A Study of Middle School Students' Motivation to

Learn English as a Second Language

By

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Adopting a constructionist interpretive research approach, I investigated the phenomenon

of motivation to learn English as a second language (ESL) in a sheltered, middle school,

transitional class. I interviewed eight ESL students who were attending an ESL program

in grades seven through nine. This process enabled me to distill the essence of which

factors impacted the students' motivation for second language acquisition (SLA). The

literature does suggest that ESL students' motivation to learn English may be influenced

by numerous factors including, but not limited to: previous learning experiences, family

perspectives on education, peer interaction, and classroom teacher, teaching strategies

and procedures. The study occurred over a period of five months, from April 2012 to

August 2012, and included data gathering and analysis.

 Key words: motivation, ESL, SLA

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Definitions

Affective filter	A mental blocking mechanism which increases in students under stress/pressure, preventing them from allowing for comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981).
CET	Cognitive evaluation theory – positive feedback facilitates intrinsic motivation (Gagne & Deci, 2005).
ENREB	Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board
ESL	English as a Second Language
Extrinsic motivation	A change in motivation level due to external influences
Input	Anything a student learns through listening, reading, or viewing (Krashen, 1998)
Instrumental motivation	Selective commitment to the learning of a language, where the language is seen as a tool, usually for the performance of a job (Gardner, R., 2007).
Integrative motivation	Complete commitment to learning a language and integrating into the culture in which it is couched (Gardner, R., 2007).
Interpretive constructionist particular	Researchers who work to find shared meaning within "a group, recognizing that though each person interprets the events he or she encounters in a somewhat distinct manner" (Rubin, H., & Rubin, I., 1995, p. 29).
Intrinsic motivation	A change in motivation level due to internal drive and desire (Gardner, R., 2007).
L1	Mother tongue
L2	A subsequent language learned after the mother tongue
NNEST	Non-native English speaking teachers (Ma, 2012)
Output	Anything a student produces through speech, writing or representing in an effort to communicate (Krashen, 1998).
SLA	Second language acquisition.

Socio-cultural theory	A theory which suggests that learning is, "embedded within social events and occurring as a child interacts with people, objects, and events in the environment" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 287).
Self-determination theory motivations	"SDT postulates that autonomous and controlled differ in terms of both their underlying regulatory processes and their accompanying experiences, and it further suggests that behaviors can be characterized in terms of the degree to which they are autonomous versus controlled" (Gagne & Deci, 2005, p. 334).
WTC	Willingness to communicate (MacIntyre, Baker, Clement and Donovan, 2002)
ZPD	"the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Chapter I: Introduction

As a teacher of ESL students for the last four years, I became interested in what factors contributed to student motivation to learn English. Through this study I have developed a clearer picture of these factors.

Immigration to Manitoba has increased in the last four years and has brought with it students from around the world from a variety of previous educational experiences, languages and levels of ability (Puchala, Vu, & Muhajarine, 2010). As such, it behooves Manitoba ESL teachers to become educated regarding what has occurred historically regarding ESL children's experiences of learning English as a second language, as well as the educational context they come from in order to support their learning appropriately. I wanted to better understand ESL students' motivation to learn English in order to be better aware of how I could positively affect my future students' motivation for second language acquisition (SLA). Consequently, I wanted to hear the first hand perspectives of the students in their own voices regarding this phenomenon.

Being aware that my students are all individuals and come from a variety of backgrounds and family philosophies regarding ESL, I believe that their contributions are most valuable in this process. By giving these students ownership in the study, they were able to realize that their knowledge, cultures, home languages and experiences have value in an ESL context. Additionally, by participating in this study, the participating students can reflect on the factors that influenced them and become more meta-cognitively aware of how these factors impact their individual motivation to learn.

I have conducted this research with the use of interpretive constructionist methodology. As described by Creswell (2007), an interpretive researcher weaves their

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own experiences and thoughts throughout their study: "Researchers recognize that their own background shapes their interpretation, and that they 'position themselves' in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural, and historical experiences" (p. 21).

By viewing my research through the lens of an interpretive constructionist, I also endeavored to maintain theoretical sensitivity as I did so. Strauss and Corbin (1990) define this as: "the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't." I believe that having been an ESL student myself, and now being a teacher of ESL students, I was able to maintain and employ theoretical sensitivity throughout my research.

My ESL adventure began when I arrived in Canada at the age of six. I did not speak any English when I entered the Manitoba public school system. My first language was Polish. The school I first attended was an English/Hebrew bilingual school. I was lucky to have a teacher who spoke English and Polish. Her ability to translate English into my L1 impacted how I viewed learning English. This unique educational context and her assistance facilitated my understanding enhanced my motivation to learn English (Vygotsky, 1978). From a familial influence perspective, my parents always put a lot of weight on academic success, and they expressed an integrative attitude towards SLA. As a child, I was not shy, and took risks when learning English; consequently, I felt good about my successes and was further motivated to strive for fluency. It took a long time for me to feel 'Canadian'. For a very long time I felt 'other', no longer Polish but not yet Canadian. Eventually I developed an identity that encompassed all of my experiences,

becoming who I am today. I believe that my experience as an ESL student allows me to

empathize with my students who are now learning English in the classes I teach.

As I began this study, I expected that the factors that contributed to my motivation

to learn, my acculturation and the development of my identity would be the same factors

that affect the participants' motivation as they went through the process of learning

English. The factors which I expected and are supported by the literature include: familial

perception regarding learning English, acculturation, and the need to develop an 'ideal L2

self,' intrapersonal factors, such as personality and willingness to communicate,

interpersonal factors such as peer relations, and the educational context. My assumption

was that students who were highly motivated to learn English would list a combination of

said positive factors (integrative familial perception, outgoing personality, positive peer,

teacher and educational experiences and a development of an ideal L2 identity) as

contributors to their intrinsic motivation. However, students who stated that they did not

feel motivated to learn English would recount fewer positive factors or a combination of

fewer positive factors (instrumental familial perception, introverted personality, neutral

or negative peer, teacher and educational experiences, and no definitive L2 identity) as

contributing to their non-motivation or de-motivation. My findings were strongly

supported by the literature.

In chapter one I introduced the methodology and overviewed the topic of this

study. In chapter two I consider the literature in the field of ESL students' motivation to

learn English, the contributing factors including: familial motivating factors,

acculturation and L2 ideal self, intrapersonal motivating factors, interpersonal motivating

factors, educational factors, as well as my theoretical framework. In chapter three I

discuss the methodology of interpretive constructionist research, the research paradigm,

the researcher's role, participant selection, data sources and data collection, interviewing,

data analysis, trustworthiness, limitations, and ethical considerations. In chapter four, I

discuss and analyze the data I gathered including the data from participant interviews.

Additionally, I summarize my research journal and the field notes. Finally, I consider

how the themes in the literature were evident in the data I gathered. In chapter five I

discuss the implication of the findings, discuss the limitations and make some

recommendations based on the findings.

Chapter II: Literature Review

In chapter two I consider the literature in the field of ESL students' motivation to learn English as well as the contributing factors including: familial motivating factors, acculturation and L2 ideal self, intrapersonal motivating factors, interpersonal motivating factors, and educational factors; additionally I describe my theoretical framework.

Literature in the area of ESL student motivation consistently highlights a cluster of factors that can affect students' motivation to learn English. Most of the research conducted in this area has been focused on older children. I am interested in seeing if the same factors affect younger students' (grades seven to nine) motivation to learn English.

Familial motivating factors

A large segment of the literature in the field of ESL education and motivation goes back phenomenon of ESL (as opposed to English as a foreign language teaching or EFL) that started with the increased movement of immigrants around the world over the last 50 years. In order to understand the context of ESL students, it is important to understand the perceived value of English language learning abroad. Gardner, R. (2007) found that ESL learners seek to learn English for one of two reasons, either for *instrumental* or *integrative* purposes; these two approaches to ESL language learning are also described by Jordan (2004) as:

> Identify positively with the people and culture of the target language, wishing
>
> to resemble the people concerned, to understand their culture and to be able to
>
> participate in it, could be said to have 'integrative motivation'; 'Instrumental
>
> motivation' [occurs when] a learner is motivated to learn an L2 for utilitarian
>
> purposes, such as getting a job, or passing an exam. (p. 197)

On the same theme, Brown (1991) concurs that a majority of the immigrant population of

professionals from a variety of fields come to Canada, "for their children's future, [and]

instill this sense of responsibility in them" (Mady, 2010), and most wish for their children

to integrate fully into Canadian society. Therefore, the parents' perception of English

and its value is reflected in their children as they begin attending ESL classes (Li, 2004;

Sayadian & Lashkarian 2010). The parents' influence on the children's perception of

their new cultural environment on (both positive and negative) can impact how students'

view their classmates, teachers and the language acquisition process (Berger, et al., 2006;

Brittain, 2009; Cebello, 2004; Gardner, 2007; Griffith, 1996). According to Gardner, R.

(2007) the cultural context and parental influence have a lot to do with how well a student

will perform in the L2 acquisition process. If the language acquisition perception at home

is that it is important to learn English fully, as it relates to all aspects of their lives

(integrative), students are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to work hard in order

to gain English language proficiency (Hardre, & Sullivan, 2008; Masgoret & Gardner,

2003; Shirbagi, 2010; Tucker, 2007; Williams, 2003). However, if the attitude at home is

that the sole purpose of English is to perform a paying job (instrumental), then students

are less likely to be motivated to immerse themselves in all aspects of the L2 experience

(Barwell, 2003; Jordan, 2004; Lee & Bowen, 2006).

Often parents will encourage their children to continue speaking their L1 at home

while encouraging them to focus on their L2 acquisition at school for the sake of a good

education (Fernsten, 2008). L1 maintenance is important not only for cultural reasons,

but also because multilingualism is a benefit in and of itself (Kouritzin, 2000). Sridhar

(1994) as well as Menard-Warwick (2007) point out that SLA should occur in addition

to, not as a replacement of, the mother tongue. Additionally, the view that the mother

tongue is less valuable and needs to be replaced by English is groundless. The idea that a

student's L1 carries with it a subtractive connotation makes English 'superior' is a

hegemonic attitude which can cause a sense of inferiority and insecurity in the student

and can, in turn, negatively impact student motivation to take any risks when learning a

new language (Butler, 2003; Jung, & McCroskey, 2004; Williams, & Butler, 2003).

Wong-Fillmore (2000) suggests that even Early Years (K-4) students become quickly

aware of the currency placed on speaking English. Some will replace their L1 with

English in order to fit in as equals with their monolingual English-speaking counterparts:

"The learning of English is a subtractive process, with English quickly displacing the

primary language in young, first generation immigrants" (203).

     ESL students also have to navigate through their new educational landscape while

dealing with the reaction they receive from their Canadian-born contemporaries and

teachers who often perceive ESL students as exceptional (Donnelly et al., 2009; Lvovich,

2003; Macpherson, 2005). Sridhar (1994) believes that there is a sort of prejudice and

marginalizing attitude towards L2 learners despite their possible competency in two or

more languages. This type of social stressor can, "present an obstacle to optimal

educational achievement and rapid integration into the student mainstream population"

(Clemente et al., 2000). Canagarajah (2006) concurs when he points to further examples

regarding the negative message that students received from teachers who urged them to

choose English over their L1, arousing feelings of being undesirable or 'other' by the

target populations (Miller, 2004; Weiner, 1985). On the other hand Grayson (2008)

claims that ESL students' performance is unaffected by non-ESL students in the class.

There is also a feeling that the use of another language by students while they are learning English may muddy the linguistic waters and make acquisition of English more difficult (Larsen-Freeman, 1991). However, research has found that learning two languages simultaneous does not impact students' ability to keep the languages separate (Merisuo-Storm, 2007). As well, Cummins (2001) states that L2 learners use their L1 as a means to make sense of their world and to transfer meaning from their L1 to their L2, which is an imperative in SLA since without an L1 it is impossible to transfer meaning to an L2 (Clemente, & Collison, 2000).

Acculturation and L2 ideal self

Acclimatization, personality and the shifting identity development of young L2 learners also affects SLA (Ajaya, 2011). English language acquisition in new Canadians is more than an academic exercise; it is fraught with psychological adjustments to new cultural mores (Cuero, 2009):

> Immigrant youth often face cognitive and psychosocial challenges related to cultural adjustment and adaptation . . . experiencing difficulties in forming cross-ethnic friendships, over-reliance on support from peers with similar cultural backgrounds, alienation and isolation . . . their experiences are compounded by complex linguistic, acculturative, [and] psychological difficulties. (Van Ngo, 2009 p. 82)

The acculturation of ESL students arriving in Canadian middle schools (grades seven to nine) is based on more than just learning a new language. The process goes much deeper than that, and places pressure on students not only at school but also at

home. Full acculturation can take anywhere from months to years depending on the

student's motivation and language proficiency. The process new Canadian students go

through, includes: acculturation, adaptation and finally, integration (Van Ngo, 2009).

Other factors that impact the process of acculturation, as described by Daryl (1996)

include: pre-immigration socio-economic level, previous education and post-traumatic

stress (in the case of refugee students). Additionally, the "changing family structure"

(Daryl, 1996, p.76) upon arriving in Canada can affect student acculturation. Often

children seem to adapt, acculturate and learn English quicker than their parents. This L2

acquisition makes them the authoritative, capable individuals in the family, required to

translate for parents and speak on their behalf; on the other hand, "children often desire to

assimilate and are embarrassed about their parents 'Old ways'", [while] parents fear

children's loss of L1 and cultural values" (Daryl, 1996, p. 76).

Upon entering school, school readiness is another factor which may affect some

students' assimilation and academic success. ESL students arriving in Manitoba are

generally placed in a grade based on their age. This rule becomes a 'best guess' with

African students we have received over the last four years whose birthdays all seem to

fall on either December 31 or January 1, and documentation of their actual birth date is

often lacking. Additionally, in many countries, the Philippines included, the academic

process does not align with the Canadian one, thus creating gaps in new students'

knowledge which is compounded by the fact that they are more than likely not fluent in

English: "ESL children [have] lower levels of school readiness than non-ESL children on

all domains, especially the communication skills and general knowledge domain"

(Puchala, Vu, & Muhajarine, 2010, p. 517). However one thing is certain, acculturation

manifests itself when ESL students are thriving, developing social connections within and

outside of their L1 peers, and are demonstrating academic growth and success (Daryl,

1996).

Additionally, ESL students have to contend with parental pressure regarding

learning English, as well as how they are perceived by others, and becoming acculturated

to a new educational paradigm (Berry, 2009; Buttaro, 2004; Schmitt, 2008). Some ESL

students choose to use English in favor of their L1, believing that this will accelerate their

integration into Canadian society (Weisman, 2001). There is always a concern when an

ESL student with insufficient L1, tries to learn an L2 and becomes 'stuck' in an ESL

limbo. Such students are caught between two languages, insufficiently proficient in

either, one which they are learning, and one which they are losing (Wong-Fillmore,

1991). Additionally, students who feel marginalized, "reject a bicultural identity" (Zatate

et al., 2005, 111; Garnett, et al., 2008) which could negatively impact how they perform

academically. Making the choice to reject ones L2 environment on social grounds when

one is not proficient in an L1 is doubly tragic for such students. The loss of the L1 is

often unfortunate collateral damage in the process of second language acquisition

(Benson, 1991; Thorne, 2005). Similarly, bicultural friendship dyads among immigrant

and English native speakers can lead to code-switching and the creation of a hybrid

culture, and even a hybrid language within a social cluster (Fuller, 2007; Xu et al., 2007).

Callahan et al (2008) discovered that larger ESL communities fostered more successful

SLA than did schools where there were only a few L2 learners. Much longitudinal

research suggests that first generation immigrant students do not attain the academic

success that they strive for due to lack of L2 proficiency (McCarron et al., 2006).

Intrapersonal motivating factors

A student's personality and how a student feels about him or herself as a learner

can impact their motivation to learn English: "Willingness to communicate plays an

important role in second language acquisition. Both an individual's personality and the

situation can influence willingness to communicate. Personality has a major impact on

willingness to communicate" (Yu et al., 2011, p. 257); Harkins (2001) points out that

children's personalities, whether their introverted or extroverted cannot be changed.

However teachers can help students recognize their particular strengths and to help

students employ them to their benefit (Gardner, H., 1983). Motivation in ESL learners

can come from a variety of sources. Self-directed motivation can come from a student's

need for self- improvement to gain a sense of completeness, or for the purpose of

integration into a target population (Conger et al., 2011; Heine et al., 2001; Noels et al.,

1990; Stetenko & Arievitch, 2004). Alternatively, students with a naturally inquisitive

nature may merely require the presentation of language learning as a puzzle, or a game

for them to invest in their own learning as they acquire their L2 (Noels et al., 1999).

