switch to English. This is expressed in Interview Excerpt 32, in which Sofia discusses the usefulness of learning German, which is however undermined by a lack of necessity because of the high English competencies within the Berlin communities through which she moves.

Interview Excerpt 32 Sofia: 'understand random announcements'

- 1 R: In Berlin it's not a big deal not knowing German because well, pretty much everyone speaks English more or less. But it's still very useful to speak the language of the country, understand random announcements, signs, people talking. [...] Except for understanding what people in kebab places say (laughs) probably like the goal was understanding the basics of what can be used in everyday life.

At the same time, many of the Anglophone learners interviewed felt a sense of moral obligation to learn German because they were living in a German speaking society, as is expressed by Jessica in Interview Excerpt 33. This investment in language learning, despite being in a

different context, aligns largely with the symbolic investment held by learners in Australia. In many cases the learners in Berlin were not learning German with the motivation to enter specific local German speaking communities of practice. Rather, they were working on their German skills because this act reflected elements of their identity which these learners wished to portray such as empathy, respect and cultural awareness. Such investment in learning German is also reflected in Interview Excerpt 34, in which Andy states that he is making an effort to learn German in part because of the social pressure attached to the expectations of his language ability when he returns to his home country. In this case, Andy's efforts to learn language are motivated by a desire to avoid being seen in a negative light upon returning home, rather than by aspiring to be more empathetic towards other cultures. Nonetheless his learning is motivated by his investment in his identity in terms of what others at home might think. He remains most invested in this aspect of the self, rather than focusing on entering communities of practice in Berlin.

Interview Excerpt 33 Jessica: 'I feel like I should'

1 R: I want to learn German because I live here, and I feel like I should.

Interview Excerpt 34 Andy: 'a little ridiculous'

1 I: What do you want to do with your German in the future?

2 R: I don't know. Because if I go back to the US and they look at my resume, it's like, 'Oh you lived in Germany for two years? Do you speak German?' and I say no, I think that's a little ridiculous.

Mariana, who unlike Andy wishes to remain in Berlin long term and work in an area that will require her to speak German fluently, expresses feelings of being an outsider because of her lesser German language ability. She reports feeling shut out from the L2 speaking world, and 'attached' to her international friends. Throughout the interview she discusses how her life is able to function because her studies are completely in English but she feels concerned about the future. The international community is connected to her life as a student but it will not be connected to her life in the workforce. She is strongly invested in entering the German speaking communities of practice associated with her future career, though she also has concerns about her ability to successfully enter these communities.

Interview Excerpt 35 Mariana: 'I feel I'm not part of it'

- 1 R: I feel like I have to learn German. I feel bad. I feel like I'm not able to feel part of it, part of society, have a normal life here. I always feel attached to my international friends. Even though my master's is in English, still. In my area all the job positions/ You have to speak really good German.

In Interview Excerpt 36 James describes a discrepancy between what he had initially associated with the L2 and the associated culture and his impressions after having lived in Berlin. He describes feeling somewhat less connected to the German culture than he had expected, having come from a family with ties to Germany and active German traditions as part of his childhood. James talks about spending most of his time with the international community, rather than the German L2 speaking community. He reflects that he could imagine himself living longer term as a part of that community but not as part of a less international community, such as that of a smaller German city.

Interview Excerpt 36 James: 'not always accessible'

- 1 I: What do you want to do with your German skills in the future?
- 2 R: I don't know if I can see myself living in Germany for a long time. Maybe in Berlin I could live. A lot of other parts of Germany/ I don't know. I'm not/ Maybe I just don't like Germans as much as I thought I would. (laughs) You know it's just like/ There's a lot of things here that I'm just like, 'This is very strange.' [...] Like most of the people I spend my time with here are not German. And so/ I don't know. It maybe/ The German people I've met here don't always feel so accessible.

This demonstrates the degree to which the status of being an Anglophone is a double edged sword. On one hand it grants access to a diverse international community connected to the university. On the other hand it was experienced by a number of interviewees as having an isolating effect, creating the impression of two worlds existing within close vicinity of one another but often not interacting.

7.3 Conveying the self in a multilingual environment

As was the case for learners in the Australian learning environment, the strategic language choices made by learners in the German learning context are highly intertwined with issues of identity and self presentation. This aligns also with the research outcomes of Pellegrino Aveni (2005), who found that learners often resisted opportunities to use the L2 because using the L2 stopped them from being able to present themselves in the way in which they desired. Connected to the issue of self presentation are concerns about the ability to present oneself as someone who is intelligent, educated and able to participate in academic discourse.

Interview Excerpt 37 Andy: 'Not unless it's just a quick transaction'

- 1 I: Are there situations in which you feel very comfortable speaking German?
- 2 R: Very comfortable?
- 3 I: Or comfortable?
- 4 R: Not necessarily, unless it's just a quick transaction.

Interview Excerpt 38 Beste: 'I am a tiny bit ashamed'

- 1 I: And do you feel comfortable speaking in German?
- 2 R: When I am surrounded by a lot of German people, I am very conscious of myself and I am a tiny bit ashamed/ like embarrassed to speak. Maybe I feel like I would make a mistake in a conversation or something like that.

Learners were asked in the interviews about how comfortable they felt when speaking German. More than half of the learners reported often feeling uncomfortable in their attempts to use German outside of the classroom. For example, in Interview Excerpt 37, Andy describes only feeling comfortable when using German in brief transactions. He discusses feeling uncomfortable using German in other situations, including in the language classroom, resulting in a resolve to often avoid speaking altogether, which will be discussed later in this chapter. In Interview Excerpt 38, Beste echoes a similar sentiment, as she describes feeling 'ashamed' and 'embarrassed' (line 2) when she uses German, a feeling connected primarily to insecurities and expectations associated with her grammatical accuracy.

Learners often felt held back from attempting to speak German because they perceived that their German L1 interlocutors would focus on their shortcomings. This led them both to feel

uncomfortable speaking German, and to avoid speaking German outside of the classroom altogether. For Andy and a number of other learners in this group, the learning strategy adopted was to work on German skills in the safer and more structured environment of the L2 classroom with the goal of one day using the language outside of the classroom once a perceived standard of acceptable language competency had been reached. This appeared for Andy and Beste alike to be a near L1 speaker level, which, without practising outside of the classroom, would be extremely difficult to achieve. Thus these learners tend to find themselves frustrated at their lack of progress, and struggle to move beyond the intermediate level of language competency.

7.3.1 Prioritising personally meaningful communication

Both Benson (2019) and van Lier (2004), along with many other social language learning researchers, have emphasised the importance of viewing the language learner as a whole person. Language teachers, learners and researchers alike need to take into consideration other aspects of learners' life outside of the language classroom which influence their choices to engage with the L2. Research looking at language learning within communities of practice (e.g. Lantolf & Pavlenko 2001; Norton 2013; Toohey & Norton 2003) has shown that learners play an important agentive role in determining their learning outcomes. Learners construct their identities through their roles and participation in communities of practice (Paltridge 2015; Wenger 1998). That being the case, these communities are imperative to determining a sense of belonging and learners tend to place a very high value on their ability to participate in their existing communities of practice.

Interview Excerpt 39 Sofia: 'it's not like real social interaction'

- 1 R: I kind of wish I could practise more. But then again you kind of/ If I say like, 'Ok let's speak German a little bit.' It's like an exercise. So, we're spending some amount of time practising, it's not like real social interaction.

For learners whose German skills are at an intermediate level, such as those interviewed as part of this research, using German in existing communities of practice not only disrupts the habitual discourse patterns of that community of practice, it inhibits the learner from communicating elements of their identity. In Interview Excerpt 39 Sofia describes speaking in German as an 'exercise' and as something that is separated from 'real social interaction'. Sofia

discusses not being able to speak about topics in German which interest her. This means she is unable to engage in conversations which align with her true sense of self and thus speaking in German for her lacks a sense of genuineness. Similarly, in Interview Excerpt 40 Defne describes how she feels when speaking in German with her L1 German speaking partner. She reflects that it is difficult to have ‘meaningful content’ when speaking German (line 2). When she speaks in English with her partner she can discuss complex topics that align with her identity as someone involved in academia and as someone who is well educated. Speaking German means she cannot participate in the discourses that are part of the community of practice that she has formed with her partner.

Interview Excerpt 40 Defne: ‘it’s important to have meaningful content’

- 1 I: What about your boyfriend, do you ever speak in German with him?
- 2 R: (laughs) Whenever I talk to him, I don’t understand anything and it really depresses me. [...] And we, most of the time, will discuss politics or literature or something. And we will try a little and then speak English. It’s more important to have meaningful content so it’s a little hard with German.

Interview Excerpt 41 James: ‘you’re kind of less’

- 1 R: I’d been thinking/ I was like, ‘Do I wanna try and speak/ like go on dates and speak in German? Do I message people in German?’ And I was like, I don’t really wanna do that.
- 2 I: What would be different?
- 3 R: I don’t know. It would just be less, I think. You’re kind of less. You can express less complex ideas, you’re going to be less funny. But we’ll see, maybe I’ll be going on dates in English and I’ll say, ‘This isn’t going well anyway, I may as well be speaking German.’ (laughs)

In Interview Excerpt 41 James discusses his consideration of his language choice while dating in Germany. He states that he considered which language to use and came to the conclusion that he would use English because if he were to use German he would be ‘less’, in other words able to communicate less of his identity to his interlocutors (line 3). He emphasises the lack of ability to communicate ‘complex ideas’ in German. He is not able to participate in the conversations which are part of the discourse that is part of his L1 communities of practice. A highly strategic learner, James sees the potential of dates that are not ‘going well’ to be transformed into opportunities to speak the L2. However, this strategic behaviour would only be instigated in the case that there was a loss of social investment in the relationship, with his lack of desire to pursue an interaction romantically. This decision allows for a shift in

investment from the social relationship towards an investment in pursuing language learning. For the learners interviewed, choosing not to speak German in their everyday communities of practice was often connected to a desire to talk about complex, academic topics which were beyond their current ability in German. The desire to socialise and to convey particular aspects of their identity was, in most situations, something they were more invested in in most situations than they were in pursuing opportunities to use the L2.

Impressions of the self: authenticity and language choice

Connected with the desire to participate in the habitual discourses of learners' everyday communities of practice is the desire to communicate the self authentically. Already highlighted has been learners' perception of a lack of ability to communicate the full self, and a lack of ability for 'real social interaction' in the L2 (e.g. Interview Excerpt 39, Interview Excerpt 41). Research by Piller (2002) and Joseph (2016) has emphasised that learners, even with very high competencies in their L2, continue to perceive the L1 as the means by which they can most genuinely and completely communicate the self.

Interview Excerpt 42 Beste: 'two stupid people trying to feel German'

- 1 R: Sometimes I speak in German with a Swedish friend of mine who is also learning German. But sometimes it just feels like we are two stupid people trying to feel German.

The inability to fully express one's ideas and to participate in the discourses that are part of the everyday in the L2 amounts to feeling 'stupid' for many learners, exemplified by Beste in Interview Excerpt 42. She describes her efforts to practise speaking German with another L2 speaker, whereby she reflects on the perceived inauthenticity of their attempts to create a community of practice that operates in German. She describes herself and her speech partner as 'trying to feel German', insinuating that she feels they are trying to take on an identity that does not belong to them, or that does not align with her true sense of who she is.