Willingness to identify with a culture, the student's language learning aptitude,

tapping into students' natural curiosity, and the classroom environment, both physical

and cultural, are all factors that can impact students' motivation to learn English.

Working with this idea, MacIntyre et al (2002) theorized that one's *willingness to*

communicate (WTC) is a personality trait. In one's first language this trait is stable, but

when it comes to SLA, WTC can be affected by SLA proficiency and communicative

competency (Dörnyei, 2003). Their theory is situated within a complex set of

psychological and linguistic variables which impact how an L2 student will learn the

language. These factors include: confidence, desire for interpersonal communication,

parameters of social situation, experience, and last of all (Dörnyei, 2003).

Where personality is concerned, extroversion and resilience seem to positively

affect language acquisition, while sensitivity to rejection and anxiety inhibit language

acquisition. Krashen's (1981) describes the *affective filter* as a variation in the level of

student comfort:

> Learners who are comfortable have a positive attitude toward language learning
>
> have their filters set low, allowing unfettered access to comprehensible input. In
>
> contrast, a stressful environment, one in which learners are forced to produce
>
> before they feel ready, raises the affective filter, blocking the learners' processing
>
> of input. The affective filter, according to Krashen, can help explain the variable
>
> outcome of SLA across L2 learners, including differences in the learners' ages
>
> and in classroom conditions. (Van Patten & Williams, 2007, p. 28)

A further aspect of intrapersonal motivation can be found in examining the

process of an ESL student becoming a Canadian student, and the resultant development

of their *Canadian* self.

Markus and Nurius (1986) describe how motivation and one's L2 identity are connected:

"[Our] possible selves are important . . . because they function as incentives for future
behavior"

(p. 954). Delving further into this correlations, achieving one's Canadian self is a tension

between mental and emotional aspects of the student as he or she relates "goals and

outcomes to emotions between the actual self and the ideal self, and anxiety to a

discrepancy between the actual self and the *ought* self (an image of self held by another)"

(Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 958).

Often immigrant students learning an L2 are in the process of developing an L2 identity

for themselves; their Canadian L2 identity includes fluency and complete acculturation

(Csizer & Kormos, 2008; Csizer & Dörnyei, 2005). This process occurs through an

internal mediation as the L1 student acquires English, and integrates into the target

culture, he or she takes on his or her identity as a New Canadian. The student decides

which aspects of his or her old life and self to keep, and which aspects of the new culture

to incorporate.

Deci and Ryan's (2002) *self-determination theory* ties into the psychological

aspect of a student's personality, and states that motivation for the L2 can be tied to

intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: "Self-determination theory, which incorporates CET

(Cognitive Evaluation Theory) is more comprehensive, particularly with respect to

extrinsic motivation, [and] provides a fuller and more useful approach to understanding

the motivational bases for effective organizational behavior" (Gagne, & Deci, 2005, p.

356). This theory looks not only at the student, but also places each student within the

learning environment where the environment and the teacher directly impact student

learning (Dörnyei, 2003). I have found that it is important to embrace each student as an

individual. In so doing, I can also encourage him or her to share their culture, their

language, and their roots. Encouraging students to hold onto their roots helps them to

validate their cultural roots, mediate their new identity which includes who they were,

with the Canadian they are becoming.

Interpersonal motivating factors

Gardner, R. (2007) observed different ethno linguistic communities in

multicultural settings (Kim, 2011; Miller & Hidehiro, 2004). His goal was to define the

factors which enhanced and hindered intercultural communications. What he saw was

that in many cases the motivating factor for using and developing an L2 was that the L2

was a tool for multicultural exchanges; a motivated student's personality usually

possessed cognitive, affective and behavioral components, which translated into a

willingness to take risks to communicate (Alessandria & Nelson, 2005; MacIntyre et al,

2002). If they are persistent, self-confident, and positive (Guay et al., 2000; Vitterso,

2003) in their efforts to acquire their L2, they are usually successful. Although the

process of SLA has markers and sign posts indicating stages of language acquisition,

"students carry individual personality factors that make their involvement with the

process uniquely their own" (Ernst-Slavit et al, 2001, p. 172). All ESL student

relationships strongly impact the student's motivation for SLA. Many theorists would

argue that learning is, for the most part, about interactions and relationships. The

interaction occurs between students and other students, students and the teacher, and

students and the educational artifacts they encounter (Dörnyei, 2003). These factors alone

are not significant until the student chooses how they will be employed to benefit his or

her learning. Working in concert, the teacher and students construct the educational

context. This is only successful when all parties work in good faith in an effort to help

each other understand what is being taught and what is being learned (Gardner, 2007).

Educational factors

Aside from the cultural and personal context of ESL learners, the educational

context also impacts students' motivation. The classroom environment, teacher's

methodology, and choice of materials used, all work together to motivate or de-motivate

the students. The ideal ESL classroom would have a multilingual ESL teacher at the

helm. However as this is often not possible, it behooves ESL teachers to become as

culturally sensitive and aware as possible for the sake of their students (Dodd, 2001). As

Van Patten and Williams (2007) note, the most if not the only factor important is the

learning environment of ESL students: "[The] environment consists of developing

responses to environmental stimuli. If these responses receive positive reinforcement,

they will become habits. If the responses receive punishment (in this case error

correction), they will be abandoned" (p. 19). Beyond the academics and cultural

sensitivity, and ESL teacher must be caring and nurturing. Feeling valued and supported

helps students to be more confident feel more capable of achieving success. Borba (2009)

stated that beyond respecting a student's culture and first language, teachers need to care

about their students and their students' families, by being available, open and supportive:

"Educators must take the first step towards entering the world of the immigrant family in

a caring and respectful manner" (p. 685).

In the classroom, factors which impact a student's academic success include:

"students' previous educational background, linguistic competence in L1, initial ESL

experience, integration profile, [and] use of L1 strategies" (Appel & Gilabert, 2002;

Early, 1989). A student is motivated to learn within a classroom setting where context

rich subjects such as math, science and social studies transcend continents as well as

languages, providing the students with layers of context and accessible meaning.

Classroom motivated students draw parallels and make connections to their L1 when

learning these subjects in an L2 setting (Cho & Reich, 2008; Oxford & Shearin, 1994).

This is not to say that a classroom motivated individual is language motivated as well;

these two may be mutually exclusive and therefore may pose confusion for the classroom

teacher (Gardner, R., 2007). Language is the vehicle in the ESL classroom by which

content area learning occurs (Mgqwashu, 2005). The ESL teacher must work to ensure

that the learning context provided to her ESL learners is positive in order to maximize

integrative motivation (Nikolov, 1999). Unobtrusive techniques such as "revoicing" can

be used by a skilled ESL teacher to help move her students from one stage of language

development as they work together to develop and strengthen the student's L2 speaking

skills (O'Connor & Michals, 1993).

ESL students come to the classroom with different multiple intelligences and

preferential learning styles that affect how they learn and show learning (Gardner, H.,

1983). According to Cohen (2003), ESL students have insight into "their own language

learning preferences and . . . [are] . . . aware of the specific kinds of challenges which

both classroom and out-of-classroom tasks pose to them as language learners" (p. 289).

Strategy use is also significant for ESL learners because its' use and achievement is,

"complex, multifactorial, and often nonlinear" (Yamamori et al, 2003, p. 407). Teachers'

sensitivity to students' previous learning should guide lesson planning as well as

assessment, while being mindful of the fact that L2 learners, "should be allowed to find

what works for them rather than have strategies pushed upon them" (Oxford & Nyikos,

1989, p. 297). Teachers also should be open to the fact that, "to a large extent, the

response that a [student] has to a learning activity reflects his or her cultural background,

[and] talents that have been nurtured" (Ginsberg, 2005, p. 223). Despite students' initial

inability to express themselves clearly and to fully demonstrate their understanding,

"teachers are justified in holding high expectations for their students" (Marinov-Todd et

al, 2000, p. 30); to that end the ESL teacher must be clear about her expectations and

maintain high standards (Baker, 2008).

Another factor which aids in promoting motivation in the classroom for L2

learning is a refocusing of teachers away from feeling as though ESL students need to be

'fixed' (Lo & Hyland, 2007; Winer, 2007), and onto what students have accomplished. It

has been shown that intrinsic motivation grows out of a sense of achievement and

competence, or a mindset of success: "CET (Cognitive evaluation theory)…suggests that

feelings of competence as well as feelings of autonomy are important for intrinsic

motivation…and that positive feedback facilitates intrinsic motivation by promoting a

sense of competence" (Gagne & Deci, 2005, p. 332). The ultimate goal of the ESL

teacher is for her students to become independent learners with a tool kit of strategies

which will allow them to tackle future academic challenges. For learners with additional

language learning challenges, the ESL teacher needs to promote autonomy by adapting,

differentiating, or individualizing work to ensure success (Dörnyei, 1994). Similarly,

Vygotsky (1978), hypothesized in his Sociocultural Theory that, "… human mental

functioning is fundamentally a mediated process that is organized by cultural artifacts,

activities, and concepts (287)". Taking a similar position, Grayson (2008) posits that

comprehension and manageability of tasks greatly impact student learning: "The SOC

(Sense of Coherence) theory suggests that students' understanding of what they are

learning also affects academic achievement; students who perceive their problems as

comprehensible and manageable are more likely than others to achieve academically"

(Grayson, 2008, p. 489). Since students' motivation is linked to a feeling of success and

competence, ESL teachers should work towards facilitating these experiences for their

students (Pae, 2008). Like Brown (1991) before them, Deci and Ryan (2002) also believe

that this can be easily accomplished by encouraging students to feel invested in their

learning and to provide them with reachable goals that will empower them (Guilloteaux,

& Dörnyei, 2008; Holme, & Moulton, 1997; Roman-Perez, 2010). It therefore follows

that if students feel empowered and are able to feel success, they will develop a strong

sense of intrinsic motivation (Gardner, R., et al, 2004). Bridging L2 learning with L1

previous knowledge and experiences validates ESL students' L1 currency and cultural

value thus enabling them to succeed in an inclusive and accepting environment (Oxford,

2003). Vygotsky (1978), and later Brown (1991), discuss how the difficulty level of tasks

presented to students needs to be monitored and adjusted as each student grows in

language and skill acquisition to ensure learning is constantly occurring and students do

not get bored or lose motivation. Stemming from Vygotsky's (1978) research, the theory

of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) states that the pace at which the teacher

challenges each student and how the student is scaffolded throughout that process will

invariably impact how successful that student feels and progresses in his or her SLA.

This is illustrated in the research of Van Patten and Williams (2007): "The relationship

between learning and development is not directly causal, but intentionally designed

learning environments (e.g., instructed L2 settings) stimulate qualitative developmental

processes" (p. 211).

　　　　According to Gardner, H., (2010), another way to motivate ESL students' to learn

English is by activating the learner's curiosity by ensuring that teachers harness the

students' inquisitiveness. This strategy draws learners in and helps them develop intrinsic

motivation to learn. At the commencement of the 44th annual TESOL Convention in

Boston, Gardner, H., (2010) spoke about how the *disciplined* and *creative minds* must

work together in order for students to be able to, "Think outside the box":

> People cannot be creative unless they have mastered at least one discipline, art or
>
> craft. And cognitive science teaches us that on average, it takes about ten years to
>
> master a craft. So, Mozart was writing great music when he was fifteen and
>
> sixteen, but that is because he started when he was four or five.

Group work is another way an ESL teacher can increase motivation in her

classroom and help promote cross-cultural awareness. Collaborative work allows students

to develop socially as well as academically while providing stimulation through peer

assessment, goal setting, and collaborative mediation of a challenge in a constructivist

environment (Halleck et al, 2002, Harklua, 2000; Irving, 1984; Kite & Crossman, 2007;

Olivio, 2003; Oxford, 1997; Wu, 2003). Group work in the ESL classroom should be

culturally sensitive and not be imposed as cultural and personality dynamics could

potentially cause more harm than good (Storch, 2002). Social interaction in a

multicultural and multi-linguistic classroom allows students to become aware of the

richness of their own heritage as well as share in the stories and experiences of their

contemporaries. This normalization of ESL-ness aids in motivating students by validating

their L1 (Kouritzin et al, 2009; McCarthy et al., 2005). Additionally, verbal intelligence

is one learning style which does not get as much focus as other learning styles do

(Gardner, H., 1983). However, in an ESL classroom it is doubly important, firstly

because it allows verbal learners to exercise their learning style of choice, and secondly

because it encourages ESL students to employ their L2 (Gardner & Lambert, 1959;

Paper, 1990). Aside from group work, teachers should employ multimedia and all manner

of technology in their ESL classroom to give students a multi-facetted learning

environment as a way to mediate their SLA (Yunus et al, 2010).

Theoretical framework

This project was predicated on the belief that there are many factors which impact

ESL student learning. These factors include previous schooling experiences, both positive

and negative, as well as the impact of familial integrativeness versus instrumentalism

(Gardner, 2007). Vygotsky (1978) defines discourse regarding language learning as

interactions between students and other individuals for the purpose of communication,

including factors such as peer interaction and the classroom environment. Finally, the

ESL student is influenced by his/her interpersonal and intrapersonal factors, while

acculturating to a new country, school, and language as he/she forges a new Canadian

identity for himself/herself (Markus, H & Nurius, P. (1982). It is my contention that

insufficient positive influences, or experiences related to education experience of the

student, negatively impacts the ESL student's motivation for SLA and consequently

impedes his/ her ability to develop his/her Canadian identity or version of himself/herself.

Similarly, Deci and Ryan's (2002) *self-determination theory* postulates that motivation

and a student's self image within a classroom are tied together. Additionally, as stated in

Krashen's (1981) *affective filter* theory, the student's willingness to communicate

(MacIntyre, Baker, Clement and Donovan, 2002), would undoubtedly impact his/her

motivation for SLA.

The phenomenon of motivation in ESL students for SLA is a complicated and

multifaceted process that all of the ESL students experience to some extent throughout

their acculturation process. Figure 2.1 depicts the SLA process.

Figure 2.1. Factors Contributing to ESL Student Motivation for SLA
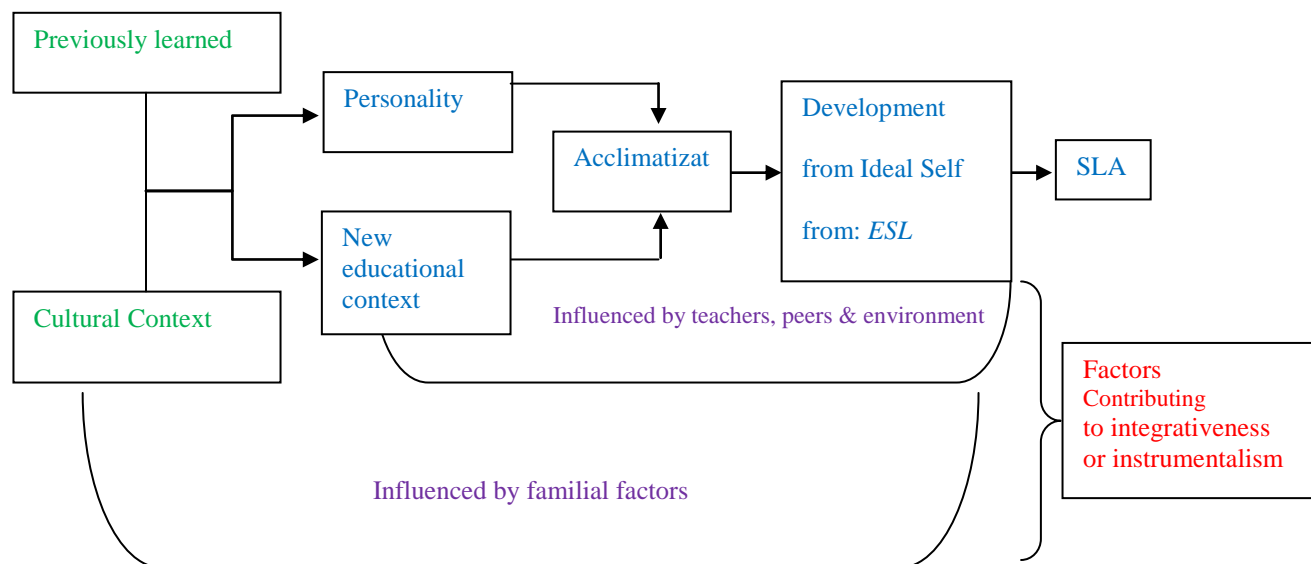
Figure 1. The model summarizes how I believe ESL students acquire their L2 and the factors that impact their motivation for SLA.