Interview Excerpt 43 James: 'lack of ability to express yourself in everything'

- 1 R: I'm not funny in German. There's a lot of times I make jokes in German and people do not understand that I've made a joke. I feel like it's just a general lack of ability to properly express yourself in kind of everything. [...] There's certain/ Maybe part of how we speak is how/ Using a particular phrase/ You know, you have friends that you will quite often use a particular phrase. You lose that.

In Interview Excerpt 43 James elaborates on his earlier statements about feeling as though he is able to communicate less of the self in the L2. For James, an important element of his identity is his sense of humour and he finds that this does not come across when speaking German. He reflects that often his attempts at making humorous statements go unrecognised. Further, he is unable to carry out his particular way of speaking. He cannot use many of the words, phrases, slang, and idioms that would be available to him in the L1, which are also embedded in discourses connected to various communities of practice and subcultures which one might identify with. Many learners expressed a concern and frustration about a lack of ability to speak in a particular way, a way of speaking connected with one's sense of self.

Interview Excerpt 44 Defne: 'like a little dumb kid'

- 1 R: I'm like a kid! (laughs) I think. Like a 5 year old or a 4 year old even. (laughs) I feel like a kid or a little like a dumb kid trying to say something.

Interview Excerpt 45 Mariana: 'nobody says that to me in other languages'

- 1 R: When I speak German, I say very simple things. And people are like, '*Süß, oh so süß!*' But nobody says that to me in other languages. It's just because you're like a kid! It sounds like the person is innocent or doesn't know things.

As a result of an inability to use language to form complex sentences and discuss academic topics, numerous learners described feeling 'like a kid', such as in Interview Excerpt 44 and Interview Excerpt 45. Mariana reflects that people refer to her as cute (*süß*) when she speaks German. However this is not an aspect of her identity that is recognised when she speaks languages in which she is more competent. For both Defne and Mariana, feeling like a child is connected to a feeling of being perceived as less intelligent, less eloquent and less capable of complex thought when using the L2 because their current language ability inhibits their ability to communicate their ideas to their full potential. Mariana discusses people perceiving her as 'innocent' and 'not knowing things'. In this way, speaking the L2 outside of class presents a challenge to self presentation because learners often feel that the way they are perceived by their interlocutors is misaligned with their own understanding of who they are.

Interview Excerpt 46 James: 'he was just trying to do it in a different language'

- 1 R: I remember I used to work with this guy who was from Spain and the boss would always talk about how he was really dumb. [...] But definitely so much of it was just that he was trying to do it in a different language. And the boss would tell him to do things and he

wouldn't understand. I definitely do that at work now sometimes. [...] The impression that people form about you is very much about how you can communicate.

Following his own experiences of the inability to communicate the full self in the L2, James has reflected on some of his interactions with L2 English speakers in Australia. In Interview Excerpt 46, he describes a scenario at work in which his Spanish co-worker was perceived as being 'dumb' and slow. After himself working in a hospitality environment as an L2 speaker, he describes his realisation that his co-worker potentially simply had not understood what he was being asked to do because of the language barrier. He discusses how the inability to express oneself, through speech and also through behaviour, that is the ability to quickly respond to commands and seamlessly follow instructions has an important influence over the way one is perceived. James recognises that this perception is not necessarily connected to one's true mental capacity or intelligence but rather is associated with one's ability to communicate using the L2 within a particular social context.

7.4 Barriers to accessing opportunities to speak in a transcultural context

A focus of the semi structured interviews was on learners' pursuit of opportunities to speak German, looking at both how willing they were to do this and how strategically they approached their attempts at accessing the language. It is important to understand learners' communities of practice outside of the classroom and the degree to which the L2 is, or has the potential to be, a part of those communities of practice. This subchapter looks at the various and sometimes limited L2 speaking communities of practice that the learners in this group accessed, with a focus on the particular struggles attached to the transcultural context of Berlin.

7.4.1 English speaking communities of practice and accessing the L2

Interview data revealed that the learners surveyed participate in communities of practice in which English is a commonly used language. For almost all of the learners interviewed, their studies were entirely in English, meaning that they were not strongly invested in building skills for studying in German. In Interview Excerpt 47, James notes that most of the people within his social communities of practice do not speak fluent German, making it difficult for him to practise German with them.

Interview Excerpt 47 James: 'most people are speaking English'

- 1 I: Who are most of the people that you spend your time with?
- 2 R: Most of my close friends here have been other exchange students. [...] Then and in classes as well, obviously they're English classes, so most people are speaking English and usually don't have very fluent German anyway.

Interview Excerpt 48 Beste: 'nobody around me is trying to learn German'

- 1 R: I am still very motivated actually. But actually, nobody around me is trying to learn German. Nobody has this motivation that I do. [...] Everybody is willing to switch to English, including me, to express myself better sometimes. [...] The most difficult thing about learning German is everybody speaks English.

Beste, in Interview Excerpt 48, makes a similar point; there are few people around her who share the mutual goal of learning German. Numerous interviewees highlighted the dilemma of having a strong desire to learn the language but struggling to find other friends with whom that desire was shared. The shared ability to speak languages other than German, most often

English, with both other international students as well as German L1 speakers was unanimously identified as a primary cause of the issue of not being able to access opportunities to speak German.

Interview Excerpt 49 Defne: ‘technically I have German friends’

- 1 I: Do you have any other friends that you speak in German with?
- 2 R: I mean the problem with my friends is/ It's a good thing, but the problem for learning German is that they all, almost all, are quite fluent in English. I mean technically I have German friends and I can practise but it never happens.

Interview Excerpt 50 Sofia: ‘the problem is [...] my English is so good’

- 1 R: The problem is maybe because my English is so good. It's so easy for me to speak English and it's so much faster. Sometimes even in the conversation with people in like the café, when they realise that you're a foreigner and even if you try, they switch to English pretty quickly. So, you're like, ok whatever. [...] Sometimes it's even the case that people don't speak German. The thing is that I know maybe like, maybe 40 people in Berlin, maybe 4 or 5 of them are German.
- 2 I: Do you have any friends that you speak in German with?
- 3 R: No, not at all.

In Interview Excerpt 49 Defne aptly summarises this tension between competing desires, describing her friends' ability to speak English so competently initially as a 'problem' (line 2) before correcting herself to describe it as 'a good thing', but nonetheless a 'problem for learning German'. For Defne, English enables her to live a normal life in a foreign country, to express herself in a way that she feels comfortable with. However, simultaneously it blocks her from being able to pursue her language learning goals, which are so important for her future in Berlin. Similarly, in Interview Excerpt 50, Sofia identifies her own extensive knowledge of English as the 'problem' which is holding her back from being able to practise her German (line 1). The ease and efficiency of communicating in English means that it wins out as the language of choice, despite her motivations to improve her language skills. She further reflects that very few people that she knows are in fact L1 German speakers. Additionally, she confirms that she does not currently speak German with any of her friends at all outside of class (line 3).

The discourses attached to the communities of practice in the interviewees participated were strongly rooted in English. The university and its connected communities of practice were described by them as being highly international, and operating primarily in English. In many

cases it would not be possible for them to function in German because few members of these communities had strong German skills. Some learners expressed feelings of contentment with the fact that these groups were their primary communities of practice, whereas other learners were frustrated by a feeling of being shut out from German speaking communities.

7.4.2 Refusal to speak by others: frustration and anger

Many of the Anglophone learners in Berlin discussed situations in which they had experienced feelings of frustration and anger connected with their attempts at practising and using their German outside of the classroom. They described situations where they made autonomous, strategic attempts to use German in situations within their daily lives. This included transactional use of German with unfamiliar speech partners as well as initiatives they had made to speak in German with friends or acquaintances. Learners described feeling negatively in situations where they made an effort to speak German but their interlocutor replied in English.

Interview Excerpt 51 Jessica: 'where they are living has changed'

- 1 R: I just feel angry. Because I feel like I am trying [...] And it's not so much that they're frustrated with me as with the situation. And I do feel like among bus drivers and people that don't really speak English, I think there is this kind of frustration that where they are living has changed so much and that there are people that don't speak their language. And I think that that would be hard so I don't take it personally [...] I would really like to speak more, and I have tried but I honestly/ I actually have tried and people don't really want to. [...] But I always try. But people switch to English always.

Interview Excerpt 52 Beste: 'it's hard to force every time'

- 1 R: It's hard to force every time, like, 'Hey let's speak German, let's speak German.' And people sometimes really don't wanna do it.

In Interview Excerpt 51, Jessica discusses perceived feelings of frustration with her language abilities in relation to a larger social issue in Berlin, the ongoing process of change in the city. Berlin has become an increasingly popular international destination for both travel and longer term residence. Jessica sees her interlocutors' code switching as a symbolic choice that shows their impatience and frustration with the broader situation. Jessica's reaction suggests that she perceives the grammatical errors embedded in her attempts at speaking German to identify her as an outsider. Further, her comments give the impression that she feels that this code switching

is a form of social resistance to the international community, a tightening of the boundaries of pre-existing L2 speaking community of practice. This sentiment was echoed in many of the interviews. The phrase ‘people don’t want to’ was uttered by numerous interviewees, including Beste in Interview Excerpt 52, when commenting on this topic.

Interview Excerpt 53 Andy: ‘you have to speak perfect German’

- 1 R: My roommate is weird. It’s like you have to speak perfect German to him or he won’t speak German to you.
- 2 I: So, have you tried to speak German to him?
- 3 R: Yeah, he just answers in English. Even over text.

Andy, in Interview Excerpt 53 describes his frustration at his attempts to use German with his roommate. He feels that his roommate is only willing to speak with people who are able to communicate at a native speaker level. For Andy this situation is frustrating because he feels that his roommate is indirectly implying that his German skills should be stronger but simultaneously the roommate is impeding an opportunity for progress. Many of the learners throughout the interviews reflected on similar mixed emotions connected to their abilities to use English and German in their everyday lives. Their ability to speak English enabled them to live in a foreign country more easily but at the same time it meant that they felt that some German L1 speakers viewed them negatively. Additionally, they felt frustrated and often also hurt in situations where they sensed that their attempt to use German as a gesture of good will had not been recognised or had been misunderstood. In such instances the identity learners wished to portray and that which was assigned to them by their interlocutor did not align. Many of the learners interviewed were learning German as an act of respect towards the culture in which they were living, and in using their German they were attempting to communicate their respect for the culture. However, as the learners were still at an intermediate level of language ability, interlocutors chose to communicate with them in English and in doing so made them learners feel that their efforts were inadequate.

Resisting opportunities to speak

In some cases, as a result of repeatedly attempting to use German and being met with code switching or otherwise negative responses, some learners had chosen to avoid speaking German in a range of situations. Andy, for example, in Interview Excerpt 54 discusses the ways

in which he avoids opportunities to speak in the language classroom. This has come about because he feels that his attempts are too strongly criticised by the language teacher. He reflects, with a tinge of sarcasm, that he feels as if he has ‘failed [the teacher’s] language’. This can be seen as an act of identity preservation. In situations in which Andy has chosen to speak up in class and had mistakes pointed out in front of the rest of the class, Andy’s identity as a competent language learner is being presented to the class group in a way that does not align with his own beliefs. For Andy, his best chance at preserving his identity is resisting opportunities to speak within the classroom.

Interview Excerpt 54 Andy: ‘I don’t speak’

- 1 R: So I don’t speak. It’s just like, ‘Sorry I made one mistake.’ But that’s the difficulty of it, I guess. [...] She has that unique way of making you feel bad for trying. For failing her language.