Interpretive constructionist research

I chose to us interpretive constructionist as the methodology in this study. Rubin and Rubin (1995) define this method as: "[Working] to find shared meaning within some particular group, recognizing that though each person interprets the events he or she encounters in a somewhat distinct manner, he or she is likely, at the same time, to bring to bear the understanding held by peers, family, [or] friends" (p. 29). When using interviews, "data tends to be qualitative, [where the researcher aims] to understand what is happening in social situations" (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011, p. 46). Stringer (2008) states that interpretive research allows the inquirer to, "reveal the meanings people attach to events [that] they experience, and the way they connect to their life-world" (p. 23). I interpreted the discourse that the students shared with me, but I also injected my thoughts, hunches and experiences into the process (through the use of a journal and interview observation notes). In effect the students and I constructed the data

as it related to what motivated the ESL students for SLA, from various perspectives; by

undertaking this method of gathering data, I was able to focus on: "achieving credibility

through careful choice of interviewees, research sites, thoroughness of questioning, and

accuracy and transparency in reporting" (Rubin, & Rubin, 1995, p. 16). Additionally, I

was mindful of maintaining theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to ensure

that the data I gathered was the data that would support my theoretical framework and

would. I also focused on safeguarding each interviewee's story and their anonymity

while distilling from their words the authentic data which allowed me to formulate my

conclusions. Arnette (2007) expresses the broader purpose of interpretive inquiry by

stating:

> Qualitative research is responsive, engaged in constant public disclosure, and
>
> obligated to offer a public context for any evidence claimed…that continues to
>
> advance both the natural and the human sciences . . . permitting the public to
>
> accept or reject the findings and or what they were based upon. (p. 31)

In the second chapter I surveyed the literature in the field of ESL student

motivation. The factors that are significant influences on student motivation for SLA

include: familial motivating factors, acculturation and L2 ideal self, intrapersonal

motivating factors, interpersonal motivating factors, and educational factors. I developed

a theoretical framework which set up the parameters for the research. The research

methodology I chose to use was the constructionist interpretive methodology.

Chapter III: Methodology

In chapter three I discuss the methodology of interpretive constructionist research, the researcher's role, the research paradigm, participant selection, data sources and data collection, interviewing, data analysis, trustworthiness, limitations and delimitations, and ethical considerations.

The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions in order to ascertain which factors influence students' motivation to learn English:

1   How do ESL students describe the process of learning English as a second language?

2   Which factors do ESL students feel enhance motivation for SLA?

3   Which factors do ESL students feel impede motivation for SLA?

Researcher's role

The research process is predicated on questions. As the researcher, I situated my topic of interest based on the literature in the field, and then developed my research tools, or interview questions.

One of my goals in undertaking this study and interviewing eight ESL students was to gather data (between April 2012 and August 2012) was to better understand the contributing factors of the phenomenon of motivation for SLA in middle school (grade seven to nine) ESL students. By interviewing each student individually, I was consciously aware that, "interviewees *and interviewers* work to construct themselves as certain types of people in relation to the topic of the interview and reflexively the

interview itself" (Rapley, 2001, p. 303); Creswell (2007) states that the role of the

interviewer must be established with this in mind. My role in the interviews was neither

as, "a participant nor a nonparticipant, but rather a middle-ground [between the two]" (p.

139). I positioned myself as an inquirer, who shared in the ESL experience with the

interviewees, and therefore I was in a unique position to understand their journey.

Using the interpretive constructivist methodology as well as the responsive

interview model I was able to straddle the role of the researcher as well as a participant in

the study: "A responsive interview model assumes that there is a mutual and personal

relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 34).

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), aside from the mutual relationship between the

interviewer and interviewee, other characteristics of the responsive interview model are:

the interviewee is given the forum to express his or her interpretation of an experience or

situation, the interviewer's style and personality is evident in the give and take of the

interview. However, the interviewer does not impose his or her views on the interviewee

and the interview process is understood to be flexible and adaptive depending on the

interviewees' responses (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The process of respecting the

interviewees' thoughts, feelings and experiences goes back my focus on maintaining

theoretical sensitivity throughout the data gathering process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Data gathering

Participant selection. In order to recruit participants, I employed criterion

sampling (middle school students who attended an ESL program) of participants. In so

doing, I was able to "select individuals …because they [could] purposefully inform an

understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell,

2007, p. 125). Additionally, the participants who volunteered were ones who felt

comfortable about sharing their feeling and thoughts and who were comfortable speaking

at length about their motivation for SLA: "for one-on-one interviewing, the researcher

needs individuals who are not hesitant to speak and share idea…less articulate, shy

interviewees may present the researcher with a challenge and less adequate data"

(Creswell, 2007, p. 133).

I visited the ESL class and shared my study idea with a group of ESL students in

grades seven through nine. They received a package including an information letter, an

assent form and a consent form as well as a stamped and addressed envelope. I chose the

eight students who mailed back the assent and consent form to me signaling that they

would be interested in being interviewed. I expected to receive assent and consent forms

from the students who had been excited about sharing their thoughts and experiences

about learning English during my presentation. However, some of the first students to

send their forms back were some of the quieter students in the group.

The sample size I chose to use was eight. I was not as concerned about the

number of students as I was more interested about mining the necessary depth of

information. Sample size was not as important for me as what I was able to glean from

what was said and how it related to the data I had gathered (Boles & Bombard, 1998).

McCloskey (2008) supports this theory: "Researchers recognize that important patterns

can emerge in small samples, and large samples can create an unmanageable amount of

data without adding to the analytic outcome" (p. 30). Prior to interviewing children it was

valuable to establish a rapport with the participants in order to, "provide a safe

environment for them to explore their experience" (Stringer, 2008, p. 64); similarly,

Rubin and Rubin (1995) stress, "the importance developing and maintaining a partnership

with the interviewee" (p. xi).

Interviewing children

Interviewing children unlike interviewing adults has its' pitfalls because while the

researcher wishes to ask open ended questions, responses may not yield depth and

richness of data: "[children] tend to respond or react to events in immediate rather than

abstract terms" (Stringer, 2008, p. 64). Interviewing middle school aged children (grades

seven to nine) may hold further challenges as there are internal mitigating factors that

affect how children at this stage of development view themselves and their role in

society: "Children between 11 and 14 years of age and undergoing the developmental

transition from child to adolescent... [and] are challenged to become competent at

handling increasingly complex social situations and incorporate the physical changes of

puberty into their self-concept" (Horner, 2000, p. 510).

Additionally, because pre-adolescent and adolescent children are growing and developing

their identities, they tend to hold the values and opinion of their mentors, rather than

internally subscribing to them their own, as adults do: "the words of language are always

half someone else's: when individuals use words, they formulate themselves and their

thoughts from the point of [view of] others, and from the point of view of their

community" (Talja, 1999, p. 471). Consequently, the views the students may profess to

hold about their motivation for SLA may in fact be those of their guardians or friends.

Research has shown that how questions are framed when interviewing children is the key

to a successful interview: "Interviewing children concerns the structure of the interview.

Information obtained from free recall, or an unstructured interview schedule, is more

likely to capture the unique perspective of the child" (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999, p.

181).

Developing a general interview guide

From the research there does not seem to be a consensus on which factors are the

most contributory to student motivation to learn. I was aware that, "the most crucial

development aspect of the research process (whether qualitative or quantitative) is the

research question" (Burck, 2005, p. 240); having said that, I used questions that would

allow me to gain a better picture of the factors influencing SLA. Factors that are the most

prevalent in the literature include: previous learning experiences, familial influence, peer

influence and the students' personality and self image. I believe that my interview

questions yielded further information regarding factors affecting ESL student motivation

for SLA.

During the first round of interviews, I met with each of the eight students one-on-

one for approximately one hour. During the interview I asked each participant the same

planned, questions as well as probing questions, and follow up questions depending on

the students' responses, as discussed in Rubin and Rubin (1995).

The initial interviews were planned in conjunction with the students and their

parents and we met at a location conducive and convenient to the parents and children.

The parents and participants were given guidelines for the location: it had to be

conducive to the digital voice recording of the interview (minimum background noise),

and with some measure of privacy in order for the researcher to maintain the interviewees

confidentiality. The respondents were given the option to refuse the use of the digital

recorder in order to ensure that they were comfortable in the interview environment. They

were also given the option to stop the interview at any time. I engaged in a short five to

ten debriefing session upon the completion of each of the 16 interviews in order to ensure

the accuracy of the data.

I used a variety of questions to elicit the data I was looking for. The different

kinds of questions used include: introductory or opening questions to put the students at

ease, probing questions which would guide students to speak more deeply about their

experiences, follow up questions to ensure all data was as complete as possible, and

debriefing questions to ensure students had a chance to clarify and issues they might have

experiences along the way (see Appendix A).

I started each interview, as suggested by Stringer (2008) by putting my

participants at ease by: identifying myself and my role in the conversation, identifying the

topic to be discussed, and asking the interviewee for permission to discuss said topic with

him or her: "Help the interviewee as well as the researcher surface detail-rich

descriptions as well as their significance and meaning in a way that is less likely to be

dictated by cultural scripts and established identities" (Schultze & Avital, 2011, p. 5).

I asked each participant the same general questions, what Rubin and Rubin (1995)

call "survey" (p. 1) questions, in order to gather responses about the same aspects of their

motivation for learning English experience while they attended the ESL program and as

during their time as students transitioned into their regular classes.

Major topics for interview questions:

1   Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today and discussing some questions

    I have about how students who come from other countries, feel about learning

    English; I am trying to understand students' desire to learn and what pushes

some students to learn and not others. Please feel free to stop me at any time

or to let me know if you need clarification on anything I ask you. This will

take approximately an hour, is that ok with you? Is it alright if I ask you some

questions about your experiences with learning English at this school and in

the ESL class? Is it alright if I record our conversation? Is it ok if I take notes

while we talk? We can stop the interview at any time. Just tell me that we

have talked enough for now and that you want to stop.

Question one was a series of opening and introductory questions to establish rapport

and the purpose of the interview. I gave the students the opportunity to feel free to ask

questions throughout the process as well as giving the parameters of the interview and

I asked permission for asking him/her questions and recording the interview.

2 How long have you lived in Canada? Please tell me about the languages you
   speak other than English.

3 Please tell me about your experience learning English.

4 Can you please tell me a little bit about how school in Canada is different
   from school in your home country? I'm interested in hearing about the
   differences regarding your peers, how the classroom was run and how your
   teacher taught.

5 Can you please tell me how you feel about learning English? Was it hard or
   easy learning English when you first came to Canada? What do you think
   affected how you learned English? Why have you been successful in learning
   English? What kept you working hard to learn English?

Questions two to five were more specific questions, and were meant to elicit

information regarding the student's previous learning, and how they viewed their

previous experience in comparison to their current one. The length of time that a

student had lived in Canada impacted how much time they had had to acclimatize to

the new culture and structure of the school. Some students require an extended period

of time, to adjust to the difference when they first enter the ESL program; I found that

there was a correlation between students' previous learning experiences and their

current successes and challenges as they learned English. These questions were open

ended enough so that student responses lead to clarifying or further probing

questions.

6   Can you please tell me about the friends you have made at this school? What

languages do your friends speak? How do you think you have changed as a

person since you've lived in Canada?

7   How do your friends feel about school? Do your friends affect how you feel

about learning English? If so, how?

Questions six and seven required the students to share more personal data and to reach

back into their memory banks for the answers. The questions were meant to prompt

students to discuss their relationships with their peers and whether their peer group had

any impact on their own learning. I assumed that motivated peers would excel at learning

English, whereas peers who were not invested in their own learning would not feel that

they were as successful at SLA. These questions were more specific and were meant to

yield data that I was able to analyze across all participants to compare their perceptions

regarding SLA.

8   Can you please tell me what your parents' experiences of learning English

are? What are they doing to learn English?

Question eight was also a more specific question and was more personal in nature than

the previous two questions. It was aimed at discovering how the student had been

influenced by attitudes regarding education in the home. *Instrumental* parents may send a

message to their children that becoming fully immersed in the culture and language of

their new country was not a necessity. This, in turn, would be manifested in the student's

low motivation to learn English. However, if the student's parents had an *integrative*

view of learning English, then the student's attitude would reflect this through their high

motivation to learn English (Jordan, 2004). These questions were open and were meant

for the students to share historical and familial perception of language learning. I

anticipated that I would have to use further probing questions based on student responses

in order to delve deeper into familial perception of SLA.

9   How do you feel about school now that your English has improved since you

arrived? What is your favourite subject? What are your favourite things about

Canada? Is there anything you miss about school in your native country? Are

there things you don't miss about your native country?

The purpose of question nine was to ascertain how the participant felt about his or her

new educational environment and whether they felt comfortable and integrated into the

culture and fabric of their new school. This question could have made the participant feel

vulnerable if I had not developed sufficient rapport, but it was open enough so that the

participant was free to speak his or her mind. Often more motivated students become

more involved on all manner of activities offered by the school and surrounding

community, and show a more invested attitude, including motivation towards studying. I

expected the responses to this question to vary as the students I was interviewing came

from a variety of academics experiences, and cultural backgrounds.

10 Are there any questions you would like to ask me about anything we've been

talking about today?

The purpose of question ten was to debrief the students and to answer any questions they

or their parents had for me. At this point if other questions arose from me or the students

based on the responses to the previous questions and answers, they were addressed. I also

thanked them for their time, as well as asked for permission to contact them again if I

require further data or clarification after I started analyzing the data.

The second set of interviews included two clarifying questions (Appendix E),

which arose from the previous interviews as well, I used this time at which I used for

member checking.

1 Do you feel Canadian?

The first question in the second interview was meant to further clarify for me how much

assimilation and acculturation the students felt that they have achieved, and how much

they had acculturated by how "Canadian" they felt. I assumed that the more they

associated with being Canadian the more acclimatized they were.

2 Would you say that you have an outgoing or shy personality?

The second questions required that the participants be more introspective and to qualify

themselves as having a personality that was either introverted or extroverted. The purpose

of this question was to see if an outgoing personality made intrinsic motivation for SLA,

or would translate into a lower affective filter (Krashen, 1981). The interviews were

semi-structured and audio taped and then transcribed for the purpose of analysis.

Sources of data

I three sources of data as suggested by Creswell (2007) including: the interview

data, an interview guide (Appendix A), field notes taken during each interview

(Appendix B), noting observations regarding the interviewees, reactions to the questions,

the participants' comfort level, the setting, and my feelings about each interview,

including anything surprising as well as outlying. Additionally, I made notes throughout

the research process in a research journal noting: my thoughts, hunches, surprises and

things I learned along the way (see Appendix C). It was essential for me to have more

than one source of data because the relying on just the audio recording of the interview

only captured the participants' voice:

> Tape-recording does not capture the tacit, non-verbal elements of an interview,
>
> which are crucial aspects of the experience for the researcher. We may not know
>
> exactly how we assess people, as human cognition remains something of a
>
> mystery, but we do know that. (Walsham, 2006, p. 323)

I ensured that I was actively listening to my participants during each interview,

and that I observed their non-verbal language, that I recorded in my field notes (see

Appendix B), for example: "… questions that they [might feel] they cannot or should not

answer [may become evident in] nonverbal responses that might indicate a lack of

understanding of a question" (Goldstein, 1995, p. 351). I was also conscience of the

choice of words the participants used to express their thoughts and feelings. As a teacher

of ESL students, I felt gratified that they were able to fully express themselves in English,

their second or third language, as, "language competence should be measured…as the

ability to translate, transpose and critically reflect on social, cultural and historical

meanings conveyed by the grammar and lexicon" (Pennycook, 2008, pp. 33-34). When I

transcribed the interviews I quoted the interviewees verbatim, and even though their

grammar and tenses were not perfect, they were able to make themselves understood.

I believe that interviewing these students not only allowed me to understand the

various mitigating factors which affect their motivation to acquire their L2, but also

because also it allowed me the opportunity to gain,". . . knowledge about how 'ordinary'

pupils learn … [giving me] valuable information for [how all] other pupils [learn]" (Dahl,

2004, p. 130).

Analysis

The first order of business was to transcribe the interviews verbatim. Secondly,

the data was organized in a meaningful way so that it could be analyzed (Appendix D &

Fig. 2): "Interviews are systematically examined - analyzed to suggest further questions

and topics to pursue…[and] the researcher may go back to conduct more interviews… if

gaps are seen" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 15). The transcribed data was coded for

significant statements, and then clustered, allowing for common themes to be mapped

across each participant, and then all of the participants' data. Figure 3.2 depicts the

process I undertook during the data analysis process.

Figure 3.2 Interpretive constructionist breakdown of data analysis
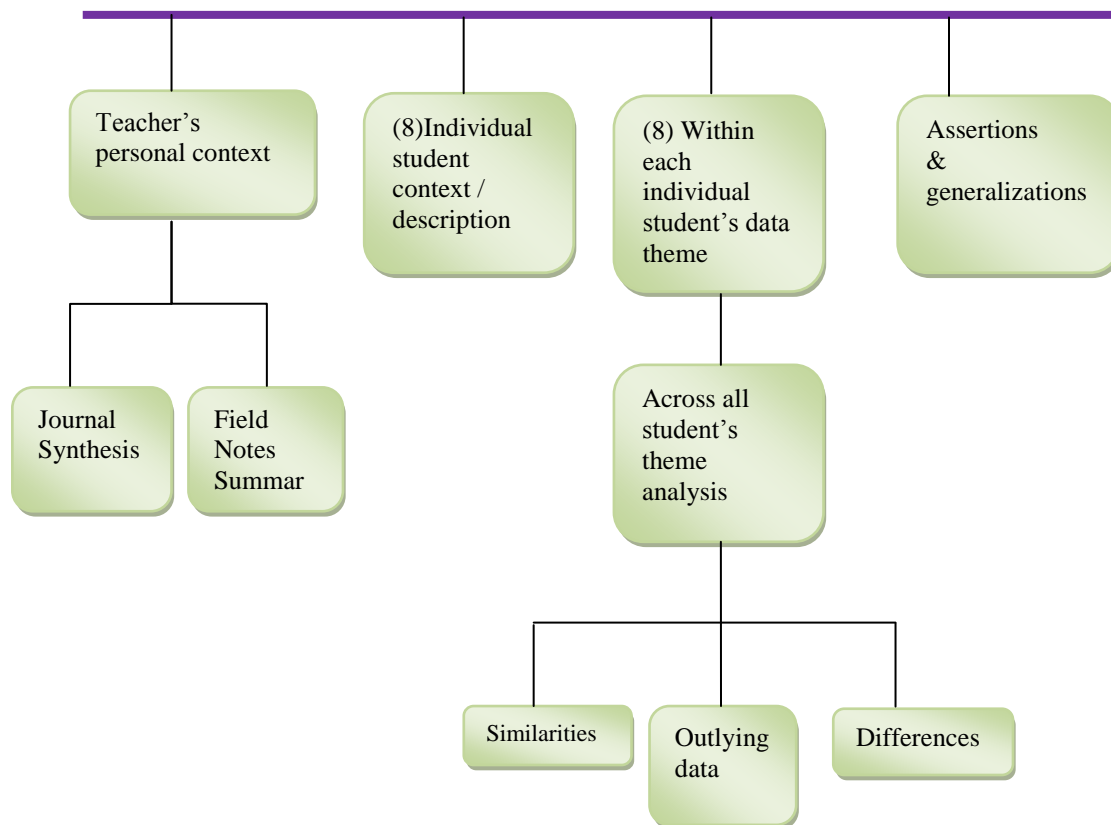
Figure 2. This model depicts the path I took while analyzing the three sources of data including: the research journal, the field notes, and the interviews.

Based on Creswell (2007) model (p. 172)

Coding. Researchers, "use a recursive, iterative process in developing the codes and increasing [their] understanding of the phenomenon" (Weston et al, 2001, p. 386). As suggested by Creswell (2007), transcribed data was reduced, "into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in…discussion" (148). Coding occurred repeatedly in order to ensure that all data has been sufficiently coded and analyzed:

A return to the immediate data as given to us in consciousness…accounts of that irreducible sphere of primal impressional consciousness that somehow constitutes

> …an access to the elusive nature of the moment of the now that is always
>
> somehow at the very center of all phenomenological reflection. (Van Manen,
>
> 2006, pp. 715-716)

The process of analysis required the researcher to follow the steps of describing the data,

interpreting the data, and finally explaining the data (Verschueren, 2001). Coding was a

significant part of the analysis of discourse data; it needed to be done thoroughly and

exhaustively:

> Coding is not what happens before analysis, but comes to constitute an important
>
> part of the analysis. There is a reciprocal relationship between the development of
>
> a coding system and the evolution of understanding a phenomenon. (Weston et
>
> al, 2001, p. 397)

Through coding new and previously overlooked and unexpected connections and

perspectives can emerge. Additionally, yielded clusters of outlying data that was

reanalyzed and recoded:

> The goal of coding is to pave the way for data analysis. The variables that emerge
>
> in this stage are a combination of anticipated and unanticipated discourses and
>
> discursive processes . . . the next step is to return to the data, dissect it, and
>
> identify any unanticipated discourses or processes. (McCloskey, 2008, p. 33)

In addition to the students' data I reflected on my own notes: what I had learned,

anything that surprised me along the way, and what conclusions I had reached:

> Including the incorporation of ideas from social constructionism . . .
>
> constructivism, and an emphasis on the use of self-reflexivity . . .the various

assumptions and beliefs researchers bring to their research work with regard to

questions of ontology . . . and epistemology. (Burck, 2005, p. 241)

Themes. The resultant themes were written into a description of the phenomenon

of ESL students' motivation for SLA. Field notes and journal notes were summarized,

and in addition to the interview data, yielded a rich description of the phenomena

including my perspective of the process, a reflection on the students' experiences during

the interviews, as well as the interviewees' experiences as ESL students describing their

motivating factors for SLA:

> Thick description presents human behavior in a way that takes not only the
>
> physical and social context into account, but also the actors' intentionality [as to
>
> make] the meaning and significance of behaviors and events are made accessible
>
> to the reader. (Schultze & Avital, 2011, p. 3)

Through the use of interpretive constructionist methodology, I gained a depth of data

from a variety of perspectives all converging on the question: what motivates middle

school ESL students to learn English?

Interpretive constructionist methodology was the most conductive method for me

to use in an effort to discover the factors which influence ESL students' motivation to

learn English.. Therefore, transcribed and analyzed data from these interviews revealed a

picture of what motivates similar ESL students for SLA. Analysis included critical

discourse analysis (see appendix D).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA). Maintaining standards during research

ensures validity, and reliability of findings. The interview data yielded layers of meaning

and a variety of contexts which needed to be considered:

> The big issue for any critical approach to language use is the fact that in this
>
> world of communication almost nothing is ever exactly what it looks like . . .
>
> communication is basically about 'meaning' and meaning is an intangible
>
> phenomenon. (Verschueren, 2001, p. 61).

Without strenuous guidelines it would be difficult to ascertain the quality in qualitative

research as the methodology could be viewed as somewhat 'fuzzy', with researchers

sharing their thoughts, observations and documenting participant interview statements as

the bulk of their data analysis:

> Critique derives from investigating and problematizing the connection between
>
> language and social structure…to support this premise by means of insights from
>
> other social-theoretical fields of inquiry, seeking a more sustainable social,
>
> cultural, and/or historical foundation for linguistic analysis. (Blommaert &
>
> Bulcaen, 2000, p. 456)

> When interviews are the main source of data gathering, and the interviewers such

as me must be aware of a myriad of factors when analyzing interview data. Uldam (2011)

concurs with Fairclough's (1993) definition of critical discourse analysis which states

that:

> Analysis…aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality
>
> and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b)
>
> wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how
>
> such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped. (p. 135)

Delimitations and limitations. Being the sole researcher conducting this study, I

had to consider my perspective and bias and how it played into the data: "We are all

biased by our own background, knowledge and prejudices to see things in certain ways and not others…the people in the field situation do not perceive the researcher as being aligned with a particular individual or group" (Walsham, 2006, p. 321). By taking notes and audio taping my participants, and by being present in the interview process and being the inquirer, I was impacting not only the participants' but also my own perception of the participants: "The importance of scrutinizing one's assumptions and values as researcher and of examining their impact throughout the research process has been addressed by a number of qualitative researchers" (Burck, 2005, p. 242). The nature of interpretive research is that it is subjective to a point and invoked my perspective and bias as to the research question and the participants: "Emphasis upon the question [which] takes us from raw subjectivism to public engagement of the text…the resultant insights that emerge from the question and text then have public admission of perspective" (Arnett, 2007, p. 32). I believe that by being consciously open-minded and actively listening to the interviewees stories so that I could accurately retell then, I was able to remain unbiased throughout the process.

There were some other limitations and challenges which needed consideration. One limitation was the fact that I did not conduct a pilot study prior to interviewing the participants. Additionally, all of the students who volunteered seemed to be very motivated; therefore, I was not able to interview any individual who felt unmotivated to learn English. As well, the process of acculturation, and the development of the L2 identity can take up to as long as a decade. The students I interviewed were at the beginning of this process and I was not able to document the entire process.

Another issue which arose was that one of the interviews mysteriously did not record. This was very disappointing and frustrating as I thought I had data which was really interesting. The student did not want to redo the interview, so unfortunately I was not able to use any of the data I had gathered aside from the recording. I interviewed a different student instead who was interested in participating in order to have the required number of participants interviewed. One way to avoid this kind of occurrence might have been to have more than one recording device working at each interview, but it seemed that the students got somewhat apprehensive about being recorded with one device – more than one might cause them even more stress about the process. When the participants were nervous they spoke very quietly and it was very hard to hear them on the recordings. This was the other frustration I had when I was transcribing. By the middle of the interview they all invariably loosened up and got caught up in the process of sharing the details of their experiences.

The data which I gathered from the participants generally fell within, and was delimited by the literature in the field. A few unexpected results did come up throughout the research. One unexpected factor was that the primary reason that all of the ESL students cited as motivation to learn English was to make Canadian friends. Peer pressure on the other hand was not a factor in the ESL classroom as a influence or motivating factor for SLA. Introversion and extroversion were not ties to an affective filter (Krashen, 1989) that was correspondingly high (introversion) or low (extraversion). It was possible it seemed that a shy student could have a low affective filter and an outgoing student could have a high affective filter.

Validity. Guba's criteria for validity of qualitative research require that data

demonstrates: "credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability" (Mills,

2007, 85-87). I was able to do so through the use of triangulation by collecting data from

three different sources: research journal, field notes and observations during interviews,

and the 16 interview transcripts from eight participants, each bringing with them a

different perspective on the same phenomenon. I also maintained validity by obtaining

member checking, including sufficient literature, the identification of outlying data, and

the saturation of the data. In the Field Notes I made citations regarding the participant's

physical demeanor; their eye contact, where they chose to sit in relation to myself and

apparent comfort level during the interviews. The interviews themselves gave me insight

into the participant's mind's and their thoughts regarding their education past and present

as well as how they saw themselves as new Canadians. The Research Journal allowed me

to synthesize what I observed in my field notes as well as what the students said in

response to my questions, their tone of voice and how they felt about the questions and

their answer. Using only one of these sources of data would have yielded a more flattened

impression of each student; however by triangulating these sources of data I was able to

construct a more three dimensional view of each participant including their physicality,

expressiveness, their voice and their thoughts:

> The reliability of research findings can be increased by methodological
>
> triangulation using multiple data-gathering methods (e.g., observation, interviews,
>
> and diary techniques). In the study of interpretive practices, the reliability and
>
> generalizability of research findings can be enhanced by combining different
>
> types of research materials. (Talja, p. 473)

Ethical considerations

Recruitment criteria. All eight of the students were chosen through criterion/convenience sampling. Both parents and students signed off for the students to participate before they were included in the study. If either the parent or the student did not agree on the student's participation, that child was not included in the study. Both the parents and students were present during the interviews.

Deception. There was no deception necessary to conduct the research for this study, and participants were not compensated in any way for their participation. Participants benefited from taking part in this research project as they were given the opportunity to share their experiences and recollections of their previous educational experiences. This process was relevant and meaningful to the participating students; as well it yielded beneficial information to them as a member of a larger immigrant community. Additionally, the participants were able to gain meta-cognitive awareness of what makes them more motivated to learn English. There were no risks to the participants in this study.

Confidentiality and participant safety. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, each of the eight interviewees was assigned a pseudonym to protect the students' identity, age, grade, sex, cultural background, the interview site, the school they attend, and the division. Although the researcher made every effort to protect participant confidentiality, in accordance with current legislation, disclosures of harm to self, threats of/or harm to others, and/ or reported or suspected child abuse would have been immediately reported to the appropriate authorities. Including, but is not limited to, reporting to the supervising professor and (if necessary) Winnipeg Police Service. All

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files were stored securely separate from student consent documents. At all times the

safety of the children was safeguarded by following the ethics protocol; as well, "strict

adherence to an a priori format, such as the traditional "question-and-answer" mode, is

discouraged" (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999, p. 178).

      Disposition of data. The disposition of data from withdrawn participants or data

from participants' whose parents choose for their children to withdraw, was not included,

or analyzed during the study. The data collected from such participants was disposed of

immediately after the student's withdrawal notice as per destruction of data steps (See

security of data).

      Security of data. The security of records and data collected in this research,

including the researcher's journal and field notes were kept secure in order to maintain

participants' anonymity. Digital voice recordings of interviews were transferred from the

digital recorder equipment to a folder under the interviewees' pseudonyms in an external

memory card or usb (universal serial bus), or flash drive, which I wore around my neck

during the day and locked up in a safe at my home during the night, immediately after

finishing the interview and before leaving the interview room. This memory card was

password protected with 128 bit digital encryption. After the voice recording was

transferred from the digital voice recorder to the encrypted memory card the digital

recorder was wiped clean of all recordings through the use of the "delete all" command.

Digital documents, including all documents produced by any computer software, such as

Microsoft Office, Adobe PDF and/ or scanned software, were kept in a password

protected folder on an encrypted thumb drive designated for this research alone. Paper

based data (correspondences, notes, field notes, assent and consent forms) containing

students' names were kept in separate folders in a locked safe at the researcher's

residence, and place of research analysis. Electronic data, such as email communication

with the researcher were transferred to a usb key, and then the original messages were

deleted, and then deleted from the delete file. At the conclusion of the study (Aug, 2012),

all data collected in this research, digital and physical alike, such as paper drafts, paper

transcripts, paper journal, paper field notes and any other paper based records or data,

were destroyed as per the following steps at the conclusion of this research: all physical

paper based data were shredded with a witness present and all electronic digital data were

incinerated with a witness present. All electronic communication was deleted from the in

box, sent box and deleted box.

 Dissemination. Students were given the option of receiving the summary via

email or regular mail. The summary was made available in August 2012. The research

findings were disseminated to the supervising professor for review and a brief summary

(excluding personal identifiers), written in a manner that was easily comprehensible to

individuals whose first language is not English, and sent to the participants at the

completion of the research project excluding identifiers such as names, race, and age.

 In this chapter I described the interpretive constructionist methodology I used and

the process I followed during this phase of the study including: the research paradigm,

the researcher's role, participant selection, data sources and data collection, interviewing,

data analysis, trustworthiness, limitations, and ethical considerations.

Chapter IV: Presentation of Findings

In chapter four, I summarize the field notes, and the research journal. As well, I consider how the themes in the literature were evident in the data I gathered. Additionally, I discuss and analyze the interview data I gathered.

In middle school, the friends I associated with were likewise academically focused; their drive bred competition amongst our peer group and drove us all to work hard. Being academically driven and successful became a part of my identity in high school. All of these factors, familial influence, peer group, classroom routines and structures and teachers influenced who I became as an ESL learner. Having experienced being an ESL learner from grade one onward, I have always been interested and empathetic to other ESL students' experiences. To that end I chose to study the factors which influence the motivation of ESL students in grades seven through nine to learn English.

Throughout middle-school I had a series of very supportive English teachers with high standards in grades seven through nine who encouraged me to read, analyze, and question everything. They gave me the skills necessary to be successful and instilled a love of English literature to the point that I went on to complete an undergraduate degree in English literature. Additionally, I recall how much focus my parents put on education. They were constantly reminding me how important good grades were, and showed disappointment if I did not achieve of the highest level.

Interview field notes summary

During the process of meeting with the participants, I took notes either during the interviews or immediately afterwards in order to capture all of the impressions and observations I made while interviewing the students.