Mariana, in Interview Excerpt 55 discusses a desire to have permission to speak freely, with grammatical imperfections. However, she feels that this freedom is not granted by her German speaking interlocutors outside of the classroom. She feels that she needs to speak ‘correctly’, and that she ‘shouldn’t be saying it because it’s wrong’. She feels that she should only speak if she knows how to put forward her ideas with perfect grammar. Further, she believes that this is something that other language learners feel similarly anxious about.

Interview Excerpt 55 Mariana: ‘I shouldn’t be saying it because it’s wrong’

- 1 R: I feel really bad when I switch to English. Because I really want to try to say things even if they are wrong. But it seems that I cannot/ I shouldn’t be saying it because it’s wrong. People have told me that Germans really care about their grammar, about speaking correctly. So maybe that’s something that people are afraid of.

Interview Excerpt 56 James: ‘it’s a victory if I can get them to understand’

- 1 I: What’s your attitude towards making mistakes when you speak?
- 2 R: That’s never really worried me too much. I’ve definitely always put more into trying to just speak. Just trying to speak and not trying to get it exactly right. And I do always say something to someone in German and then mutter a few corrections to myself afterwards. But I think people don’t expect me to have perfect German. So, it’s a victory if I can get them to understand what I’m saying.

Not all learners felt the need to have error free language in order to be granted social permission to use the L2. James, in Interview Excerpt 56, has a very different attitude from that of Andy

and Mariana. He feels that because he is a foreigner, it is socially acceptable for him to make grammatical errors in speech (line 2). He does not feel that it is expected or required of him to speak 'perfect German'. His focus is on conveying his point, rather than on conveying it with grammatical precision, and this approach allows him a great deal of freedom in his ability to use the L2 without anxiety.

7.5 Strategic, autonomous choices for accessing the L2

As has been discussed in greater detail in [Chapter 3](#), previous research has highlighted the importance of out of class learning (e.g. Hall 2009; Kashiwa & Benson 2018; Lai 2015; Sundqvist 2011). The prior subsections have looked at a number of social reasons why Anglophone learners in Berlin struggled to access the L2, including a lack of speech partners to practise with and direct resistance to allowing their participation in L2 communities. This subsection looks at the strategic behaviours which have granted them access to opportunities to use German outside of the language classroom. Benson (2011b) has suggested that it is the role of the teacher to plant the ‘seeds of autonomy’ from which learners can develop their own autonomous out of class learning behaviours. The learners in this group, however, did not partake in explicit strategy teaching sessions. The strategic behaviours were varied across the learner group, with some learners showing themselves to be highly resourceful in creating opportunities for self directed naturalistic learning.

7.5.1 Structured language use opportunities: the tandem program

A learning opportunity that was structured through the organisation of meetups by the university was the ‘tandem’ program. Within this program, the university paired speakers of various L1s together so that, for instance someone wishing to learn German who speaks English as their L1, could be paired with a German L1 speaker who wishes to learn English. Learners interviewed who spoke only English and some German discussed some issues with this program as there was less demand for English language practice and a high demand for German. Anglophones who spoke additional languages had more success in participating within the program. The program formally paired language learners together, however following this, tandem groups were left to make decisions about language use activities independently. Within the interviews, learners were asked about whether, and how often they met with a tandem partner as a strategy for learning German. Around one third of learners (37.5% N=6) reported not engaging in the tandem program at all. One quarter (25% N=4) of learners had a tandem partner that they met with irregularly, and around one third (37.5% N=6) met with a tandem partner on a regular basis. Meeting with a tandem partner was strategy for gaining access to German that was viewed positively among interview participants because it

provided a purposeful and somewhat structured way for them to access the L2. Tandem meetups did not require them to initiate switching to German within preestablished relationships that habitually used English. The mutual benefit of tandem programs helped learners to feel more comfortable speaking in German with an L1 speaker. In some cases, however, learners reported having issues in organising meet ups and finding conversation topics, and in resisting the temptation to switch to English entirely for the sessions.

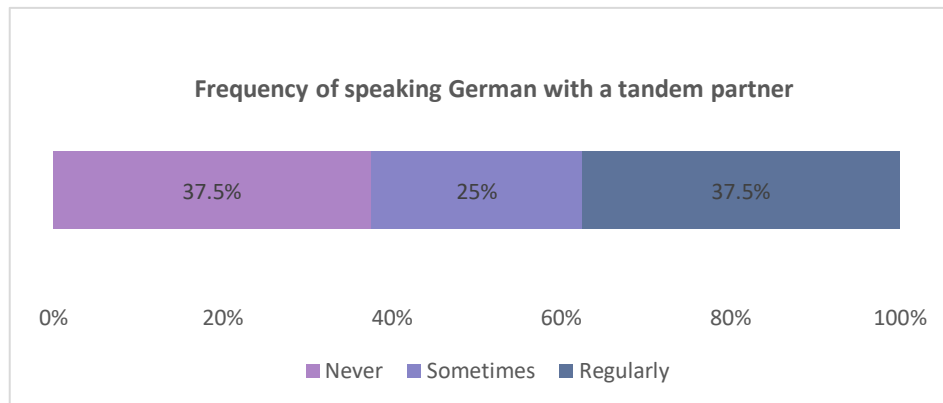


Figure 7.1 *Learners' reported frequency of speaking German with a tandem partner N=16*

As well as initiating engagement in a tandem meetup, some learners also approached their ongoing participation in a tandem strategically. For example, in Interview Excerpt 57 James describes his approach to tandem sessions. He emphasises that he has made specific considerations about which types of activities they can engage in as part of their sessions, having found that visiting new parts of the city creates a more comfortable environment than sitting in a café. He discusses the division between languages, saying that ideally they speak English and German equally. However, he says that he is often 'a little bit greedy' (line 3) because he strategically sways the conversation to continue in German. Other interview participants discussed scenarios in which their tandem partner behaved similarly to James, with the result that their sessions fell back into their L1. In these situations, they often described encountering once again a conflict between their desire to socialise and speak freely and their desire to practise the L2.

Interview Excerpt 57 James: 'I'm a little bit greedy'

- 1 R: And I'm doing this tandem thing which has actually been a good way to hang out and speak German with people. My tandem partner is very nice. We do fun things together sometimes. But it's usually quite fun.
- 2 I: Do you do 50%, 50%?
- 3 R: I think I'm a little bit greedy with it probably. I think I try to speak a bit more in German just because/ (laughs) I don't feel like he really needs it that bad. [...] So that's been a really good way to learn. [...]
- 4 R: Most of the just kind of stranger interactions I have I try to do in German and sometimes try to drag them out a little bit. Like, ask more questions than I usually would. [...] But I know it's going to be effort. So, if I'm like really tired, I'm not going to take this opportunity to engage and speak in German because it feels like work to do. It's kind of fatiguing to speak.

James in Interview Excerpt 57 (line 4), describes the highly autonomous behaviours in which he engages in order to access the language. He reports using 'stranger interactions' as opportunities to learn, enabling him to engage to a greater degree in conversations with people that he does not know in order to be able to practise the L2. He reflects, however, that these interactions can become 'fatiguing' (line 4) and points out that it feels like effort on his part to be the initiator or pursuer of such interactions. This struggle is reflected in Interview Excerpt 58, where Antwan similarly describes a need to 'force' oneself to speak in German (line 2). This sense of having to go against the natural flow of social interaction and make specific, autonomous efforts to access the L2 despite being in a German speaking environment was strongly echoed throughout numerous interviews.

Interview Excerpt 58 Antwan: 'you have to force yourself'

- 1 I: What would your advice be to somebody who is in Berlin and wants to learn German?
- 2 R: Well, find German friends. Like that might be tough/ I don't know. [...] If you're in Berlin and you want to practise German, you need German people. If you want to learn German in Berlin, you really have to force yourself.

In Interview Excerpt 59, James describes a further strategic behaviour that he has engaged in, showing a great deal of learner autonomy: he has recently attained work in a hamburger restaurant. The decision to take on this work was motivated in part by a desire to integrate and work in Berlin, but also largely by a desire to learn the L2 in a naturalistic context. He describes his appreciation for the fact that he is forced to speak the language because his co-worker does

not speak English. He recognises also, how closely tied language use is to the context in which it occurs, describing his language use at work as ‘hamburger German’.

Interview Excerpt 59 James: ‘it’s ‘hamburger’ German because we’re making hamburgers’

- 1 R: I’ve recently, in the last couple of weeks started working at a place which has been good in terms of learning German. Because the guy I work with doesn’t speak English. So we speak German. It’s ‘hamburger’ German because we’re making hamburgers. (laughs) So that’s been a good way to speak a lot of German.

James has demonstrated himself as a learner who is highly aware of the affordances within his learning environment. He appreciates the language courses offered by the university but recognises also the need for his own autonomous efforts to create opportunities to engage with the German language outside of the classroom. Along with his strategic behaviours which allow him to initiate conversations with people around him, takes on work in German speaking environments and create environments such as with his tandem partner where he will have many opportunities to speak and also receive feedback, he also engages in receptive learning activities. He reports reading familiar book series in German and watching television series. James is an excellent example of social language learning strategies in action and his responses to questions regarding his out of class language use showed that his behaviours were intentional and strategic, with the goal of language competency in mind.

7.5.2 Investment in out of class learning: receptive activities

Although learners were also invested in their future plans, which in some cases required them to gain access to L2 speaking communities of practice, their investment in communities of practice in the present which operated primarily in English tended to override that. This meant that the language choices that they made in regard to creating and taking up opportunities to use the L2 with other L2 speakers and with other L2 learners were similar to those of the learners in Australia. In many cases, learners chose to engage in receptive naturalistic language learning activities such as watching media online, listening to podcasts or listening to music, as exemplified by Beste in Interview Excerpt 60. This proved to be an easier point of access to the L2 for these learners, despite living in an L2 speaking community. Learners in the Berlin environment showed greater investment in their social relationships, which were easiest to maintain through using English, than in their desire to learn German.

Interview Excerpt 60 Beste: 'I watch some videos'

- 1 I: How do you learn German outside of the classroom?
- 2 R: I read sometimes. I listen to podcasts. I watch some videos. Sometimes German songs.

In Interview Excerpt 61 and Interview Excerpt 62, Andy and Defne describe their attempts at speaking in German with German L1 speaking friends. In both cases, learners describe a receptive language learning experience. Andy mostly listens to his friends' conversations, rather than actively participating in them. For Defne, her friends speak in German and she answers in English, allowing her to feel comfortable enough to continue the conversation.

Interview Excerpt 61 Andy: 'it's usually them speaking to each other'

- 1 I: Have you ever tried to speak German with your friends?
- 2 R: Yeah I do. I have other friends that speak fluent German. Sometimes we speak in German, but it'll be like a short conversation. But then I'm not usually speaking much. It's usually them speaking to each other and I'll interject. But it's good understanding or listening.

Interview Excerpt 62 Defne: 'I answer in English'

- 1 I: How does it go when you meet with your German friends and you say, 'Let's speak German!'?
- 2 R: (laughs) My rule is you speak German and I answer in English. (laughs)

Similar approaches to accessing the L2 were discussed by many learners throughout the interviews. They represented a low stakes way for them to engage with the L2, requiring them to comprehend the language but not necessitating language production. Such exchanges also allowed learners to have greater control over the way in which they portrayed the self, because they were able to use English to convey their ideas, a language over which they have a greater degree of control. In approaching language learning this way learners are employing a social strategy which has enabled them to find a middle point between their social relationships in which they are highly invested, and their desire to practise their German. These strategic choices allowed them a greater sense of maintaining their social relationships and the identities expressed through language that are attached to them.

Although the transcultural and highly diverse environment represented by Berlin has in many ways made communication simpler for this learner group, it has also complicated learners' attempts to learn the L2. The communities of practice attached to learners' social and personal lives in Berlin operate primarily in English and thus learners are highly invested in continuing to use English to maintain and build these relationships. Learners were attempting to resolve as best they could their various investments, which led them to choose to speak either English or German in a range of situations, and led them to use receptive strategies such as those described by Defne and Andy, allowing them to access language while maintaining the identities they had established with their speech partners.

7.5.3 The classroom as an opportunity to speak

For many learners, the classroom community of practice presented itself as a primary opportunity to gain access to the L2. Despite being in an L2 speaking environment, however, the responses of the learners studying in Berlin echoed those of the learners in Australia when discussing the difficulties of accessing opportunities to use the L2. In Interview Excerpt 63 Andy describes this issue and states that attending university language classes is his primary solution for this problem. He is simultaneously participating in multiple language classes offered by different universities. For Andy, the language classes provide a structured and socially comfortable way for him to access German. They provide a time and a specific context and purpose for his language use and this appeals because Andy has some reservations about his ability to use the language. Thus, he resists opportunities to use German outside of class and instead creates further classroom contexts for himself to continue practising within an environment where his self perceived language shortcomings are felt to be more acceptable. This is an example of a learner choosing to shift the locus of control towards the teacher, avoiding autonomous learning activities beyond the effort made to see out additional language classes.

Interview Excerpt 63 Andy: 'I've taken up another class'

- 1 I: What's been the hardest thing about learning German for you?
- 2 R: I guess finding people to speak to in German, that actually speak German to you.
- 3 I: Do you have any strategies for that?
- 4 R: I mean, I would say I've taken up another class, so that's more additional speaking time.

Interview Excerpt 64 James: 'It would be easy not to do'

- 1 R: [Learning German] has been really fun since I've been here. It's felt really good to do. I'm really glad I'm doing a course for it because it's something that twice a week puts you thinking about German and reminds you all the time you should be trying to do it. [...] I've got friends who decided not to do a course and they don't seem to be learning any German. Like I think it would be pretty easy to not do.

Similarly, James reflects on the structure and motivation for continued language learning that the language course provides him with, exemplified in Interview Excerpt 64. He speaks of friends who have chosen not to participate in a language course who have not continued their language learning, instead operating only in international, English speaking circles. This highlights a difference between the broader community and the communities of practice that operate within it. Learners can exist with transactional German skills in Berlin, because the communities of practice through which they move only require that of them. The language classroom is an example of a way to force oneself to participate in a community of practice that does require German language use.

7.6 Learning German in a transcultural context: a summary

Within the transcultural context of an international university in Berlin, the learners interviewed described ways in which their identities were intertwined with both their communities of practice and their strategic language learning related choices. Some learners described a sense of a shift in identity due to the ways in which they were able to use both English and German in this transcultural environment, taking on an international identity. The discussion of these connections which have been presented in this chapter is intended to be an investigation of learner experiences, rather than a representation of the broader context of Berlin. The descriptions of experiences reflect those detailed by learners in the interviews. This chapter takes learners' descriptions of events and experiences as its primary interest. Through viewing the learning environment and its perceived affordances from the perspective of the learner, a deeper understanding of the reasoning behind the ways in which learners approach their out of class activities can be achieved.

Learners had a range of social investments connected to their L2 learning. In many cases these were similar to those of learners in the Australian learning context, as they wished to learn German as a movement towards social awareness and empathy. In some cases they were also concerned about how a lack of competency in German would come across when they returned home. Therefore, some learners were invested in language learning because of an investment in portraying themselves as certain kinds of people. However, numerous learners were also considering staying in Berlin long term and wished to gain access to communities of practice through their L2 competency. Furthermore, learners described a conflict between their own perceived identity and the one which they presented to their interlocutors when speaking German. For many learners interviewed, the identity they projected to others when speaking the L2 lacked authenticity. They reported feeling less intelligent and more childlike when speaking the L2. Thus, in many cases, this investment in their having control over the identity they conveyed to their interlocutors led them to choose to speak English instead, rather than taking up or creating an opportunity to speak the L2.

All learners interviewed were highly invested in social relationships whose language of operation was English. This meant that learners often struggled to 'force' these relationships, or communities, to shift into German because switching languages caused a major disruption to their ability to participate fully in that community of practice. Learners discussed feelings of

frustration connected to an inability to communicate complex ideas and speak about topics that were important to them when using the L2. This led them to use English in the majority of their out of class communications, much like the learners in the Australian context.

As a result of the strong English language routines within learners' out of class communities of practice, learners needed to autonomously employ their own social language learning strategies in order to gain access to the L2. In some cases, similar to learners in the Australian context, learners chose to see the language learning classroom as their primary opportunity to practise using German. These learners typically also used a range of receptive social strategies to further their language contact and engagement, but often reported engaging in these activities intermittently. Many learners made attempts to participate in the tandem language partner program organised by the university, however they experienced varying rates of success. Their success was in some cases connected to their willingness to employ further strategic behaviours such as considering activities that were conducive to creating a comfortable environment that fostered language use, or taking the initiative to organise meetups, as well as ensuring that conversations did not switch back to English. Gaining access to the L2 outside of class was recognised fairly unanimously as being something that required a great deal of effort, both socially and emotionally. Some learners demonstrated highly strategic approaches to furthering their language learning, such as seeking out a workplace in which co-workers spoke only German. Overall, learners in both the Australian and German contexts faced similar difficulties in gaining access to L2 speaking communities. However, learners in the Berlin context were clearly considerably more frustrated and challenged emotionally by their inability to access the much larger L2 speaking community, which was in much closer proximity.

Anglophones in both the Australian language learning context and the German context faced difficulties in accessing language which were connected directly to their ability to speak English and the implications of this ability for their social relationships. The availability of the of English as a means of communication within the Berlin context means that learners are able to communicate their intelligence, ideas and various discourses in a relatively uninterrupted way. The learners interviewed placed a high value on this ability and only in a few cases did learners engage in the highly autonomous, strategic behaviours, necessary to practise speaking the L2 outside of the classroom.

Chapter 8: Conclusion and ways forward

This research project has investigated the connections between language learning, identity and social language learning strategies. This chapter provides a summary of the research outcomes of this project, coming back to the original research questions which framed it. This final chapter then considers future actions that might be taken on the basis of the research outcomes of this project. This includes suggestions for implementation of the knowledge related to the use and teaching of social strategies, as well as recommendations for areas of focus for future research.

8.1 Research outcomes

The research carried out as part of this project used a combination of methodologies, including questionnaires, semi structured interviews, participant observation and diary keeping to attain the presented data. Furthermore, an Australian university served as the main focus point for this project while additional complementary data from language learners in Berlin helped to provide a broader perspective on the language learning and identity construction experiences of Anglophone learners. Below, the outcomes of this research are described in connection with the research questions that guided this study.

8.1.1 Returning to research questions

Two guiding research questions framed this research project, each focusing on a different key aspect of this research. Research Question 1 focused on the connections between learners' strategy use and their constructions of identities within L2 communities of practice. Research Question 2 centred on the outcomes and benefits of explicit social language learning strategy instruction within the classroom.

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between Anglophone learners' use of social strategies and their construction of identity within L2 communities of practice?

Data gathered in both the Australian and German learning context showed that learners' communities of practice and their investment in enacting particular identity roles within those communities influenced the strategies that they chose to employ to use the L2, particularly

outside of the classroom. Learners' investment in a range of factors connected to their decision to learn the L2 influenced the types of learning activities they chose to undertake outside of the classroom. Learners' investment in language learning also had to be reconciled with their investment in other areas of their lives such as their social relationships with potential L2 speech partners. The subsections below provide an overview of the research findings relating to learners' investments in constructing and projecting specific identities, and in participating in communities of practice. Further, the ways in which learners' investment in certain identities and communities of practice interact with feelings of comfortableness with different speech partners are investigated below.

Investments in knowledge and portrayed identities

Many of the Anglophone learners in both contexts described being invested in language learning as a symbolic gesture associated with the attainment of linguistic knowledge. Particularly for learners in Australia, language learning was sometimes viewed as an academic subject with a focus on the attainment of linguistic facts, aligning with learners' approaches to learning for their other university subjects. Learning goals were very often evaluated in terms of passing or failing the course. This meant that many learners engaged in form rather than meaning focused learning and thus their strategy use tended to be geared towards accessing grammar and vocabulary related materials, rather than naturalistic ones. Many learners were invested in L2 learning because of a desire to portray themselves as culturally aware, and, in the Berlin context, as making an effort to be respectful of the culture belonging to the place in which they had chosen to live. Many of the learners in Australia discussed choosing to learn German as a movement away from a culture focused on English. Thus, the data gathered in this study reflect an element of Anglophone investment in language learning that is motivated conceptually, rather than practically.

Some learners who have this symbolic investment in learning also expressed additional practical and social motivations for choosing to learn the L2. However, for many, the symbolic dimension the prime motivating factor in their choice to learn an L2. This L2 knowledge acted as a form of status and could be shared with an expanded range of future employers and acquaintances, and as part of first encounters. Such investment in language learning is connected to an approach to learning that focuses less on productive communication and more on receptive forms of interaction with language. For some learners, investment in this aspect

of learning led them to engage in meaning focused receptive activities such as reading books that they had previously read in their L1, listening to music that they enjoyed, or watching YouTube videos on topics relevant to them. Additionally, learners who were strongly invested in language learning as a form of knowledge attainment maximised their access to German language classes, attending as many classes as possible but often, somewhat counterintuitively, engaging minimally with the language outside of those activities. For one learner in particular, this investment in classroom learning was connected to a concern about the presentation of self in terms of the language ability attained abroad upon returning home.

Interview data from the Australian learning context in particular showed that high investment in language learning and in the relationships connected to that learning, for example choosing to learn the L2 because of family heritage, did not necessarily mean that learners were willing to use the L2 with these friends and family members. Indeed, a high investment in relationships meant that some learners consciously chose not to take up opportunities to use the L2 with friends or family who had a shared knowledge of the language. In some cases, this was connected to anxieties about their interlocutors' evaluation of perceived shortcomings in language ability. In other cases, learners' high investment in personal relationships led them to place greater value on their ability to socialise and participate in discourses within pre-existing communities of practice, rather than on improving their L2 abilities. Rather than using social language learning strategies to create and take up opportunities to speak, some learners described something akin to strategic avoidance of situations in which they would have to speak German. This can be attributed to concerns of self presentation in the L2, associated with a limited ability to speak the L2, as well to the feeling that their interlocutor will be critical of that ability.