Alice. Alice and her parents chose to meet me outside a local McDonald's, while all of the other interviews occurred at the participants' school. The parents purchased drinks, seemed comfortable. As we sat down to begin the interview at a stone picnic table outside, the father apologized for having chosen such a bustling location. Throughout the interview Alice was very open and animated (using her hands to express herself), she looked straight ahead rather than at me, perhaps because the sun would have been in her eyes otherwise. But her voice was monotone and I wondered if this was as a result of how she spoke in her L1. She showed that she had strong convictions about learning. She was a good student and believed in working hard. She was somewhat critical about the "low" level of education in Canada as compared to her European education. She was not one of the students I had expected to participate. She had been engaged during my initial presentation to the ESL class, but unlike some of the other students, she was quiet, and I remember wondering if she understood what I was talking about. After the interview was finished and I was packing up, Alice's mother made a point of saying that they had picked up and moved to Canada after the age of 40, it was not easy, but it was an adventure and their choice so they could not blame anyone if it was difficult. This statement reflected the theory that parents' perception of complete integration into the new culture affects students' perception of the value of said culture and their motivation to learn English (Gardner, 2007). The parents seemed very supportive of their daughter,

allowing her to participate and not showing any indication they disagreed with anything

she said.

   Keemo. I had arranged an interview date with Keemo, and he chose to meet at the

school during the lunch hour. Keemo was an amazing youth who told me stories about

growing up in Africa, the loss of close relatives and his struggle learning English. He did

not know a word of English when he arrived in Canada but remained a strong and

resilient individual, despite the many trials, tribulations and changes he had undergone to

get to this point in time. He had learned English in less than 21 months, and had a hunger

for learning which he did not try to mask nonchalantly with teenage bravado. The one

thing he stressed that he liked about Canada was that he could get food anytime he

wanted, and that he could eat three times a day instead of once, as he had done in Africa.

He was very passionate about soccer, and it had been one stumbling block to arranging an

interview time as he practiced or played soccer nearly every night. He was very soft

spoken at the start of the interview, but he was open about his experiences and shared

freely. He answered all of my questions. I found it interesting that he said he only had

'white friends', even though there were students in the school from his cultural and

linguistic background. He said that the other African students could not help improve in

his four African languages or correct him because they knew about what he knew. He

said that his white friends were smart and helped him in all of his subjects. This attitude

reflects the idea postulated by Jordan (2004), that new immigrants with an integrative

attitude identify with the target community and endeavor to join them and become like

them. Successful acculturation often manifests itself when ESL students such as Keemo

feel comfortable seeking out and developing social connections outside of their L1 peer

group as well as within their L1 peer group (Daryl, 1996). During the interviews, Keemo

sat straight in his seat, choosing to sit beside me instead of across from me, but he looked

straight ahead instead of at me. He used his hands to express the things he felt strongly

about.

   Viola. When I interviewed Viola, she made eye contact and used her hands when

the words were hard to find. She moved her chair closer to me and seemed very

comfortable to be talking to me. She spoke about how in Vietnam girlfriends held hands

and when she came to Canada and tried to hold hands with a friend, she was "rejected",

and found this confusing. She seemed a little self-conscious about not being able to find

the right words to express herself, but she persevered until she felt as though she had

gotten her message across.

   Shai. Shai the Korean student was very well spoken and polite. It was interesting

how the students normally sat beside me, but Shai chose to sit across from me at a small

round table. When I asked him what he missed about his country he got a little emotional

thinking about his family and friends. He said he spoke with them via email but it was

clear that after only being in Canada for 10 months, he still felt the loss. He generally

maintained eye contact and seemed at ease answering all of my questions. Shai seemed

very empathetic to me. He asked me if I was going to be eating lunch too, as he saw I did

not have anything with me. He also spoke of friends who came to Canada without family

at all to study and shared how hard that experience was on them. He made a point of

mentioning more than once how kind and caring Canadians were as compared to

Koreans; I found this a surprising generalization. I was struck by how clear his English

was when he spoke. He had not learned much English prior to coming to Canada and his

grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary were really good. He mentioned that culturally

Canadian schools and Korean schools differed in how students resolved conflicts. In

Korea students fought and carried weapons like knives to school and this was generally

accepted as the norm. However in Canada this would lead to a threat assessment if not a

lockdown and suspension. I was touched by the fact that he attributed his success to his

ESL teacher because of how kind she was and how well she taught. This comment put

me in mind of what Gagne and Deci (2005) Cognitive Evaluation Theory, regarding the

effects of positive feedback facilitating intrinsic motivation in students by promoting a

sense of competence and self confidence in themselves as learners.

  Sawana. Sawana was calm, comfortable and open during her interviews. She

wore a traditional Muslim head scarf, tee-shirt and jeans. I appreciated the fact that she

had retained her religious beliefs and traditional head scarf while integrating into the role

of becoming a Canadian teenager. Deci and Ryan's (2002) self-determination theory

posits that a student able to assimilate their roots into the psychological aspect of their

personality is tied to intrinsic motivation for the L2. She was also well spoken and

audible. She made occasional eye contact, but I wasn't sure if this was as a result of

cultural or shyness. She mentioned that the only thing she missed from her native country

was her grandmother; she did not miss any friends, food, or childhood comforts. A lot of

the differences she remembered were differences between schools in Canada and Africa

were cultural protocols – standing up to answer questions, wearing uniforms, no

computers, and that generally boys went to school (not always the girls, unless they were

an only child) because the family had to pay for school and the books. She had been in

Canada 3 years and she seemed well adjusted and no longer tied to her previous life.

Chloe. I had met Chloe prior to the interview and she seemed to be a bubbly, confident girl, but as we started the first interview she became somewhat quieter. Once we got started her confidence came back and the volume of her voice increased to what I had previously experienced. She seemed very confident speaking in English, with no pauses or self-doubt about grammar or tenses (even though she did make some minor errors throughout. She mentioned how her parents are always reminding her that school was important and she needed to study first and "play later" (23/05/2012). This reiterated the philosophy that parents hand down to their children that school comes first and motivation to learn is shaped at home by what parents teach their children (Li, 2004; Sayadian & Lashkarian 2010).

Katana. Katana did not make a lot of eye contact, and started out soft spoken. I had the impression that he did not really want to open up too much. He answered the questions very briefly, but when I asked him to clarify, he shut down, and said nothing. I found his reaction surprising, but I persevered gently through the questions, giving him time in case he was thinking deeply of a response. He was the only one who said he did not like Canada and wanted to go back to the Congo. However he did not tell me much in the way of things he missed back home other than the fact that school was half the day and he had lots of good friends. My guess was that he was trying to intrigue and shock me as he did volunteer to be interviewed, as his teacher had mentioned how well he has integrated into the ESL classroom and how well he was progressing. According to Callahan et al (2008), having larger groupings of ESL students within a school fostered more successful SLA than in situations where there are isolated ESL students in a more homogeneous population with less L2 learners.

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Vlad. When I met Vlad, he chose to sit across from me during the interviews. He started out with his arms crossed. He was soft spoken with broken, heavily accented English. As he spoke his voice got louder and he started to make eye contact. He had a Ukrainian accent and a lisp which made it difficult to understand him at times. I had to repeatedly check for understanding. It was difficult to interview ESL students whose English is less developed because they accents and grammar mistakes make transcribing a challenge.

In addition to the field notes, the research journal allowed me to keep track of my impressions of the students, and my own thoughts along the way.

Research journal summary

From the beginning of the research process, I kept a journal I which I wrote thoughts, hunches and questions regarding the process interviews I conducted and about things those participants said during the interviews.

Starting the research process. When I began the process of recruiting interview participants, I presented my thesis and recruited participants by giving them a package of information and consent/assent letters to sign if they wished to participate. The school I chose houses the ESL program from which all of my participants attend. There was a class of approximately 28 students from grades seven to nine in the ESL class I met with. They were from a very diverse range of academic/ cultural backgrounds including a number of African countries, a number of Asian and European countries, the Middle East, and India. A number showed great interest in participating so I was excited about getting the participant pool I required without much difficulty; in fact I was concerned I would have to cut some willing participants. It was surprising that the students would be

so excited about research in a field that from the outset might seem dry to a teenager. I

had expected that they would be dozing off after the first 5 minutes of my presentation.

It was encouraging to me that I slowly received consent and assent forms

appearing in my mailbox and it seemed more than likely that I would have all of my

required interviews done with all eight volunteers by the end of June. This allowed me to

focus on transcribing, thinking through the data and analyzing it, distilling themes and

comparing them to the theory.

Participants. The interviewees were four boys and four girls from a variety of

countries including: Poland, Burundi, Vietnam, Philippines, Korea, the Congo, and the

Ukraine. The criteria for choosing these particular students included: attending grade

seven through nine, spending time in the ESL program, and an interest in participating in

the interviews. Finally, as a group they came from a variety of countries and there was a

balance between male and female students (see Table 1 for demographic information).

Table 1

General demographic data from ESL student participant interviews

Student's pseudonyms	Grade	Country of Origin	Languages spoken	Length of time in Canada	Previous ESL education
Alice	8	Poland	Polish, German, French	48 months	No
Sawana	9	Burundi	Kirundi, Swahili, French	72 months	Yes
Viola	7	Vietnam	Vietnamese	24 months	Yes (private tutor only)
Choe	7	Philippines	Tagalog	12 months	Yes
Shai	9	Korea	Korean, German	10 months	Yes
Keemo	7	Burundi	Kirundi, Swahili,	21 months	No
Katana	8	Congo	Lingala, Kikongo Swahili and Tshiluba	12 months	No
Vlad	9	Ukraine	Ukrainian, Polish, Russian	72 months	No

Note. The chart shows the demographic data as it pertains to the participants that were interviewed.

The interviews with the eight participants revealed they had been in Canada

between 10 months to three years. They all had uninterrupted schooling prior to coming

to Canada. Some of them began learning English in their home countries, while others

only started learning English when they arrived. All of the students had a good grasp of

English at the time that I interviewed them. Four students (Ukraine, Congo, Burundi,

Poland) had no formal English schooling prior to coming to Canada; one (Vietnam) had a

private tutor who was paid to come to her house after school to teach her English and

three (Burundi, Philippines, Korea) attended public school where they had one hour of

English language instruction a day taught by a non-native English speaker. I discovered

that trying to put the students' words into my own took away from the flavor and

authenticity of their words; therefore I chose to quote them directly throughout my

discussion of the interview data.

   The first participant was Alice, a Polish grade eight student. I was surprised that

she volunteered to participate because she did not seem excited during my presentation. I

know the culture and country she is from and wondered what she would tell me about the

differences between the educational system between Canadian and that of our native

country. I would have expected the most vociferous students to have been the ones who

stepped up as participants. I was looking forward to interviewing the rest of the

participants to see what other surprises I would encounter. Alice was the only student

who, along with her parents, chose to meet me at a local McDonald's. The rest of the

interviews took place at the students' school during the lunch hour.

   Shai, from Korea mentioned that in his previous school carrying knives and

fighting was an acceptable way of solving disagreements between students. I wondered if

the school division should make a point to focus on ensuring there is discussion regarding

social mores and socially acceptable/ unacceptable behavior to help acculturate students

as they come into ESL classes in addition to teaching English language skills and content.

   Viola, from the Philippines was paged from the office twice to meet me in order

to arrange the interview times and I was beginning to think she might be away when I

saw her coming down the hall. I asked her why it took her so long to come to the office

(her classroom was only a couple of doors down from the office). She said that when she

heard her name, she thought she was in trouble, so she did not want to come to the office.

Students from countries outside of Canada expressed a strong sense of adherence to the

rules of the school, and they fear doing something which will lead them to being

reprimanded in the office. Shai had mentioned that his teacher occasionally hit students in

Korea. New Canadian students are still learning the rules and expectation of Canadian

schools, and at times their actions lead to reprimands because of the fact that the

expectations here are different from that of schools in their native country. Consequently

they are ever vigilant to what they do and how they do it in order to make sure they are

not transgressing inadvertently.

Students with strong accents also presented a challenge when interviewing and recording.

It was difficult to do the transcription.

Questions and thoughts. After the first three interviews I noticed that not only

were all the participants intrinsically motivated but also, they were not very outgoing.

Intrinsic motivation did not seem to go hand in hand with dominant personality. It

seemed that a low affective filter could go hand in hand with shyness. I would suggest

that the affective filter described by Krashen (1981) is an internal personal aspect which

allows the individual to fully embrace their new culture and therefore allows them to

easily learn the language. This however does not seem to tie into the individual's

personality. An individual with a shy, quiet personality can have a low affective filter,

while someone with a dominant personality can have a high affective filter, an

instrumental view of the language and learn it more slowly (Ernst-Slavit et al, 2001).

Second interview questions. I added two questions to the second round of

interviews. The first question was: Do you feel Canadian? The first question aimed to

ascertain how the students saw themselves after they had spent some time in Canada. The

second additional question was: Would you say that you have an outgoing or shy

personality? The second question targeted the idea that learners with low affective filters

learned more easily that those with a high affective filter.

Upon analysis of the transcripts I found that the data fell under five major

umbrella categories under which various themes arose. The main categories were:

familial influence, intrapersonal interaction and the L2 ideal self, acculturation,

interpersonal interaction, and educational factors.

Familial influence

Parental influence on student learning. The first theme that arose under this

category was the premium that the parents of the ESL participants put on education in

general. All the students mentioned that their parents encouraged them to do well at

school, but some parent provided their children with additional educational opportunities

beyond school. The parents' desire for their children to have a solid language base speaks

to Gardner, R.'s (2007) theory that the integrative attitude facilitates a fuller acquisition

of a language. All of the students expressed the belief that learning English was an

important part of becoming culturally integrated into Canadian society. The two students

who mentioned that their parents procured tutors for them included Shai (Korea) and

Viola (Vietnam). In the case of Shai, his mother asked his aunt to teach Shai some

German: "my aunt was from German…she teached me little bit" (15/05/2012). Shai said

it was a very difficult language to learn, primarily because of the pronunciation. Viola's

mother paid a tutor to come to her house on a daily basis to teach Viola English: "a tutor

came to my house to teach me English… in school I didn't learn English" (10/05/2012).

It was clear from what the students said about their parents' influence and their

perception and the importance of education and particularly their motivation for English

language acquisition, as a result (Li, 2004; Sayadian & Lashkarian 2010). Furthermore,

all of the students stated that their families expressed that English language fluency was a

priority for all of the students as well as their parents. Aside from academic support, the

students shared how important their parents' emotional support and physical proximity

were to them.

   Parental support of student learning. Based on what the students said, strong

family connections and the support of the parents for their children made the move to

Canada less traumatizing for the participants. In juxtaposition, Shai reflected on the

experiences of his international student friends and others he knew who were in Canada

for the purpose of studying English, but whose families were in Korea: "Koreans changed

after coming here … they every day are getting more bad… because in here no friends no

family so they feel …some people don't have family too" (24/05/2012). Based on Shai's

statement, a lack of family support and connections gave the students a sense of

rootlessness and loneliness which in turn affected their success academically and socially.

Li's (2004) research corroborates Shai's statement. In her study she interviewed a group

of Chinese university students who were studying in Canada, away from family and

friends. She discovered that when students suffered from social/culture shock as well as

homesickness with no supports, familial or otherwise, their academics suffered (Li,

2004). Another aspect of supporting their children included the parents' financial support

of their children.

   Parental choices and sacrifices. In many cases the parents made a choice for the

sake of survival as to which of the two parents had the best chance to learn English and

be successful and progress professionally, while the other parent worked in order to

provide for the family in the interim at any kind of job they could find which did not

require extensive knowledge of English. For example Shai said: "My mom take classes in

university…my father doing his job working…making sushi; to my dad it is so hard, but

my mom she is good to learn English and enjoy it" (15/0502012). The students seemed to

realize just how important it was to be able to speak English when they saw the types of

jobs their parents held in their home country: bankers, economist and dentists as

compared to the jobs they were able to get in Canada with little English; these jobs

included, making sushi and cleaning buildings. Viola discussed how her mother "worked

in a bank for 30 years [in the Philippines], and she loved it [but now] she cleans

buildings, so she tells me to learn English and get a good job" (10/05/2012). Brown

(1991) supports this comment with the theory that parents sacrifice much to move in

order to give their children a better life. For the parents, having gone through the

experience of having a well paying job in their home country and now working at a low

skill position because they lacked English language proficiency, obviously the parents

wanted better for their children. It seemed all of the parents stressed to their children that

education and integration was the key to the future. They seemed to stress that 'failure

was not an option', having gone from being comfortable and doing well, to moving to a

new country where they were struggling, they wanted to ensure that their children's

successes outshone their own.

Parent and child views differ. The experiences of the parents impacted how the

participants viewed English language learning. All of the students shared that many of

their parents either were currently or had taken English language classes in order to be

able to work in Canada. However, despite insisting to the children that they needed to

learn English, it seemed from their stories that their parents took a more instrumental

approach to English, meaning that the parents' goal was to learn just enough English to

fulfill their jobs. Alice described her parents' English language learning: "They learning

[English], they have to go to work so they speak English at work" (02/05/2012). Both

Vlad and Shai said their mothers were taking English classes while their fathers worked.