Comfortableness and willingness to engage using the L2

Reflecting the results of studies by Pellegrino Aveni (2005) and Norton (2000, 2013), and extending them to a foreign language learning context, learners' interview responses, as noted above, suggested that they were highly invested in their presentation of the self. Language learning revealed itself as something that could both benefit and disadvantage the way they were able to present the self to their interlocutors. Many of the learners interviewed within the German learning context discussed a feeling of discomfort when speaking German, particularly outside of the classroom. Learners discussed situations in which interlocutors were not friendly

to them and where their efforts to use the L2 went unrecognised or were misinterpreted. Many learners discussed their anxieties associated with grammatical accuracy, particularly connected to *speaking* in the L2. These concerns made learners significantly less willing to speak both inside and outside of the classroom, for fear of their mistakes being recognised by others. This can at least in part be attributed to a focus on language learning as the attainment of knowledge, from which it follows that a lack of grammatical ability and formal correctness reflects a lack of knowledge. Many learners discussed concerns about revealing that they did not know something that they perceived they *should* know. This is contradicted by their status as intermediate language learners, which necessitates the making of a great number of mistakes in order to be able to practise the language and to further L2 learning. This apprehension on the part of the learners reflects the high value that is put on the use of standard language forms and on grammatical correctness within the academic learning environment. Learners revealed that they had created a range of safe situations in which they could feel comfortable using the L2. These included with family members who were also L2 learners, with other language students, and with friends or family who did not speak the L2 and so could not recognise any mistakes. Finally, a number of learners in the Australian context discussed the strategy of speaking with oneself, in one's head or even out aloud, as a low anxiety method to create an opportunity for language use.

Pursual of L2 learning was for many learners connected to a desire to enter or increase their participation in a range of communities of practice. For example, some learners in the Australian context were invested in their future selves as German language teachers, motivated by their desire to enter these L2 using imagined communities upon the completion of their studies. However, when the use of the L2 hinders learners' ability to participate in their existing communities of practice, this can act as a barrier to language use, as was the case for learners in both the Australian and German context in this study. Learners' existing communities of practice have strong language routines attached to them. The reflections that learners made regarding their out of class language use choices demonstrated that these discourses, once established, can be difficult to shift. In many cases, learners were more invested in furthering social relationships, which was done most efficiently and comfortably through their use of the L1, than they were in pursuing opportunities for L2 use. Learners in Berlin discussed a lack of ability to participate in the discourses associated with their communities of practice when using

the L2. These discourses included speaking about complex topics, ones which were connected to their identities as highly educated university students.

Overall, learners' willingness to engage with the L2, in both receptive and productive out of class activities, was mediated largely by investment in self presentation and in social relationships. This meant that the strategies that learners employed to further their learning were also closely tied to their identity related investments in learning. Learners described a range of investments in varying communities of practice that were connected to their identities, personal interests and often also to the kinds of texts that they engaged with in the L1. An example of this was one student who self identified as a 'nerd' and strategically used video games to access opportunities to use and improve competency in the L2. Other learners, through their receptive engagement with various forms of social media also used this as a way to participate, even if passively, in L2 discourses connected to the communities of practice with which they identified. Some learners demonstrated their ability to be extremely resourceful in strategically seeking out opportunities to engage with the language in a variety of settings. Learners also showed that without such autonomous, strategic behaviour towards out of class language use, they often struggled to build a personal connection with the language and to motivate themselves to use the L2 beyond what was required for the assigned, graded coursework.

Identity construction in a foreign language learning context

The data discussed as part of this study suggests that identity does very much play an integral role in language learning, affirming the observations of previous researchers and expanding the scope of their studies to include learners in foreign language learning settings. This goes against Block's (2014) assertions, discussed in [Chapter 4](#), that little or no identity construction occurs in relation to language in these settings. The insights into language learning gathered through interviews with and questionnaire data from learners at an Australian university provide evidence for the argument that identity construction is implicated as a part of the language learning process itself, regardless of context. Learners in foreign language learning contexts discussed ways in which they had integrated their L2 knowledge into their L1 sense of self, incorporating words and phrases from the L2 into their L1 speech. Furthermore, learners' sense of self and their desire to portray a particular version of the self to others influenced their choices to engage with or avoid using the L2, for example avoiding speaking

in the L2 with family members because of high investment in those relationships. Identity construction associated with language learning is connected to meaningful experiences involving the L2 and this is determined by the ways in which the learner engages with the L2. The variety of environments through which learners move throughout their L2 learning journeys have an impact on the identity construction connected to language learning. There is not a particular learning environment, such as foreign language learning settings, which precludes identity construction in the L2. A second language learning or study abroad setting in some cases provides more prevalent, everyday access to language. However, as we have seen in the data from the learners in the German context, this does not always imply access to meaningful opportunities to speak the L2. Nonetheless, in both contexts, learners discussed the many ways in which their personal connection to the L2, with both positive and negative aspects and emotions attached to it, affects their choices to engage with the L2 and the ways in which they position the self in relation to the L2. If the teaching materials and strategies offered to learners encourage them to engage in meaningful ways with the L2, motivating them to find texts and speech partners with whom they can participate in discourses that align with their identities, learners will build an increasingly stronger sense of self and connection to the L2.

Research Question 1: a summary

Through this study, greater insight has been gathered into the connections between learners' identity construction, their choices to use or avoid using the L2, and their willingness to employ social language learning strategies to create and facilitate opportunities to engage with the L2. The data in this study asserts a strong connection between these three elements, as is depicted in **Figure 8.1**.

These three elements are mediated largely by learners' social investment, which determines their decisions to use or avoid using particular language forms. Learners' meaningful engagement with the L2 aids in the construction of identities that involve the L2. As learners build stronger L2 identities, they become more invested in their language learning. Likewise, for learners who are highly invested in using the L2, for example because of a desire to enter certain imagined communities, there is a strong connection between their future selves within those imagined communities and their use of the L2.

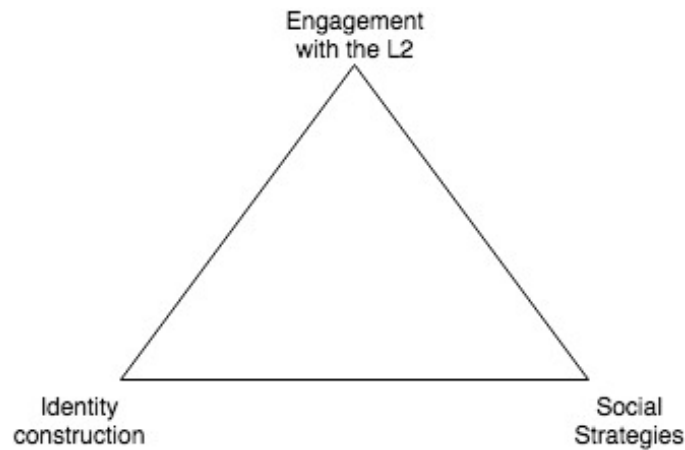


Figure 8.1 *A reactionary relationship between L2 engagement, identity construction and social strategy use*

The identities and associated communities of practice that learners are invested in determine the strategies that learners choose to employ, particularly for their out of class learning. Learners can use strategies to create access to language, to control emotions, to reflect on their learning and to continue to engage in the L2 in ways that are personally meaningful to them, that is activities that align with their L1 identities. Thus, learners' responses to interview questions and within the initial questionnaire demonstrated that, even without explicit strategy instruction, using social strategies to access meaningful opportunities to engage with the L2 helps learners to construct their L2 identities. This finding therefore leads us to consider the possibilities associated with teaching social language learning strategies in the language classroom, which was the focus of the second research question.

Research Question 2

What effect can the explicit teaching of social language learning strategies have on Anglophone learners' use of and engagement with the L2 and their construction of identity connected to the L2?

The discussion of Research Question 1 looked at some of the research outcomes in relation to the theoretical framework associated with identity and social language learning strategies, highlighting areas of their connectedness. The second research question focused on the potential for putting this theory into action inside the classroom by means of a small scale case study involving an action research teaching experiment. The case study nature of this experiment, in which one group received explicit social strategy instruction and the other group

did not, means that the outcomes are applicable primarily to the particular learner group in question. However, they also provide the basis for future larger scale research with a similar focus on teaching social language learning strategies, thereby fostering L2 communities of practice. The key effects observed within the learner group that participated in this experiment are discussed below.

Impacting ways of thinking about language learning

A notable effect of the strategy teaching, though not specifically a strategy itself, was an increase in awareness of the process of learning and in reflections on learning. In traditional teaching methods, learning processes are often not explicitly discussed or reflected upon. To enable a discussion between students about language learning strategies, it is necessary for students to reflect on their behaviours associated with their language learning, particularly outside of class, as well as the motivations behind their engagement in those particular behaviours. A greater ability to reflect on learning throughout the semester was exemplified in questionnaire responses, where learners from the experimental group provided notably longer, more detailed responses than those in the control group.

This research has found that learners engage in strategic behaviours without strategy instruction. In many instances, however, learners appear not to recognise this behaviour specifically as doing something strategic. When learners are able to identify their own existing strategic behaviours, it provides much greater scope for expansion on their existing approaches. For example, a number of learners discussed speaking in German with family members who were also L2 learners, however this was done mainly as something for their own entertainment. If learners are able to recognise these informal instances of language use as significantly contributing to their language learning, they are more likely to engage in these behaviours in a strategic, organised manner. This is not to say that all learners in the experimental group made extensive changes to their existing out of class language use habits. Many did not. However, strategy teaching provided an opportunity for structuring out of class learning, particularly speaking with other L2 learners, which a number of learners reflected upon as being useful.

Related to this effect, the teaching of social language learning strategies helped learners to recognise meaning focused learning activities, including receptive ones such as listening to music, watching YouTube videos and consuming other forms of social media, as making a

significant contribution to their language ability and knowledge. Following the strategy teaching, learners in the experimental group reported spending more time engaging in out of class meaning focused activities than learners in the control group. This suggests that the strategy teaching sessions helped to validate the usefulness for learning of such activities, despite not directly aligning with coursework and assessment tasks. Additionally, the strategy teaching sessions and associated informal homework tasks achieved the somewhat obvious goal of encouraging learners in the experimental group to develop their own strategies, and to use a range of strategies more frequently. Learners in the experimental group almost unanimously agreed that they had developed strategies for learning, whereas slightly less than three quarters of the control group agreed with this statement. This suggests that learners do develop strategies without strategy instruction but affirms also the hypothesis that strategy teaching encourages learners to become more aware of and develop existing learning strategies.

Constructing L2 identities in communities of practice

A goal of the strategy teaching was to encourage learners to see each other as potential learning resources, and to motivate learners who otherwise struggled to access the L2 to create German speaking communities of practice amongst themselves. This could be done through the simple act of meeting in a group of two or three in a café, at a bar, or on the lawns of the university, with the collective goal of speaking German together. The strategy teaching sessions which focused on speaking assigned students the unofficial task of speaking with someone in German for 10 minutes. Students were assigned this homework task two weeks in a row and given time to reflect on their experiences after each week, and they were encouraged to continue meeting with other class members beyond the homework assignments. While some students were reluctant to partake in these homework assignments and preferred to complete those that involved receptive activities, others reflected that it was helpful for them to be able to practise speaking when they otherwise struggled to find opportunities. This attitude is exemplified by a learner named Erin, who described one instance in which she met with a classmate. Her account of how they went about meeting, in a relaxed atmosphere, and how they incorporated social strategies and polylinguaging to facilitate their continued conversation encapsulates the intentions behind the strategy teaching sessions in this study.

Interview Excerpt 65 Erin: 'we made like a German English equivalent'

- 1 R: We met up over beer (laughs). [...] And we started off by describing what we had for breakfast [...] And if we got stumped we'd just look the word up on the phone. Or we made like a German English equivalent/ Just said the English word with a German sort of accent. We managed to talk for like 10 minutes without even realising that we were talking for that long. [...] So we both felt much more confident. [...] I didn't realise that we'd learnt this much. It was really encouraging.

Of particular significance here is the final comment that this simple 10 minute conversation in the L2 acted as a major confidence booster for both her and her speech partner. Thus, this interview excerpt very neatly sums up the goals of strategy teaching, which were achieved for this learner and her classmate. Although this was not the case for every learner, this particular result for two members of the group reflects the intentions of this exercise and the great potential it has for learning in a comfortable out of class setting. Erin and her classmate created a German speaking community of practice, employing macro strategies to do so and furthermore engaged in a range of micro strategies to facilitate their communication while they were using the L2. Such meaning focused interactions hold the potential to engage learner identities, make the L2 a meaningful part of learners' lives and make learners aware of their ability to engage in genuine communication in the L2. Strategy teaching is about unlocking a potential and offering learners the tools and knowledge that they need to become more autonomous, more engaged learners.

Research Question 2: a summary

This case study action research experiment investigating the effects of teaching social language learning strategies in short 10-15 minute weekly sessions has shown that these sessions can have an influence over how learners think about and approach their language learning. The questionnaire results suggest that such strategy teaching sessions can encourage autonomous beliefs and motivate learners to engage in meaning focused out of class learning activities more frequently. These outcomes provide initial evidence for the argument that strategy teaching is an effective way to encourage learners to approach their learning in a strategic, more autonomous way, and to place a higher value on the role of naturalistic activities as part of their learning. Furthermore, strategy teaching has the potential to help learners recognise the affordances of their existing language learning environments, particularly by prompting motivated learners to create L2 speaking communities of practice between themselves and

other language learners. Such strategies are particularly relevant for Anglophone learners, who, as this research has demonstrated, can face additional challenges in a range of contexts when attempting to find opportunities to access the L2 and its associated communities. Taking a holistic approach to social strategies which also places importance on and validates receptive naturalistic activities additionally means that a range of elements of learners' identities can be engaged through their out of class language use. This means also that learners who are not yet comfortable enough speaking are still encouraged to participate in L2 discourses and given strategies to facilitate this.

8.2 Ways forward

Research into theory about language learning has not always translated easily into practical recommendations for actions that can be taken by language teachers. Recommendations following social research aiming to empower learners have often shifted the responsibility of engaging learner identities entirely onto the teacher, suggesting that they should create course materials for learners that align with their individual identities (e.g. Gkonou 2015; Kayi-Aydar 2014; Norton 2000, 2013). While it is important for teachers to take learners' individual identities, needs and investments into account, teachers are well known for being overworked, short of time and often having a minimal capacity to adapt existing course curriculums. With this in mind, the recommendations for classroom activities that follow focus on strategy teaching which empowers learners to find personally meaningful materials for themselves. In doing so, social strategy teaching is empowering to both teachers and learners alike. These recommendations are followed by suggestions regarding possible directions for future research in language learning, identity and social language learning strategies.

8.2.1 Recommendations for classroom activities

The recommendations put forward in this subchapter reflect an approach to language learning and teaching that is based on a sociocultural understanding of language learning, and aim to offer language teachers realistic suggestions as to how they might go about integrating strategy instruction into their existing teaching practices. This study has demonstrated that a relatively small change in course content, namely the use of ten minutes of class time once a week throughout the semester, can have a positive impact on learners' out of class behaviours and on the way in which they approach their learning more generally.

Approaches to strategy teaching

This research has revealed that the key to strategy teaching is offering learners strategies that are relevant to the types of communities of practice and associated media that they engage with in the L1. A similar observation has been made by Menard-Warwick (2011) who suggests that teachers should offer learners texts in class that are similar to the ones that they engage with in the L1. Deviating from Menard-Warwick's suggestion of offering learners the texts directly, the recommendation proposed here in terms of strategy instruction, is to show them the tools to enable them to seek out and work with such texts independently outside of the classroom.

For many university language classrooms, with a majority of undergraduate, young adult students, this will mean incorporating strategies for accessing modern forms of media such as TikTok and YouTube. Much of the strategy teaching literature focuses, for example, on reading strategies directed at reading books; however, learners' responses in this study to strategy sessions involving reading books and magazines showed in this study that the majority of learners rarely engaged in such activities in the L1. The recommendation to provide them with the means of identifying reading materials that are relevant to them is made with consideration of learners' responses to the strategy teaching sessions that were focused on reading within this study, which revealed that many learners in fact rarely engaged with books and magazines in the L1. Teachers can discuss with their students which kinds of media they engage with in the L1 to determine which strategies might be most useful to offer them. It is also a helpful practice to give learners a chance to reflect on their strategy use experiences and share this reflection with other members of the class. Encouraging learners to access non-didacticised L2 materials can help to expose learners to a more personally relevant variety of ways of engaging with the L2, beyond the standard language contained in course textbooks.

Social strategy teaching can include a range of strategies for accessing and interacting with resources that involve both receptive and productive language use. Particularly important within social strategy instruction is an emphasis on the often unrecognised potential for learners to use each other as resources. This could be through meeting up and speaking but also through writing and more generally through exchanging ideas and resources for learning. Furthermore, it is important to teach Anglophone learners strategies for incorporating polylinguaging into their speaking practices, and to remove any sense of guilt for doing so. This can enable them to speak with other Anglophones in foreign language learning contexts, but also prepare them to encounter the challenge of language choice when interacting with the many Anglophones they meet abroad. In general, social strategy teaching has the goal of helping learners to use the L2 as part of their lives outside of class. This means seeing the learner as a whole person and helping them to participate in communities of practice and discourses that allow them to build a sense of self through their use of the L2. This can be achieved through the teaching of both macro and micro strategies for gaining access to and using the L2.

In many cases it will not be possible for teachers to make changes to assessments. However, incorporating social strategy use into assessment tasks is an important consideration because

of the high value learners place on work that is assessed compared with work that might be perceived as an add on. There is great potential for strategic behaviours and the use of naturalistic materials to be incorporated into course assessments. This could include tasks such as students locating an L2 text that corresponds to their personal interests in the L1 and answering set questions about that text or potentially making a short presentation about a text, for example a song, a magazine article or a video, to the class. However, even providing in class follow up sessions on non-graded homework assignments proved to be a relatively effective measure for encouraging students to complete formative homework tasks. Because learners were aware that they would have to report to other students about their strategy use throughout the preceding week, they were motivated to engage in the set activities despite the activities not contributing directly to their final grades. Overall, social language learning strategies are highly flexible and can be adapted by teachers and learners alike to be most relevant to the needs and interests of a particular learner group. Strategies can be incorporated within a range of learning contexts and adapted according to the practicalities and constraints attached to each of those environments.

A focus on meaning rather than correctness

In keeping with this aim of encouraging meaning focused language use, it is helpful to offer students a view of grammar which is more open, flexible and reflective of the true ways in which language is used outside of the classroom. Grammar is an important element of classroom teaching and for many students also has an element of comforting familiarity and neutrality. Grammar as it is taught in many textbooks is presented in the form of simple tables and text, so working with grammar can be less personally demanding than asking a student to talk about their own ideas and opinions. The pros and cons of styles of grammar teaching aside, it is fair to say that grammar teaching is unlikely to be leaving our university language classrooms any time in the near future.

Grammar is another word for characterising the overall effectiveness of a person's language use. It embodies precision, flow, artistry. [...] It is a process of ensuring that what we say is said as precisely as possible (van Lier 2011, p. 4).

Many efforts have been made over the recent decades to promote communicative teaching methodology; however, there remains much scope for language teachers to adopt an approach to understanding and teaching grammar that puts a greater focus on the meaning expressed

through grammatical structures. This would enable teachers to teach grammar as it is set out in their curriculum and as it is presented within the textbooks that they work with, whilst providing learners with a broader perspective on language learning that integrates meaning focused language use. Such an approach might follow the description of grammar in the quotation above from Leo van Lier. Grammar can be approached as a tool with which ideas can be expressed more exactly and more clearly. This gives a practical purpose to the study of a grammar table and at the same time helps to alleviate learners' anxiety about shortcomings in their grammatical ability in terms of the standard language. Learners and teachers could see grammar as a something that is in progress and that offers possibilities for experimentation and creativity with the L2. From this perspective, rather than being a shortcoming, mistakes act as a sign of ongoing learning. This also allows for a reduced focus on the standard language and the integration of a range of everyday uses of language including polylingualism, dialects and non standard forms.

There is potential for much creativity and enjoyment through the integration of social language learning strategies and a less restrictive approach to language teaching which shifts the focus away from correctness and towards communicative precision.

8.2.2 Recommendations for future research

There are rich possibilities for future research investigating further aspects of social language learning strategies, identity and their connections, particularly for Anglophone learners. This initial case study, which has investigated language learning in Australia, as well as in Germany, with a narrow focus on two learner groups, has contributed to a greater understanding of the interactions between learner identity and learners' use of social strategies. This knowledge has provided insights into a range of potential adaptations to teaching methodologies. Future research could investigate the teaching of social language learning strategies on a broader scale, across a larger group of students, in order to obtain more generalisable statistical data on strategy teaching outcomes. It could also incorporate a range of languages and cultures involved in the learning process, as this study as focused only on Anglophone learners of German. Furthermore, the ways in which learners approach new media differ greatly from the strategies required to approach more traditional media forms. Therefore, there is scope for future studies to expand the scope by investigating social strategies that specifically help

learners to engage with modern forms of media, as a majority of the current strategy literature does not focus on new forms of media.

An additional possibility for future research is to investigate the degree of academic success related to the use of social language learning strategies in order to identify correlations between strategy teaching and the development of language competency. However, such a study should be wary of using traditional evaluation measures such as looking at grammatical accuracy that do not align directly with the skill set defined by autonomy, meaningful communication and connection with the L2 which is being promoted through the teaching of language learning strategies. Measures of strategy success that align with these goals of strategy teaching would be more appropriate than using, for example, learners' grades taken from assessments that are not connected to strategy use. A study that incorporated both of these forms of measurement would be ideal, providing an overview of the potential correlations between strategy teaching, strategy use, learner engagement and the development of accuracy of language form.

A final suggestion for future research would involve a deeper investigation into the second language learning experiences and strategies of Anglophones abroad, in situations similar to that of Berlin discussed in this study. This study only looked at a very small group of Anglophone learners. Future studies could investigate a broader range of experience, perhaps also incorporating learners working and studying in other parts of the city where English was a less commonly spoken language. There is great potential for further investigations into the implications of the increasingly prevalent status of English as a global language on Anglophone's efforts at learning additional languages.

Concluding remarks

Language learning is a multifaceted process; it is social and cognitive at the same time and thus language teaching needs to be too. This research has placed emphasis on the social and identity related elements of language learning and teaching. It has demonstrated that learners' investment in a range of identities, which are tied to both existing communities of practice and the imagined communities of their future selves, dictates many of their strategic language learning actions and the out of class learning behaviours that they engage in. A connection between learners' social identities and their willingness to engage in strategy use and in use of the L2 more broadly has been exemplified through this research and its findings. This research

has also outlined scenarios in which learners in both study abroad and foreign language learning environments resist opportunities to use the L2, despite being highly motivated, because of an inability to portray the self in the desired way. It proposes social language learning strategies as a tool to help to make learners more consciously aware of these conflicts between desires to learn and their social investments so that they can approach their language learning more strategically.