The apparent instrumentalism of one of the parents was a matter of necessity as most new

families did not have the luxury to have both parents not working while they attended

English classes full time. Vlad said: "My mom went to college to learn how to speak

English and my dad doesn't know 'cause he has to work" (29/05/2012). In the cases of

Chloe and Alice, both of the girls' parents attended adult learning classes. Viola's mother

as well as Katana's father opted to learn English on their own, while Katana's mother

was studying French. It was clear from what the students were saying about their own

integration into Canadian society, as well as their parents' efforts to become Canadians

and to learn English, that full integration was the goal for their children, but not

necessarily for the parents (Hardre, & Sullivan, 2008; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003;

Shirbagi, 2010; Tucker, 2007; Williams, 2003). From a critical analysis point of view,

this premium put on language learning and the struggle for both parents and children to

learn English created an acute awareness in both groups of learners as to how intrinsic

language is to survival, and why failure was not an option. In the process of watching

their parents struggling to carve out a new life for themselves and their children, the

students were able to be introspective and to share with me how they saw themselves in

the context of their new lives.

Intrapersonal interaction and the ideal L2 self

Several themes arose under the umbrella of intrapersonal interaction and the ideal

L2 self; how the students saw themselves as they built their new Canadian identity; as

well as how their personalities impacted their learning of English and helped them to

adapt to their new academic and social environment. I was interested to hear how the

students viewed themselves in the context of their new country and language.

The process of building a new Canadian identity. None of the students saw

themselves as completely Canadian. They initially identified themselves with their native

country, but some felt as though they had become slightly Canadian-fied. Vlad illustrated

this by saying: "sometimes [I feel] Ukrainian, sometimes [I feel] Canadian"

(28/05/2012). Alice thought for a long while before answering, and when she did her

answer was, "probably I will never feel completely Canadian but I feel like I live here

and you know now I live here I don't live there anymore so you know but um . . . I would

say I am from Poland, definitely" (02/05/2012). Sawana had no issue describing herself:

"I feel like I am an African girl, I am not Canadian… maybe after 10 years 20 years [I

will feel Canadian]" (18/05/2/12). It would seem that their roots in their native country

and their first language(s) kept them identifying strongly with their country of origin.

However, it seemed that all of the students were on the road to becoming and feeling

Canadian. This process takes anywhere from years to decades, but as long as the students

have a willingness to identify with the culture, they are well on their way (Macintyre,

Baker, Clement and Donovan, 2002). Additionally, it seemed that their L1 language(s)

was/were a stronger force than the physical movement from one continent to another. The

students all agreed that a willingness to identify with the culture you are residing in affects an individual's personality, and how they perceive themselves.

Personality and affective filter. On one hand, Krashen (1981) posits that a high or low affective filter is not tied to an introverted or extroverted personality; whereas Dörnyei (2003) suggested that an outgoing personality facilitated quicker acquisition of a second language. Based on the students' introspective self-assessments it seemed that personality and affective filter were not necessarily tied together. Students such as Viola (10/05/2012) admitted to being shy and not wanting to risk speaking up in class when she first arrived, but her affective filter was low enough that she learned English rapidly and excelled in her classes after only 12 months. Even though none of the students presented as extremely outgoing during our meetings, I believe that the process of becoming uprooted and having to struggle to make a new life necessitated that they shrug off the luxury of being shy and made gains with their language acquisition and integration into the school community as a means of surviving and because 'failure was not an option'.

Students' Canadian identity. It is my assertion, that a well-developed, positive L2 Canadian identity occurs when a student has successfully integrated into his or her new physical and linguistic landscape and has changed in order to facilitate the language acquisition process. Most of the students shared that they felt they had changed for the better. Alice said: "I think I changed cause . . . now I actually want to learn more and change …cause of I met lots of new people and different things and everything was so new and that I think it kinda changed me too" (02/05/2012). Similarly, Sawana had positive feedback about how she had changed since coming to Canada: "I changed . . . I used to be like, 'why are we going to Canada?' But now I am like, positive . . . When you

come here you meet a lot of people and then like, Canada is a good country and you will

be happy here" (18/05/2012). Sawana's willingness to be open to the new experiences

allowed her to maintain a positive attitude in conjunction with a low affective filter

helped her to learn English. Chloe felt that she had changed positively as her personality

was more outgoing, demonstrating her new confidence with English and her comfort at

school: "last year I was so quiet that because I don't know some people here but this year

I am like, so hyper every day and I am so loud" (23/05/2012). The process described by

the participants coincides with Sorrentino's (1986) statement regarding the changes that

middle school aged children undergo as they develop their ideal-self:

> [Children] . . . have a systematic and thorough knowledge of many of their values,
>
> their hopes and their fears, their plans, their goals, their potential, and their future
>
> and it is their components of the self-concept that serves to generate individual
>
> differences in motivated behavior. (Sorrentino, 1986, p. 97)

Keeping an open mind helped the immigrant students learn English and to integrate into

Canadian society (Yu et al., 2011, p. 257). Vlad, who had already spent three years in

Canada seemed torn between where he belonged and he seemed to have developed a

meaningful connection to Canada in the time he had lived here: "I changed 'cause when I

moved back to the Ukraine for three months - I wanted to stay in Ukraine because

sometimes I love Canada, sometimes I love the Ukraine" (28/05/2012). Two of the

students did not have positive changes to share. Katana had a difficult time defining the

changes he had experienced in himself since arriving in Canada, and having only spent a

year here, and having lost many close relatives prior to coming to Canada, it may was

difficult for him to pinpoint: "In Congo I act very good I was very nice, but here… (I)

don't know, but (I'm) different" (24/05/2012).

Whether the changes were a conscious effort to fit in and learn English, or

subconscious adjustments to new mores and expectations, it seemed that all of the

students had successfully managed to adjust to being new Canadians to the extent that

they were doing well in school and making friends in and outside of school.

Acculturation

For each of the eight students, in some cases social and academic mores were a

minefield of surprises and shattered expectations as they learned that what was the norm

in their home country did not hold true in Canada; while others reported that adjusting to

life in Canada was easy and a great opportunity. With acculturation also came the

sometimes painful separation from one's previous 'home' as a new one was established.

For a majority of the students, homesickness and missing loved ones left behind in their

native country was still a painful adjustment.

Cultural adjustments. Adjusting to the new cultural mores of Canada was a

challenge for some of the students. Viola described one experience she had that did not

transfer to Canadian culture when she started attending school in Canada: "In Vietnam

when I was friends with other girls, we hold hands. When I came here, and I had friends,

when I tried to hold hands the other girls, they didn't like that; it is different like that"

(10/05/2012). Similarly, Shai learned how different Korean and Canadian rules are in

school: "in Korea we are often fighting and we can carry knifes so it's a little dangerous

than Canada. But in Canada [we] can't carry knife and. . . my teacher said 'don't bring it

to school' . . . its different rules" (15/05/2012).

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New opportunities and a new life. Unlike the negative experiences that Viola and Shai shared, other students saw the positive side of adjusting to a new country. Chloe felt pleasantly surprised by Canadian compassion: "people here, they're nice . . . like hugging each other every day. But in my country they don't really hug" (23/05/2012). Vlad appreciated the cleanliness and abundance of Canada as compared to the Ukraine: "I like Canada because there isn't garbage around and there are big stores like if you need to buy more food for one week in my country you need to buy ice cream you go buy ice cream" (28/05/2012). But the most poignant example of acculturation was shared by Keemo when he said: "I like that I can get food anytime, three times a day, back in Africa, I would eat once a day; now I can go eat whenever I want" (08/05/2012).

Setting down new roots while pulling up old ones. Additionally, the students had many favorite places and experiences already associated with Canada; for example: the snow, the Forks, and the food. However, just as they were beginning to set down roots and feeling like Canada was their new home, there was a consensus as to what they missed from their native country as well. Alice, Chloe, Shai, Keemo and Vlad all missed their friends. Katana and Sawana missed their families, and Viola missed her two dogs, which she said were like her "sisters" (10/05/2012).

The conversations I had with the students, let me share in their elation and frustration as they described trying to quickly acquire the necessary language to be able to understand and adopt the appropriate behavior in an alien linguistic and cultural terrain. However along with the struggle, there were rays of sunshine, the opportunities they saw in this new place to have a better life.

In the process of acculturation and developing a Canadian L2 identity, the

students cited social interactions and culturally heterogenic composition of their ESL

class, and the development of their first social relationships as major aspects of their

Canadian school experience.

Interpersonal interaction

All the ESL students felt their social interactions with the other students in the

ESL classroom were their first forays into the English language social arena. Since all the

students had different first languages, English was the common denominator. The topic

of making Canadian friends seemed of utmost significance to all of the students. There

were a number of different themes as to why certain students wanted to acquire Canadian

friends: to help them learn English, to fit in, or to help them to feel as popular as they

were in the home country. One concept which I expected to prove true did not. All of the

students said that peer pressure was not a factor in their motivation to learn English.

English language common denominator. While in the ESL classroom, Alice

(Poland), Vlad (Ukraine) and Sawana (Burundi) enjoyed the diverse culture as this was a

new experience for them, coming from schooling that was traditionally culturally

homogeneous. Despite the vast differences between culture and language in the class, and

between the students' home countries and Canada, they all wanted to learn English for

the sake of making friends with Canadian students. The participants spoke about English

as though it was the magic key that would facilitate relationships as well as educational

opportunities. Shai summed up this sentiment: "[I learned English] for making friends"

(15/05/2012). It seemed to me that making Canadian friends was a benchmark for the

ESL students which meant they were 'good enough' in the eyes of their Canadian

contemporaries.

The benefits of having Canadian friends. Keemo explained that he preferred

making Canadian friends to Burundi friends because the students in the ESL class from

Burundi, "can't correct me when I talk; they don't know more than me" (08/05/2012).

Keemo's focus on making Canadian friends seemed to be a way to ensure that he could

challenge himself to learn English while making new friends that would then help him to

continue improving academically. His Canadian, English speaking friends corrected his

grammar, and this translated into better spoken and written English in class. Similarly

Katana, who put me in mind of Kachru's expanding circles of Englishes (1996), shared

that, "English is important because in the world a lot of countries speak English"

(24/05/2012). Additionally, Vlad felt that," I talk with some friends that speak English

[and] my English gets better" (28/05/2012).

The difficulties making Canadian friends. Unlike Keemo, initially Shai had a

hard time making Canadian friends y as he was not able to communicate effectively or

understand everything his Canadian peers were saying: "it's hard to get a Canadian friend

. . . 'cause, they make a some joking to me and I can't understand it" (15/05/2012). Some

ESL students found it challenging to find their place within their new educational

landscape while at the same time having to interact with Canadian born students who

were less than tolerant and said or did things to made the new Canadian students like

Katana feel like an outsider (Donnelly et al., 2009; Lvovich, 2003; Macpherson, 2005).

Katana had to adjust to how people interacted with him in Canada as compared to his

native country where he was very popular and making friends came easily: "in Africa and

I have a lot of friends and they are good. They speak my language but like in here in

Canadian, people are looking at me… even if you ask them they just laugh at my

English" (24/05/2012). One influence which did not seem to be a negative factor amongst

the ESL students was peer pressure.

Peer pressure a non-issue. All of the ESL students felt unaffected by the

opinions of both their ESL friends and their Canadian friends when it came to motivation

to learn English or complete assignments. I would have expected them to say that their

friends' attitudes did influence their perception of what was important. Sawana summed

it up when she stated: "some of them aren't excited about learning, and some of them are.

It doesn't make any difference to me…I am trying to keep going…learning more English

and in my subjects" (18/05/2012). Some, like Viola interact with friends who shared the

same views on school as she did: "Yes, they like school" (10/05/2012). Alice felt that her

friends' attitudes towards learning English were similar to hers: "most of them, those that

are learning English they want to learn English cause … English became like part of their

life" (02/05/2012).

The students seemed to have strong motivation to continue learning English

regardless of their friends' motivation. Their strong intrinsic motivation was not

influenced by outside forces and came from a deeper place. This place was a need for

success at all odds, because 'failure was not an option'. It came from moving from one

continent to another and starting one's life over for a second time, and academic it was

imperative for them to catch up. Alice stated: "it also kinda teach me that when you're

actually learning something you have to be patient and try, and try again and then do this,

and do this and it have to come slowly" (02/05/2012).

Educational factors

A comparison between the classrooms and the teachers' methodologies both in

their home countries as well as in Canada were other topics which were prominent in the

students' narratives. The themes of: adjusting to the cultural and academic differences

between their previous school in the native countries to a Canadian school, how their

previous schooling helped them adjust, and how their Canadian, English speaking, ESL

teacher impacted their learning.

Differences between native school and the Canadian school. There were many

differences between schools in their home countries as compared to schools in Canada.

The differences fell into two categories, positive and negative academic factors and

cultural elements. Academically, school in Vietnam, Poland, Korea and the Ukraine was

described as more demanding, Shai (Korea) made a point of saying that, "students

usually sleep three or four hours [because] they need to study" (15/05/2012). Students

from all four countries described school as 'hard' and Vlad (Ukraine) said there was

"homework every day, every time" (28/05/2012). He also mentioned that marks were

given for completed homework and students who did not complete their homework were

penalized. Viola (Vietnam) said the she had "tests, lots and lots of tests" (10/05/2012) in

Vietnam. In the Congo and Burundi there did not seem to be an overwhelming amount of

homework. Alice's (Poland) experience was that, "school in Poland was much harder,

you had more homework, you learn more stuff during the school year" (02/05/2012). It

seemed that as learners of English on the outer rims of Kachru's (1996) expanding

circles, they felt they needed to prove themselves by working harder in order to compete

with the first language English speakers in the inner circles. The feeling of being insecure

about their L2 competence motivated the students to work harder.

      Learning different Englishes. One theme pertaining to academic challenges for

the students, and a reminder of Kachru's (1996) expanding circles of Englishes was the

theme of NNESTs (non-native English speaking teachers). These teachers, for whom

English was a second language, were teaching English to the students in their home

countries. The issues arose when the ESL students moved to Canada, a country where

English was the dominant language: "[NNESTs] are often considered less proficient

English users…can never achieve native speaker's competence… [and] their foreign

accent…[are aspects that are] perceived as their major shortcomings" (Ma, 2012).

Several of the students had learned English in the home country from a teacher that was a

NNEST which now presented issues for them in the areas of accents and pronunciation.

Sawana said that when she spoke to her friends at school, the "kids from Africa, I

understand them better than the Canadian kids [when they speak in English]"

(18/05/2012). Similarly, Vlad said: "It was hard [to understand] because of the different

accent" (28/05/2012). Aside from the differences in pronunciation, it was clear to me that

the students had come with what they perceived was some knowledge of English;

however their frustration was apparent and they felt short changed by their native

country's English programs. They were realizing that their previous English language

schooling was not comparable to the program in Canada. Discovering that they were not

able to decipher words they knew with a different accent was like learning English from

the very beginning for some of them.

Previous learning a benefit to ESL students. One positive academic factor was

the demanding nature of the educational system they were coming from had prepared

them for the language learning struggles and rigor of academic life in Canada. The

tension between the different experiences and the reality of the students' previous

schooling and the ESL classroom in Canada created motivation in the students to become

reoriented and acculturated to classroom routines and teacher expectations. Previous

learning experiences gave the students a sense of structure and general expectations as to

what they would be experiencing in Canada. Overall, their expectations were fulfilled as

their previous classroom experiences prepared them for how the ESL class ran; although

there were some differences some students had to adjust to. One difference which arose

several times was the lack of uniforms in public schools, and another was the abundance

of technology, as well as classroom protocols in their Canadian school as compared to

their native school. The students described the frustration, disorientation, and confusion

they experienced initially due to the differences between their home education and their

Canadian education; however, their need to fit in, learn English and make friends

motivated them to persevere.

In comparison, all eight students felt their classes in their home countries were

similar to the Canadian ones with books, black boards, lap tops and teaching

methodologies which included student centered activities, and group work. However, the

protocols in the classrooms did vary from those in Canada: Sawana (Burundi), Viola

(Vietnam), and Chloe (Philippines) reported that all students wore uniforms in school

back home. Additionally, in Burundi and the Congo, students had to purchase their own

textbooks, while in the Philippines they were not allowed to keep the books or to take

them home to study. Aside from the academic factors, there were cultural mores and

protocols in Canada that the students had to adjust to.

The students all had a general familiarity with the process of going to school,

attending classes, using books and completing homework. They were used to teachers'

expectations and brought skills with them which they were able to transfer to English

language learning such as decoding, writing and reading. Cummins, (2001) stressed that

ESL student preparedness and transferable skills are paramount fir motivation to learn.

All of the students had similar previous schooling experiences. Chloe's experience in the

Philippines included: "a lot of group work" (23/05/2012). Both Katana and Keemo's

schools had, "blackboards and books" (8/05/2012; 24/05/2012). Vlad had computers in

his school but, "there are better computers [here] than in the Ukraine" (28/05/2012).

Similarities and differences in classroom protocols. Certain classroom

protocols required that the students adjust to how things were done in Canada as opposed

to their native country. For example Viola (Vietnam) said that all students had to stand up

when answering questions. However assignment expectations were different for some

students in Canada, and this led to frustration. Sawana wondered: "when you wrote an

essay they are like, 'why was it different from when I learn? And they are like 'yeah, you

are in a different country [now]'" (18/05/2012). Additionally, in the Philippines, Korea,

Vietnam and the Congo, the school day was much shorter. A regular school day in the

Congo started at 8:00am and ended at 12:00 pm. In Vietnam there were two school days

in one. Students either attended from 7:00am to 12:00 pm or from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Another academic factor which greatly impacted students' motivation and came up as a

theme in all of the student's narratives was the methodology and support of the ESL

classroom teacher. Despite their different cultural, linguistic and academic backgrounds,

all the students were well adjusted and acculturated to the point that they felt comfortable

in the ESL class when I met them. They had been motivated to learn, and were familiar

with the teacher and school expectations.

The ESL teacher. Many of the students attributed their success to the efforts of

their teachers that made them feel comfortable and to helped them with the process of

SLA (Nikolov, 1999); Alice echoed what many of the students felt, that their ESL

teacher's help and gentle nature encouraged her to preserve at her language acquisition:

"I came here and the teachers were nice and they're like: 'Oh you don't know how? You

don't understand? That's ok.' And you kinda want to learn to just make them feel happy

that you learned it" (02/05/2012). A large part of learning was the relationships which

formed in the classroom between students and other students, the students and the

teacher, and the students and the educational artifacts they encountered (Vygotsky, 1978).

Aside from the technical knowledge and guidance that the ESL teacher provided to the

students, it was very clear from how the students spoke about her, that she was caring and

nurturing, and this made the students feel safe (Borba, 2009).

In summation, there were several umbrella categories which arose throughout the

interviews, they were: the familial influence, intrapersonal interaction and developing the

Canadian self, acculturation, interpersonal interaction, and educational factors. Under

these umbrella categories there were themes that I was able to further distil. These themes

were: the importance that parents put on education and doing well in school as well as the

emotional and financial support of their children; additionally, further educational

opportunities parents provided their children and the 'failure is not an option' view which

the parents expressed to their children as a wish that they be more successful than

themselves. Under the category of intrapersonal interaction and the ideal L2 self, the

themes included: the students' perception of themselves regarding their Canadian

identity, how their personalities affected their English language learning and which

factors affected their ability to adapt to their new academic and social environment.

Within the topic of acculturation the themes were: the socio-cultural and academic mores

which the students had to adjust to in Canada, that were different from those in their

home countries, as well as the aspects of their lives which the students missed from their

native home. Regarding the interpersonal interactions some themes which surfaced were:

the desire of the ESL students to acquire Canadian friends, and the absence of peer

pressure as an influence on their efforts for SLA. The themes under the umbrella category

of educational factors included: both cultural and academic expectations, how their

previous learning helped them adjust to school in Canada and how they contended with

English spoken with a Canadian accent by their ESL teacher as compared to the accents

of the NNESTs in their home countries.

     In this chapter, I summarized the field notes, and the research journal. As well, I

analyzed the themes that arose from the interviews and I connected the themes to the

literature.

Chapter V: Discussion and Implications

In chapter five I discuss the implication of the findings as well as the

limitations and the recommendations based on the data, and areas for further research.

Drawing on literature from the field of ESL, and motivation for the purposes of L2

(second language) acquisition, I have noticed that there appears to be a gap regarding

which factors work together to create intrinsic motivation in ESL students at the middle

school level. The literature suggests that ESL students' motivation to learn English may

be influenced by numerous factors including, but not limited to: previous learning

experiences, family perspectives on education, peer interaction, and classroom strategies

and procedure. In this study, I have described which factors affected the eight ESL

participants' motivation regarding SLA. The study occurred over a period of five months,

from April 2012 to August 2012, and included data gathering and analysis. Participants

included eight students attending an ESL program similar to the one I developed. The

program included grades five to nine. Prior to conducting the interviews, I secured

divisional and the school's permission as well as assent from the participants and consent

from their caregivers. Using the interpretive constructionist research method, I

endeavored to answer the following questions:

1   How do ESL students describe the process of learning English as a second

language?

2   Which factors do ESL students feel enhance motivation for SLA?

3   Which factors do ESL students feel impede motivation for SLA?

After interviewing the eight participants and analyzing the data, many of the factors that

the students expressed or demonstrated through their stories aligned with the research in

the field. The factors which seemed to enhance student motivation to learn English

included: successful acculturation and the beginning of the development of a Canadian

L2 identity, a positive familial perception regarding learning English, intrapersonal

factors, such as an easy-going personality and willingness to communicate, and the

educational context including a supportive, skilled ESL teacher and positive interaction

among the students in the classroom.

Some surprising data came up during the study. One unexpected factor was that

the primary reason that all of the ESL students cited as motivation to learn English was to

make Canadian friends. I was also surprised that peer pressure was not a factor for the

ESL students and their second language acquisition. I think this could be as a result of the

fact that the students in the ESL class were all at different stages in their language

development, and they did not compare themselves, their ability or performance with the

other ESL students. From what the students told me there was a climate of supporting and

helping each other in the ESL classroom. However, once the students were integrated

into the regular classes, and their English competence was en-par with their Canadian

counterparts, peer pressure as well and competition within their peer group became a

motivating factor for pursuing academic success. Additionally, all of the students

expressed a 'failure is not an option' mantra which their parents instilled in them, wishing

they be more successful than they were in Canada.

Limitations which came to light during the interviewing process included: the fact

that it takes a decade or longer for a newcomers to truly feel as though they were

Canadian. I must admit, this was true for me. Another limitation was the fact that all of

the students who volunteered to be interviewed were motivated. I had hoped that some

participants would have been able to share the challenges they faced in learning English

and the factors which contributed to their lack of motivation. Consequently, I was not

able to clearly answer the third question – Which factors impede student motivation?

Aside from this outlying data, the rest of the data I gathered fell within literature I

surveyed.

The implications for the findings are that ESL students, regardless of their home

country are influenced by a multitude of factors upon moving to Canada and learning

English. Some of these factors are: parents' beliefs regarding the importance of an

education, the kind of educational experience they had prior to moving to Canada, the

appropriateness of the ESL program, the sensitivity of the ESL teacher to the students'

needs, and the interaction with the other ESL students in the class. When these factors

are aligned, the students seem to have a positive experience learning English and their

intrinsic motivation is high..

Further questions which arose from this study are: what other challenges can be

minimized in order to enable students to maximize their motivations to learn? How does

student motivation to learn English impact their motivation towards learning other

subjects? Do students' learning styles and multiple intelligences such as: visual-spatial,

bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, and logical-

mathematical (Gardner, H., 1983) impact how motivated they are to learn English? How

can this be minimized?

Further research needs to be done with students who are younger and older than the target group in order to ascertain if motivation to learn is greater at any one point, and to ascertain whether ESL classes would be beneficial in students younger than grade five (which is currently the grade at which ESL programming is implemented in Manitoba). Additionally, new research in this area would be valuable, especially a longitudinal study which would focus on the success of EAL students over a period of five to ten years, to gain new insight into the process of acculturations, how it affects student academic success, as it pertains to identity building. New information would benefit both teachers, administrators, post secondary institutions and policy makers.

Recommendations

As a teacher of EAL students who has worked in a division that has in the last four years received a large influx of ESL students, I have been a witness to how schools have developed protocols, processes, assessment tools and lines of communication in order to ensure that ESL students receive equal and appropriate education and are fully supported from the moment they arrive. Additionally as someone who has developed one two of the middle school programs in our division that is successfully transitioning student from a sheltered ESL program to regular classes from grades five through eight, I believe I am qualified to make some recommendations as they apply to ESL student motivation for SLA. I have worked with teachers, principals, consultants, and assistant superintendents in order to develop this program, and the processes and protocols associated with every aspect of student assessment, placement, programming, adaptation, EAL professional development, and administration. The whole impetus for me to study

and complete my Masters in ESL was to better understand ESL student motivation and to

be a better ESL educator in order to teach and support those students.

Teachers. As previously stated by the participants, ESL parents are very

interested in their children doing well at school. However as stated preciously, often

parents have little or no English. Teachers should make an effort to make connections

with the home. ESL students' parents want the best for their children but they may have

questions regarding the Canadian school system. By connecting with the home either by

phone, in person, in English or through a translator, it would help to make the guardians

feel more comfortable working as a team with the school for the benefit of the student. I

also think it is very important that teachers validate the students' culture and first

language and to let parents know how important it is for the student to maintain their first

language(s) while they are learning English.

Administrators. Having worked with administrators to develop the middle

school ESL program, I have seen the impact of support to the ESL program and how that

translates into students; motivation to learn. I believe that it is important that

administrators support ESL programming, education, staffing allocation as well as

funding to ensure that ESL students receive appropriate education. This investment needs

to be long term and administrators need to be mindful of the fact that ESL students may

require up to a decade in order to fully acculturate. Once ESL students transition into

regular classes, they should continue to be monitored year after year to ensure that they

are being successful and thriving. To that end, it would behoove administrators to ensure

that they are hiring qualified ESL teachers who will be able to monitor and intervene

where appropriate to ensure ESL students have the resources and support they require.

Administrators should also make ESL professional development opportunities available

to all teachers who work with ESL students in order to encourage teachers to develop and

upgrade their knowledge with the newest research and tools.

Policy makers. Policy makers have great power and responsibility when it comes

to the education and welfare of all students. I think it is important that senior

administration and consultants are aware of what kinds of programming that is being

provided to ESL students and to ensure that there is a high quality of ESL teaching that is

appropriate, commensurate and beneficial across the division. I would also suggest that

early years ESL students would likewise benefit from sheltered ESL instruction. Starting

ESL instruction at grade five puts ESL students at a disadvantage if they arrive in Canada

prior to grade five and are placed in a regular classroom and then moved to the ESL

program once they reach grade five. ESL instruction at an earlier age, when students are

learning to read would benefit early years ESL learners. By waiting until students are in

grade five and expected to read to learn, this task becomes doubly difficult. As well,

placing middle school students in grades chronologically rather than based on their

previous schooling can set students up for failure. The one or two additional years they

would benefit from by being placed a year or two below could make an enormous

difference in their future SLA success; by placing students in grades based on their age,

especially in grades seven to nine only makes achievement of graduation by the age of 18

that much more difficult. Finally, the ESL framework, which is the guiding document for

teachers to use when planning and assessing ESL students has been in draft form for five

years now (since 2007). It is time that the draft becomes finalized as it has not changed

much over the last five years.

Parents and students. I strongly believe that it should be mandatory for all ESL students to attend an ESL program until such time that his or her language skills are sufficient to warrant transitioning him or her to the regular classes. From experience I have seen how students choosing regular classes before they are ready can affect their motivation for SLA. Once they start classes they realize they are out of their depth, and then they fall further and further behind, losing all motivation for learning. Students who do not want to appear different, to be segregated in a sheltered program, or whose parents believe that their children do not need ESL programming should have the facts and options clearly presented to them, through a translator if necessary in order to ensure that they are aware of the benefits and opportunities that come with attending an ESL program.

Personally, this was a fantastic experience. I was humbled by how hard these students worked, their resolve and motivation to strive to be the best they could be, speaking a second language in a country they were still trying to get used to. I was grateful to all the students for sharing their experiences with me, and it reinforced for me that what I do is important and it impact children's lives.

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Appendix A: Interview questions

<div align="right">

Start time:
Stop time:
Duration:

</div>

I asked each of the eight interviewees the following questions during the first

interviewing sessions. Each student was interviewed individually at a negotiated

location. Prior to the interview, each student was be required to remit a signed assent

form and a consent form signed by their parent in order to be interviewed.

Main research topic: What can I learn from my previous middle school, ESL

students about the factors that influence their motivation for SLA.

Major topics for Interview Questions:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

1   Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today and discussing some

questions I have about how students who come from other countries, feel

about learning English; I am trying to understand students' desire to learn and

what pushes some students to learn and not others. Please feel free to stop me

at any time or to let me know if you need clarification on anything I ask you.

This will take approximately an hour, is that ok with you? Is it alright if I ask

you some questions about your experiences with learning English at this

school and in the ESL class? Is it alright if I record our conversation? Is it ok

if I take notes while we talk? We can stop the interview at any time. Just tell

me that we have talked enough for now and that you want to stop.

2   How long have you lived in Canada? Please tell me about languages you

speak other than English.

3   Please tell me about your experience learning English.

4   Can you please tell me a little bit about how school in Canada is different

from school in your home country? I'm interested in hearing about the

differences regarding your peers, how the classroom was run and how

your teacher taught.

5   Can you please tell me about how you feel about learning English? Was it

hard or easy learning English when you first came to Canada? What do

you think affected how you learned English? Why have you been

successful in learning English? What kept you working hard to learn

English?

6   Can you please tell me about the friends you have made at this school?

What languages do your friends speak? How do you think you have

changed as a person since you've lived in Canada?

7   How do your friends feel about school? Do your friends affect how you

feel about learning English? If so, how?

8   Can you please tell me what your parents' experiences of learning English

are? What are they doing to learn English?

9   How do you feel about school now that your English has improved since

you arrived? What is your favourite subject? What are your favourite

things about Canada? Is there anything you miss about school in your

native country?

10 Are there any questions you would like to ask me about anything we've

been talking about today?

Creswell (2007) model (p. 136)

Appendix B: Interview field note protocol

Date: Start time:
Interviewee: End time:
Duration of interview:

Interview observation Protocol (1 of 8)	**Length of interview:**
Descriptive notes:	**Reflective notes:**
Setting:	
Student:	
Non-verbal responses/reactions/manifestations:	
Other:	

Creswell (2007) model (p. 137)

Appendix C: Research journal

Key Experiences/ Critical incidents/ New insights/ New questions

Date:	Description: of an incident/experience/finding/hunch	Reflection:

Creswell (2007) model (p. 137)

A STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Appendix D: First round of interviews data analysis matrix

(First stage)

Interviewees	Qu.1	Qu.2	Qu.3	Qu.4	Qu.5	Qu.6	Qu.7	Qu.8	Qu. 9	Qu. 10	Coding of themes/ contributing factors for motivation
Student 1											
Student 2											
Student 3											
Student 4											
Student 5											
Student 6											
Student 7											
Student 8											

Appendix E: Additional Interview Questions
Start time:
Stop time:

Duration:

I asked each of the 8 interviewees the following questions during the second interviewing sessions.

Main research topic: What can I learn from my previous middle school, ESL students about the factors that influence their motivation for second language acquisition?

Major topics for Interview Questions:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

1   Do you feel Canadian?

2   Would you say that you have an outgoing or shy personality?

3   Do you have any questions for me?

Creswell (2007) model (p. 136)

Appendix F: ENREB approval certificate

UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA | Office of the Vice-President
(Research and International)
Research Ethics and Compliance

Human Ethics
208 - 194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB
Canada R3T 2N2
Fax 204-269-7173

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

March 30, 2012

TO: **Margaret Aisicovich**   (Advisor S. Kouritzin)
Principal Investigator

FROM: **Stan Straw, Chair**
Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)

Re: **Protocol #E2012:022**
**"A Study of Middle School Students' Motivation to Learn English as a
Second Language**

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by
the **Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to
the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2). **This approval is valid for one year only**.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the
Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:

- If you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you
submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to the Office of Research Services, fax
261-0325 - please include the name of the funding agency and your UM Project
number. This must be faxed before your account can be accessed.

- if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with
you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year
approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

The Research Quality Management Office may request to review research documentation from
this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of
Manitoba *Ethics of Research Involving Humans*.

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at:
http://umanitoba.ca/research/orec/ethics/human_ethics_REB_forms_guidelines.html) **in order
to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.**

---

umanitoba.ca/research/orec

UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Fort Garry Campus Research Ethics Boards
CTC Building, 208 - 194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Phone: (204) 474-7122

Protocol # _____
(Assigned by HES Admin.)