With its focus on Anglophone learners, this research has shown that the shared knowledge of English can act as a barrier to L2 use. However, this study has also suggested a range of strategies for encouraging learners to use this shared knowledge as a tool which can enable extended L2 conversations. Learners and teachers can shift their ways of seeing language and move towards an understanding of languages as interconnected within communities where more than one language is available to multiple speakers. Learners and teachers can validate polylinguaging practices, using the L1 as a tool to facilitate the use of the L2, rather than trying to block and prevent the inevitable occurrence of L1 use within these groups. Further, this research has demonstrated that there exists untapped potential for learners to build their German speaking communities of practice with other L2 learners through the use of social language learning strategies. Strategy teaching has the potential to assist in making learners aware of the affordances available in their environment and to provide a structure for accessing those affordances. Strategy teaching can help learners to feel less anxious about grammatical errors and to view mistakes in a less negative light, instead seeing errors as a simple part of learning and not as something that needs to be avoided at the cost of language use altogether.

The broader view of social language learning strategies proposed within this research is highly relevant for learners within Anglophone contexts who do not always have easy access to opportunities to speak the L2 with target language L1 speakers. The data within this study has explored the many and varying ways in which learners engage meaningfully with the L2 outside of class. Further, it has shown that strategy instruction has the potential to impact the value that learners assign to activities such as reading or engaging with social media in the L2, as well as to provide a structure to help learners engage meaningfully with the L2 outside of the classroom.

Within this study, learning environments have not been understood as simply fitting into two dimensional categories of second and foreign language learning. Instead learning environments

have been seen as interconnected and existing as part of the spectrum of learners' broader and varied language learning journeys. In taking up this approach, this research has demonstrated similarities in the experiences of Anglophone learners across contexts, as well as a range of points of departure. These similarities, particularly in terms of the difficulties learners faced in accessing the L2 in both contexts, highlight broader challenges and issues of concern for Anglophone learners, emphasising the particular importance of social language learning strategies for Anglophone learners across contexts.

Teaching social language learning strategies has excellent potential to empower learners to take control of their own learning and to build confidence in their ability to use the L2. Social strategies provide steps towards learners becoming more autonomous and more engaged, and having stronger, long term connections to the L2.

Appendices

A) Interview outlines

i. Interview outlines for learners of German at an Australian university

Background

Do you speak any other languages?
Have you learnt German before? Where? How long for?
Have you ever spent any time in Germany?
What made you decide to learn German?
What do you want to do with your German skills?
Which bachelor program are you enrolled in?

Motivation and goals

Did you set specific goals for yourself at the start of semester? Measures? Achievements?
Things you would like to be able to do better in German? i.e. speaking, reading, listening, writing, talking with specific people etc.

Investment in classroom practices – likes/dislikes classroom activities

How relevant and interesting do you find course content? Examples?
Which classroom activities do you feel like you learn the most from?

Comfortableness speaking German vs. English and codeswitching

Do you find it easy to work with other students in the class?
How much of the time in class do you speak German?

When you speak English, why do you speak English and not German?

What stops you from speaking German more?

What about the time before class, or if you're working on a group assignment together? Which language do you choose and why?

Do you feel like you are the same person when you speak German as English? What parts are different? Are there parts of yourself you can't express in German?

What is your attitude towards making mistakes when speaking?

And being corrected? By teachers/other students?

Actions taken for learning outside the classroom – engagement and strategy use and knowledge

How do you learn German outside of the classroom?
Do you do extra things outside of class? Speaking, films, books, music?
What do you find difficult about learning or using German? How do you overcome this?
How can you keep a conversation going in German? Do you do this or are happy to let conversations switch back to English?

Beliefs about learning and student/teacher roles

Is learning German similar to learning for other subjects in your studies? How is it different?
What is the most important thing you need to learn, when learning a language?
What do you think is most important: speaking, reading, writing, listening?
What was your favourite thing about this semester's German course?
What would you like to change about this semester's German course?

ii. Interview outlines for learners of German at a university in Berlin

Background

Do you speak any other languages?

How well can you speak English?

In your daily life outside of the class, how much of the time do you speak English vs. German? (vs. other languages?)

What are you studying? Is your degree in English?

Have you learnt German before this course? Where? How long for?

What made you decide to learn German?

How long have you been in Germany?

What do you want to do with your German skills?

Goals for the course

Did you set specific goals for yourself at the start of semester? Measures? Achievements?

Things you would like to be able to do better in German? i.e. speaking, reading, listening, writing, talking with specific people etc.

Investment in classroom practices – likes/dislikes classroom activities

Which classroom activities do you like? Dislike?

Which classroom activities do you feel like you learn the most from?

Have there been topics you have particularly enjoyed?

Comfortableness speaking German vs. English and codeswitching in class

Do you find it easy to work with other students in the class?

How much of the time in class do you speak German?

When you speak English, why do you speak English and not German?

What stops you from speaking German more?

What about the time before class, or if you're working on a group assignment together? Which language do you choose and why?

What is your attitude towards making mistakes when speaking?

And being corrected? By teachers/other students?

Identity

Do you feel like you are the same person when you speak German as English? What parts are different? Are there parts of yourself you can't express in German?

How would someone who only spoke to you in German perceive you vs. someone you can speak in English with?

Speaking and learning outside of the classroom

How do you learn German outside of the classroom?

Do you do extra things outside of class? Speaking, films, books, music?

What do you find difficult about learning or using German? How do you overcome this?

How much of the time outside of class do you speak German?

Who do you mainly speak German with?

Do you have people you always speak English / German with?

Who do you feel most comfortable speaking German with/ in what situations do you feel most comfortable speaking German?

Are there certain people you avoid speaking German with or particularly try to speak with? Why?

Do you have any strategies for stopping your conversations from switching to English?

Beliefs about learning and student/teacher roles

Is learning German similar to learning for other subjects in your studies? How is it different?

What is the most important thing you need to learn, when learning a language?

What do you think is most important: speaking, reading, writing, listening?

What was your favourite thing about this semester's German course?

What would you like to change about this semester's German course?

iii. Interview outlines for a teacher of German at a university in Berlin

The interview was carried out in German, but an English translation is also provided in italics.

Teaching background

Seit wann unterrichtest du Deutsch?

How long have you been teaching German?

Sprichst du andere Sprachen?

Do you speak any languages other than German?

Lehrerbildung?

Education in teaching German?

Warum unterrichtest du?

Why did you decide to teach German?

Lehrkonzept

Teaching methods

Was sind deine Ziele in den Kursen, in denen du unterrichtest? (übergreifend)

What are your goals (generally speaking) in the courses you teach?

Was willst du, dass deine Studenten am Ende des Kurses können?

What do you want your students to be able to do at the

end of the course (i.e. which skills do you think are most important?)

Welche Fertigkeiten stehen im Kurs im Vordergrund? *Which skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) are focused on most in your courses?*

Welche Themen oder Inhalte sind im Kurs am wichtigsten?

Which topics or content are most important in your courses?

Was für Hausaufgabe gibst du den Studenten und warum? Machen sie diese?

What kinds of homework assignments do you give to the students? Why? Do they usually complete set homework tasks?

Welche Rolle spielt Englisch in deinem Unterricht?

What role does English play in your classes?

Eindrücke von den TN im Brückenkurs

Impressions of the students in the Brückenkurs

Welche Arten von Übungen benutzt du im Kurs und warum?

What kinds of exercises do you use in class and why?

Gibt es bestimmte Übungsformen an die sie besonders gerne teilnehmen oder ungern teilnehmen?

Are there particular kinds of exercises that students really like or dislike participating in?

Wie bereit sind sie allgemein an den Kurs teilzunehmen?

How willing do you find the students are to participate in the course overall?

Was hemmt die TN? (emotionale/praktische Faktoren)

What do you think holds students back? Which emotional and which practical factors?

Hast du den Eindruck, dass TN sich wohl fühlen, sich auf Deutsch miteinander zu unterhalten? Wechseln sie oft ins Englisch?

Do you have the impression that the students feel comfortable speaking German with each other? Do they switch to English often?

Deutsch außerhalb des Unterrichts

German outside of class

Wie oft glaubst du die TN sprechen außerhalb des Unterrichts Deutsch?

How often do you think that the students speak German outside of class?

Welche Gründe gibt es dafür, dass nicht alle TN außerhalb des Kurses besonders oft Deutsch sprechen?

What do you think are the reasons that some of the course participants don't speak German very often outside of class?

Welche Einfluss haben die englischsprachigen Studiengänge auf den Unterricht gehabt?

What influence do you think that students' English language bachelor and master programs have on your German classes?

Weißt du, welche Selbst-Lern-Strategien die TN kennen und ausüben?

Do you know of any independent study strategies the students are aware of and/or use?

Hast du Lernstrategien im Kurs explizit im Kurs thematisiert?

Have you thematised language learning strategies explicitly in your course?

B) Questionnaires

i. Pre experiment questionnaire

I. Learning, materials and activities

1. Please rate how much you like or dislike the classroom activities and materials used in German IIA listed below. *

	Strongly dislike	Somewhat dislike	Neither like nor dislike	Somewhat like	Very much like
Textbook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Group work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Free writing assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partner work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning with other university students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Music and videos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speaking exercises	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Topics covered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grammar exercises	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

Comments:

Your answer

2. How often do you do the following activities in German OUTSIDE of class to help with your language learning *

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
Read books	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listen to podcasts/radio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listen to music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read blogs/news articles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speak with native speakers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watch TV or films	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Review grammar sheets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use Duolingo/other apps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watch free classes on YouTube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write texts/emails to friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speak German with other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Memorise vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

3. How often do you do the following (inside and outside of class)? *

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
Read without looking up all the unfamiliar words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Try to guess the meaning of words from context	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Find alternatives when I don't know a word	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Look up words as I go when I'm reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seek out opportunities to practice outside of class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evaluate and learn from my errors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about language learning? *

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Undecided	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I have my own goals for this language course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Doing the homework and coming to class is enough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need to practice language skills (e.g. speaking, reading, writing, listening) individually to develop them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning German is the same as other subjects at uni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to self evaluate my strengths and weaknesses in German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The teacher should give me materials that are personally interesting to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I know how to write about a topic, I'll be able to speak about it too	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I know all the grammar rules, I will be able to speak fluently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The teacher sets out what I read and write in German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's bad to make mistakes in German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

II. Using German

1. When I speak German I... *

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
Plan what I am going to say before speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ask questions when I don't understand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Try to anticipate what the other person is going to say	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guess when I'm unsure what was said	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use synonyms or find another way to say what I want to say	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Change the topic to something I can talk about	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Momentarily switch back into English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ask for repetition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
conversation going even if I haven't understood every single word	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel I need to be able to say exactly what I would have said in English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

2. I choose to speak English in situations where I could speak German (e.g. in the classroom) because... *

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Undecided	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
It is more convenient	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can say what I mean	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't want to confuse people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't know the words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The other person speaks English to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sound smarter in English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always speak English with that person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't want to make a mistake	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can be more polite	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to make a joke	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

3. I feel comfortable speaking German... *

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Undecided	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
With German native speakers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
With native English speakers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
With the teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outside of the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

4. How confident do you feel... *

	Very unsure	Somewhat unsure	Neither confident nor unsure	Somewhat confident	Very confident
Speaking German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading in German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing in German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listening to German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

III. Background

1. I am learning German because... *

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Undecided	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I want to study abroad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to live long-term in a German-speaking country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have German family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have German friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wanted to learn another language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(Because) of job opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For my own personal development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am interested in German culture (e.g. food, music, film)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

2. Have you spent time in a German-speaking country? If yes, how long for and what did you do there? *

Your answer

3. What is/are your nationality/nationalities?

Your answer

4. What is your age bracket?

- 18-20
- 21-24
- 25+

5. Gender

- Female
- Male
- Other

6. Have you learnt other languages? Which ones and to what level? (e.g. beginner, intermediate, advanced, native language) Please list each language and level. *

Your answer

7. Please create a CODE entering the information listed below, so that your answers can be re-identified in follow-up questionnaires but you still remain anonymous. *

1. The first letter of your middle name 2. your birth month (double digits e.g. 08 for August) 3. the second letter of your surname 4. the last two digits of your mobile number. Example CODE: G12178

Your answer

8. Which IIA section are you in? *

- Thursday and Friday 1-3pm
- Thursday and Friday 3-5pm
- Other: _____

ii. Post experiment questionnaire

I. Learning, materials and activities

1. Please rate how much you like or dislike the classroom activities and materials used in German IIA listed below. *

	Strongly dislike	Somewhat dislike	Neither like nor dislike	Somewhat like	Very much like
Textbook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Group work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Free writing assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Partner work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning with other university students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Music and videos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speaking exercises	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Topics covered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grammar exercises	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Role play exercises	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

2. How often do you do the following activities in German OUTSIDE of class to help with your language learning? *

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
Read books	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listen to podcasts/radio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listen to music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read blogs/news articles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speak with native speakers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watch TV or films	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Review grammar sheets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use Duolingo/other apps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watch free classes on YouTube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write texts/emails to friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speak German with other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Memorise vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

3. About how much time do you spend doing the following activities in German OUTSIDE of class to help with your language learning? *

	No time at all	less than 30 minutes per week	30 minutes per week	1 hour per week	more than 1 hour
Read books	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listen to podcasts/radio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listen to music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read blogs/news articles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speak with native speakers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watch TV or films	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Review grammar sheets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use Duolingo/other apps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watch free classes on YouTube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write texts/emails to friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speak German with other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Memorise vocabulary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

4. How often do you do the following (inside and outside of class)? *

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
Read without looking up all the unfamiliar words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Try to guess the meaning of words from context	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Find alternatives when I don't know a word	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Look up words as I go when I'm reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seek out opportunities to practice outside of class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evaluate and learn from my errors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

5. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about language learning? *

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Undecided	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I have my own goals for this language course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Doing the homework and coming to class is enough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need to practice language skills (e.g. speaking, reading, writing, listening) individually to develop them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning German is the same as other subjects at uni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to self evaluate my strengths and weaknesses in German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The teacher should give me materials that are personally interesting to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I know how to write about a topic, I'll be able to speak about it too	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I know all the grammar rules, I will be able to speak fluently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The teacher sets out what I read and write in German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's bad to make mistakes in German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

II. Using German

1. When I speak German I... *

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
Plan what I am going to say before speaking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ask questions when I don't understand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Try to anticipate what the other person is going to say	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guess when I'm unsure what was said	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use synonyms or find another way to say what I want to say	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Change the topic to something I can talk about	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Momentarily switch back into English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ask for repetition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Try to keep the conversation going even if I haven't understood every single word	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel I need to be able to say exactly what I would have said in English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

2. I choose to speak English in situations where I could speak German (e.g. in the classroom) because... *

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Undecided	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
It is more convenient	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can say what I mean	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't want to confuse people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't know the words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The other person speaks English to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sound smarter in English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always speak English with that person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't want to make a mistake	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can be more polite	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to make a joke	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

3. I feel comfortable speaking German... *

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Undecided	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
With German native speakers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
With native English speakers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
With the teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outside of the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

4. How confident do you feel... *

	Very unsure	Somewhat unsure	Neither confident nor unsure	Somewhat confident	Very confident
Speaking German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading in German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing in German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listening to German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

III. German Outside of Class

1. This semester, outside of the classroom... *

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Undecided	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I have been able to find things to read in German that are personally meaningful to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have developed strategies that have helped me to learn outside of class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been able to find things to listen to / watch in German that are personally meaningful to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been able to write texts in German that are personally meaningful to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have created opportunities to practice speaking German.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have built confidence in interacting in German.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have developed strategies that have helped me to speak outside of the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I have created new routines for actively using German.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been able to analyse and reflect on my learning to see where my strengths and weaknesses are.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been able to identify and work on things that make me anxious about language learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

Your answer

2. What have you found most difficult about this semester's course? *

Your answer

3. What has been the most useful thing you've learnt this semester? *

Your answer

4. Please re-enter your CODE from the previous questionnaire following the instructions below. *

1. The first letter of your middle name 2. your birth month (double digits e.g. 08 for August) 3. the second letter of your surname 4. the last two digits of your mobile number. Example CODE: G12173

Your answer

iii. Questionnaire factors and variables

Questionnaire Section	Beliefs about learning		Motivation for speaking English rather than German		Comfort speaking German			Confidence using German					
Factors	Autonomous	Non autonomous	Practical	Social	Comfort with speech partners	Comfort in situations	Overall comfort speaking German	Confidence speaking	Confidence reading	Confidence writing	Confidence listening	Overall confidence using German	
Variables	I have my own goals for this language course	doing the homework and coming to class is enough	it is more convenient	the other person speaks English to me	with German L1 speakers	inside of the classroom	with German L1 speakers	speaking German	reading German	writing German	listening to German	speaking German	
	I need to practice language skills (e.g. speaking, reading, writing, listening) individually to develop them	learning German is the same as other subjects at the university	I don't know the words	I don't want to confuse people	with English L1 speakers	outside of the classroom	with English L1 speakers					reading German	
	I try to self evaluate my strengths and weaknesses in German	if I know how to write about a topic I'll be able to speak about it too.	I can say what I mean	I sound smarter in English	with the teacher		with the teacher						writing German
		if I know all the grammar rules I will be able to speak fluently	I always speak English with that person	I don't want to make a mistake			inside of the classroom						listening to German
		the teacher sets out what I read and write in German		I can be more polite			outside of the classroom						
		it's bad to make mistakes in German		I want to make a joke									

Questionnaire Section	Enjoyment classroom of learning activities			Engagement in learning activities outside of class		Strategy use				Motivation	
	Form focused	Meaning focused	Speaking assessments	Meaning focused	Form focused	Reading strategies	Macro strategies	Speaking strategies	Overall strategy use	Language as a social and practical tool	Language as knowledge
Variables	using the textbook	group work	roleplays	reading books	reviewing grammar sheets	reading without looking up all the words	seeking out opportunities to practice outside of class	planning what I am going to say before speaking	reading without looking up all the words	study abroad	wanting to learn another language
	grammar exercises	partner work	presentations	listening to podcasts or radio	using Duolingo or other language learning apps	trying to guess the meaning of words from context	evaluating and learning from my errors	asking questions when I don't understand	trying to guess the meaning of words from context	living long term in a German speaking country	personal development
	classroom topics	learning with other university students		reading blogs or news articles	memorising vocabulary	looking up words as I go when I'm reading		trying to anticipate what the other person is going to say	looking up words as I go when I'm reading	learning because of German family	interest in German culture (food, music, etc.)
	written assessments	music and videos		speaking with native speakers	watching classes on YouTube			guessing when I'm unsure what was said	seeking out opportunities to practice outside of class	learning because of German friends	
		speaking exercises		watching TV or films				changing the topic to something I can talk about	evaluating and learning from my errors	job opportunities	
				writing texts or emails to friends				momentarily switching back into English	planning what I am going to say before speaking		
				speaking German with other students				asking for repetition	asking questions when I don't understand		
								finding alternatives when I don't know a word	trying to anticipate what the other person is going to say		
									guessing when I'm unsure what was said		
									changing the topic to something I can talk about		
									momentarily switching back into English		
									asking for repetition		
									finding alternatives when I don't know a word		

Questionnaire Section	Activities outside of class		Strategy building during the semester					
	Meaning focused activities	Form focused activities	Receptive strategies	Affective strategies	Productive strategies	Organisational strategies	Overall strategy use	
Variables	reading books	reviewing grammar sheets	I have been able to find things to read in German that are personally meaningful to me	I have built confidence in interacting in German	I have created opportunities to practice speaking German	I have developed strategies that have helped me to learn outside of class	I have been able to find things to read in German that are personally meaningful to me	
	listening to podcasts or radio	using language learning apps	I have been able to find things to listen to or watch in German that are personally meaningful to me	I have been able to analyse and reflect on my learning to see where my strengths and weaknesses are.	I have been able to write texts in German that are personally meaningful to me	I have created new routines for actively using German	I have been able to find things to listen to or watch in German that are personally meaningful to me	
	listening to music	watching German classes on YouTube		I have been able to identify and work on things that make me anxious about language learning.	I have built confidence in interacting in German		I have built confidence in interacting in German	
	reading blogs or news articles	memorising vocab			I have developed strategies that have helped me to speak outside of the classroom		I have been able to analyse and reflect on my learning to see where my strengths and weaknesses are.	
	speaking with native speakers						I have been able to identify and work on things that make me anxious about language learning.	
	watching TV or films						I have created opportunities to practice speaking German	
	writing emails or texts to friends						I have been able to write texts in German that are personally meaningful to me	
	speaking German with other students						I have built confidence in interacting in German	
							I have developed strategies that have helped me to speak outside of the classroom	
							I have developed strategies that have helped me to learn outside of class	
					254			I have created new routines for actively using German

iv. Questionnaire item responses

Responses to the question: ‘What has been the most useful thing you have learnt this semester?’

Experimental Group	Control Group
Being prompted to read in German was really helpful. Being held accountable to have conversations in German was also really good.	Grammar! Because it has helped me speak more fluently. I also appreciate when the teachers speak German as opposed to English.
I am now able to speak about various topics I wouldn't have been as comfortable speaking about in German before.	Learning to confidently write in Präteritum and new ways of learning and consolidating vocabulary.
That it's okay to switch back into English when unsure of what words to use.	I have learnt that even if you make mistakes, people can understand you. This is often even more so with a native speaker which makes me feel a little bit less anxious to speak with them.
Being able to make friends and learn together is essential and the best part of any course as they are the people who can help you and practice with.	Sentence structure and tenses. If I understand the formula or system, inserting the variables is just a matter of choice (and learning lots of vocab).
Vocab and grammar	The topics covered which have helped expand my vocabulary
Conversational skills and presentation in German	Konjunktiv II
Konjunktiv II - it is useful to express wishes/ desires/ hypotheticals	Konjunktiv 2
Small sayings that flow into a sentence (e.g. ich erinnere mich an...). I have learnt a lot of grammar but still have work to do, the pace at which I can read/ hear and understand has increased	Vocabulary
Probably adjective endings, I was terrible before this semester. Also adding 'chen' to the end of nouns makes everything so much more fun.	I've learnt quite a bit of new vocabulary.

Becoming more comfortable with sentence structure when speaking and building on vocab and general knowledge of the language. Using literature has been an engaging tool also.	I have learnt a lot of new vocabulary which adds to my knowledge from year 12.
Everyone in the class is at different levels, and it isn't just the teacher's responsibility to cater for the different levels of understanding, but also each student's responsibility to try and improve themselves and realize that being in the classroom is not enough and German must be sought outside the classroom.	New grammar - konjunktiv II etc.
Some of the grammar points which help me make more complex sentences.	Grammar, i.e. Konjunktiv II, Präteritum
Sentence structure and tenses. If I understand the formula/system, inserting the variables is just a matter of choice (and learning lots of vocab).	Mostly just re-learning / re-familiarizing myself with the grammar.
New vocabulary.	The most useful thing I've learnt this semester has been the content on advice giving and the imperative forms.
Grammar.	

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