Appendix G: Divisional Consent

Research Project Title: A study of middle school students' motivation to learn English
as a Second Language
Principal investigator: Margaret Aisicovich
Email address: maisicovich@retsd.mb.ca

SW 3-14-2W, RM of Woodlands   (204) 997-2097
Box 674, Warren, Mb
R0C 3E0

Supervisor: Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, Ph. D
Email address: kouritzi@ms.umanitoba.ca
Professor of Curriculum, teaching and learning   (204) 474-9079
University of Manitoba

Dear Ms. Isaak,

I am a University of Manitoba master's student, and an ESL teacher in the
division. I am studying in the area of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, and I am
interested to learn about how children from other countries feel about learning English. I
am planning to undertake an interpretive constructionist research study with the goal of
investigating the phenomenon of motivation to learn English as a second language in a
sheltered, middle school, transitional, class. I will be interviewing eight students, and my
goal is to ascertain their previous learning experiences, support for learning by parents,
the influence of peers on their and how all these factors impacted their motivation to
learn ESL. I will be interviewing each child two times, once for approximately an hour,
and a second time for approximately half an hour for the purpose of clarification. These
students will be chosen through criterion sampling from John Prichard School's ESL
population to avoid a conflict of interest and other ethical issues which may arise from
using ESL student from my school.

University of Manitoba Bannatyne Campus Research Ethics Board
Basic Elements of Consent Disclosure Statements for Survey Research
November 27, 2011

A STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

The study will take place April 2012 to August 2012. I will interview each student twice. The initial interview will last 60 minutes. The second interview will last 20-30 minutes and will be used for clarification and member checking. Prior to participating, students will be required to remit assent and parents will be required to remit consent forms. Both forms will need to be signed before I can interview interested students.

Drawing on literature from the field of ESL, students' motivation to learn English may be influenced by numerous factors, including: previous learning experiences, family perspectives on education, peer interaction, and classroom strategies and procedure. This study will endeavor to discover which factors affect these 8 ESL students' motivation, individually and as a whole for second language acquisition.

In order to maintain the subjects' confidentiality, it will be suggested to the parents that an ideal location would be one which allows for privacy and is conducive for digital voice recording (with minimal distraction and background noise). The participants and their parents will be given suggestions such as a designated classroom or room at the participant's school, to be used outside of school hours. This option will be arranged by the researcher and the participant's school after the student and parents have agreed to it. An alternative option which the researcher may suggest is at the student's or researcher's home. Both the parents and students will be present during the interviews.

The disposition of data from withdrawn participants or data from participants' parents who choose for their children to withdraw, will not be included, or analyzed in the research. The data collected from such participants will be disposed of immediately after the student withdrawal notice as per destruction of data steps.

The security of records and data collected in this research will be kept secure in order to maintain participants' anonymity. Digital voice recordings of interviews will be transferred from the digital recorder equipment to a folder under the interviewees' pseudonyms in an external memory card or usb drive, immediately after finishing the interview and before leaving the interview room. This memory card will be password protected with 128 bit digital encryption. After the voice recording is transferred from the digital voice recorder to the encrypted memory card the digital recorder will be wiped clean of all recordings through the use of the "delete all" command. Digital documents, including all documents produced by any computer software, such as Microsoft Office, Adobe PDF and or scanned software, will be kept in a password protected folder on an encrypted thumb drive designated for this research alone. Paper based data (correspondences, notes, field notes, assent and consent forms) such as those bearing students' names, will be kept in separate folders in a locked safe at the researcher's residence, and place of research analysis. Electronic data, such as email communication with the researcher will be transferred to a usb key, and then the original message will be deleted, and then deleted from the delete file.

At the conclusion of the study (Aug, 2012), all data collected in this research, digital and physical alike: paper drafts, paper transcripts, paper journal, paper field notes and any other paper based records or data, will be destroyed.

This study has been approved by the Education/Nursing Ethics Review Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122.

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All physical paper based data will be shredded with a witness present and all
electronic digital data will be incinerated with a witness present. All electronic
communication will be deleted from the in box, sent box and deleted box.

A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep for your records and
reference.

If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not
included here, please feel free to contact me.

Please respond regarding approval of this study below. Thank you for your time.

Appendix H: Divisional approval

RETSD

Creating student success

April 3, 2012

Margaret Aisicovich
SW 3 – 14 – 2W
RM of Woodlands
Box 647
Warren, Manitoba
R0A 3E0

Dear Ms. Aisicovich:

Permission has been granted for you to conduct your research project titled, A Study of Middle School Students' Motivation to Learn English as a Second Language". Please contact the principal of John Pritchard School, Ms. Barbara Bowles, to discuss the study and the process necessary to request the participation of the educators.

We would like to request a summary of the study results when completed.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Barb Isaak
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

BI/lk

cc: Mr. Kelly Barkman, Superintendent
        Ms. Barbara Bowles, Principal John Pritchard

River East Transcona School Division
589 ROCH STREET, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA   R2K 2P7   P 204.667.7130   F 204.661.5618   www.retsd.mb.ca

A STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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of MANITOBA

Fort Garry Campus Research Ethics Boards
CTC Building, 208 - 194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Phone: (204) 474-7122

Protocol #

_____
(Assigned by HES Admin.)

Appendix I: Informed consent letter

Research Project Title: A study of middle school students' motivation to learn English
as a Second Language

Principal investigator: Margaret Aisicovich
Email address: maisicovich@retsd.mb.ca
                      SW 3-14-2W, RM of Woodlands   (204) 997-2097
                      Box 674, Warren, Mb
                      R0C 3E0

Supervisor: Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, Ph. D
Email address: kouritzi@ms.umanitoba.ca
Professor of Curriculum, teaching and learning   (204) 474-9079
University of Manitoba

Dear parents/guardians,

        I am a University of Manitoba master's student. I am studying in the area of
Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, and I am interested to learn about how children from
other countries feel about learning English. I am planning to interview new Canadian
students who are or who have been studying in ESL classes in this division. I am
interested in learning about what makes them work hard at learning English and how they
feel about learning English. I will be talking to eight students, from different grade levels.
I will be talking with each child two times, once for about an hour and a second time for
about half an hour in order to make sure that the information I got at the first interview is
accurate.
        In my reading about students who learn English as an additional language, there
seem to be many different reasons for why student feel that working hard at learning
English is important. Some of these are: their friends, their family, how they feel about
school in general based on other schools they have studied at.

A STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

I will be conducting this study between April 2012 and August 2012. Before being able to be interviewed, interested students will need to return a signed assent form and their parents will also need to sign a consent form. Both forms need to be signed before I will be able to interview the student. I will meet with you for the interview wherever and whenever it is convenient for you and your parents. I will be recording the interview and want to protect your confidentiality, so meeting with you at school before or after school or at your house are locations which would work the best to protect your confidentiality.

Both the parents and students will be present during the interviews.

If you or your child decides part way through the interviews that he or she doesn't want to do this anymore, any information I have collected from him or her be destroyed and will not be used in the study. Once I am finished with the study, I will be shredding all paper documents, notes and journals I have been keeping, deleting all emails and burning any usb keys I have used in my research.

All notes and recordings will be stored securely to make sure that any information related to the students is kept separately from personal information such as consent and assent forms.

This study has been approved by the Education/Nursing Ethics Review Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep for your records and reference.

If you are interested in allowing your child to participate in this study, please read the following statement and sign and date it. This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

University of Manitoba Bannatyne Campus Research Ethics Board
Basic Elements of Consent Disclosure Statements for Survey Research
November 27, 2011

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A STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

I _____ agree to allow my child to participate in this study. I
understand that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my child from the
study at any time by simply telling the researcher. I have read and understood the above
description of the study. I understand that my privacy and my child's privacy will be
safeguarded as explained above. I understand that if I have any questions or concerns, I
may contact the researcher and/ or the Human Ethics Secretariat Board at the numbers
given above.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your
satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to
participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the
researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional
responsibilities. Your child is free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain
from answering any questions he/she prefers to omit, without prejudice or consequence.
Your child's continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you
and your child should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout
your child's participation.

The University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board(s) and a representative(s) of the
University of Manitoba Research Quality Management / Assurance office may also
require access to your research records for safety and quality assurance purposes.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Ethics Review Board. If you
have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-
named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this
consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Participant's phone number/ email address:
_____

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature _____ Date
_____

I would like to receive a summary report of the findings:

____   ____
YES   NO

Please mail a summary report to the following:
_____
_____

University of Manitoba Bannatyne Campus Research Ethics Board
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November 27, 2011

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A STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

UNIVERSITY
of MANITOBA

protocol #
_____
(Assigned by HES Admin.)

Appendix J: Assent for children

Study title: A study of middle school students' motivation to learn English as a Second Language
Principal investigator: Margaret Aisicovich   Email address: maisicovich@retsd.mb.ca
                SW 3-14-2W, RM of Woodlands   (204) 997-2097
                Box 674, Warren, Mb
                R0C 3E0
Supervisor: Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, Ph. D   Email address:
kouritzi@ms.umanitoba.ca
Professor of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning (204) 474-9079
University of Manitoba
Why you are here?
        I am a University of Manitoba master's student. I am studying in the area of Curriculum,
Teaching and Learning. I am interested in learning about what it's like for children from other
countries to learn English as a second language, and to find out how they feel about their school
work and finishing their school work. I want to see if you would like to be in this study. This
form tells you about the study. If there is anything you do not understand, please ask your parent,
your guardian, my supervising professor, or myself.

Why are they doing this study?
        You are here, because as a previous student who attended the ESL, you are the kind of
student whom I want to learn more about. I am trying to find out how students feel about their
school work and the factors that affect your motivation to finish your.

What will happen to you?
1   If you want to be in the study these things will happen:
The study will last between April 2012 and August 2012. I will interview you twice during the
year. The first interview will take about one hour. And the second interview will take about 20
minutes to half an hour. We can do the interviews wherever you are most comfortable, quiet
enough to record the interview and is private so that just you, your parents and I know you are
being interviewed. Your parents will need to agree with you being a part of this study, and they
will also be present when I ask you the questions. Both you and your parents will be present
during the interviews.

2   I will ask you a number of questions when we meet for the interview. I will record your
answers with a digital recorder and later I will type them up on the computer.

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A STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

If there are questions you do not want to answer or that you do not know how to answer, you can just tell me and we can skip them.

<u>Will the study hurt?</u>

There are no risks associated with this study. The benefits may be that you will learn something about how you make choices to complete assignments and what motivates you to finish you work in ESL.

<u>What if you have any questions?</u>

You can ask questions any time, now or later. You can talk to your family or someone else. If you want to contact me, at any time regarding this study, you can do so at: maisicovich@retsd.mb.ca, or by calling me at (204) 997-2097. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Sandra Kouritzin at: (204) 474-9079, or by email at: kouritzi@ms.umanitoba.ca.

<u>Who will know what I did in the study?</u>

Any information you give during the study will be kept private (or secret). Your name will not be on any study papers and no one but me and my advisor (teacher), Dr Sandra Kouritzin will know you took part in the study or how you answered the questions. Once the study is finished, I will destroy any information I recordings and notes I made based on what you tell me.

<u>Do you have to be in the study?</u>

You do not have to be in the study. No one will be mad at you if you don't want to do this. If you don't want to be in this study, you can say so. I will also be asking your parents if they would like you to be in the study and they will need to agree in order for you to be able to participate. But even if you say yes now you can change your mind later.

Do you have any questions?

Assent

I want to take part in this study. I know I can change my mind at any time.

_____ Verbal assent given   yes ☐

Print name of child

[If verbal assent obtained the process must be clearly documented in the research]
Written assent if the child chooses to sign the assent.

_____   _____   _____
Signature of Child   Age   Date

I confirm that I have explained the study to the participant to the extent compatible with the participants understanding, and that the participant has agreed to be in the study.

_____   _____   _____
Printed name of   Signature of   Date
Person obtaining assent   Person obtaining assent

A STUDY OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Fort Garry Campus Research Ethics Boards
CTC Building, 208 - 194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Phone: (204) 474-7122

Protocol #

_____

(Assigned by HES Admin.)

Appendix K

Summary of study

Research Project Title: A study of middle school students' motivation to learn English
as a Second Language

Principal investigator: Margaret Aisicovich
 Email address: maisicovich@retsd.mb.ca
                          SW 3-14-2W, RM of Woodlands   (204) 997-2097
                          Box 674, Warren, Mb
                          R0C 3E0

Supervisor: Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, Ph. D
Email address: kouritzi@ms.umanitoba.ca
Professor of Curriculum, teaching and learning   (204) 474-9079
University of Manitoba

Adopting a constructionist interpretive research methodology, I investigated the

phenomenon of motivation to learn English as a second language (ESL) in a sheltered,

middle school, transitional class. I interviewed eight ESL students who were attending an

ESL program in grades seven through nine. This process enabled me to distill the essence

of which factors impacted the students' motivation for second language acquisition

(SLA).

As an ESL teacher of grades five to twelve, I know that my students arrive with a

preconception of what school means to them. They have had a variety of previous

educational and learning experiences. Some students seem intrinsically motivated and

driven to learn English, while others do not seem to have the motivation for learning

English. Drawing on literature from the field of ESL and motivation for the purposes of

L2 (second language) acquisition, I noticed that there appeared to be a gap in the

literature as to which factors worked together to impact motivation in ESL middle

school students to acquire a second language. The literature did suggest that ESL

students' motivation to learn English may be influenced by numerous factors including,

but not limited to: previous learning experiences, family perspectives on education, peer

interaction, and classroom strategies and procedure.

The study occurred over a period of five months, between April 2012 and August

2012, and included data gathering and analysis. Prior to conducting the interviews, I

secured divisional and the school's permission as well as assent from the participants

and consent from their parents/guardians.

Using the interpretive constructionist research method, I endeavored to answer the

following questions:

1   How do ESL students describe the process of learning English as a second
       language?

2   Which factors do ESL students feel enhance motivation for SLA?

3   Which factors do ESL students feel impede motivation for SLA?

After interviewing the eight participants and analyzing the data I found that my findings

closely aligned with the literature. Many of the factors that the students expressed or

demonstrated though their stories aligned with the research in the field. The factors which

seemed to enhance student motivation to learn English included successful acculturation

and the beginning of the development of a Canadian L2 identity, a positive familial

perception regarding learning English, intrapersonal factors, such as an easy going

personality and willingness to communicate, and the educational context including a

supportive, skilled ESL teacher and positive interaction among the students in the

classroom. Although all the students said that one reason they were motivated to learn

English was to be able to better communicate with their peers, a factor which seemed not

to make any difference in influencing student language acquisition was peer perception of

ESL.

Limitations which came to light during the interviewing process included: the fact

that it takes a decade or longer for a New Canadian to truly feel as though he or she is

Canadian and no longer affiliating themselves solely with their country of origin. Another

limitation was that all of the students who volunteered to be interviewed were of the

motivated variety. I had hoped that a few of them would be able to share the challenges

they faced in learning English and the factors which contributed to their lack of

motivation.

The implications for the findings were that ESL students, regardless of their home

country were influences by a multitude of factors upon moving to Canada and learning

English. The factors included: parents' beliefs regarding the importance of an education,

educational experience they had prior to moving to Canada, a student centered ESL

program, the sensitivity of the teacher to their needs and a peer group of ESL students

who are understanding and share the same experience. When these factors are combined,

the students seemed to have a positive experience learning English and his or her intrinsic

motivation was high. In other words, if the students' parents valued education and encourage their children to work hard at school, they attended a program tailored to their ESL needs and they are in a class of students like themselves, their motivation for SLA is high.

Further questions which arose from this study were: what other challenges can be minimized in order to enable students to maximize their motivations to learn? How does student motivation to learn English impact their motivation towards learning other subjects? Do students' learning styles impact how motivated they are to learn English? How can this be minimized? Further research needs to be done with students who are younger and older than the target group in order to ascertain if motivation to learn is greater at any one age bracket, and whether ESL classes would be beneficial in younger students than grade five (which is currently the grade at which ESL programming is implemented in Manitoba).

Personally, this was a fantastic experience. I was humbled by how hard these students worked, their resolve and motivation to strive to be the best they could be, and speaking and learning in a second language in a country they were still trying to get used to. I was grateful to all the students for sharing their experiences with me, and it reinforced for me that what I do is important and it impacts children's lives, and their future.

Thank you for your interest in this study. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

_____   _____

   Margaret Aisicovich   Date