Beyond the Pale:

Ethical Considerations in Research with Non-Native Speakers of English

by

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Abstract

Whereas the literature on English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction has flourished over the last thirty years, very little in the literature addresses issues concerning research with participants who are non-native speakers of English (NNSE). For this qualitative study, six researchers affiliated with a western prairie university were interviewed and asked to reflect on what ethics means to them, which ethical issues are of greatest importance to them when working with NNSE participants, and the role of research ethics boards (REBs). Issues of language, culture and power were found to be key themes as was a deep respect on the part of the researchers towards their participants. In addition, REBs were found to be lacking and in need of reconsideration. These findings suggest that there exists a distinction between *institutional ethics* (ethics as it pertains to REBs) and *individual ethics* (ethics as envisioned by researchers).

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Chapter 1

Introduction

What does it mean for a researcher to conduct research ethically? How does conducting research with non-native speakers of English impact the ethical concerns of researchers? I first considered the issue of ethics in research while reading Hostetler's (2005) look into what constitutes "good" research. Hostetler observes that "many people get nervous when venturing into ethics, believing that decisions in that domain should be left to individuals" (Hostetler, p.19). Hostetler further argues "that having moral concern does not mean being moralistic and sanctimonious" (p.20). The issue of ethics in research – and the role that participants play– is an issue that intrigues me. Having taught English as a Second Language (ESL) for many years, I have come to appreciate the trust that my students place in me – trust that I know my subject well, trust that I am there to help them make sense of the complexities of English, trust that I will treat them fairly and respect their views and their cultures. While doing research for my course work as part of this master's degree, I began to wonder further not only about the relationship between ESL teacher and student but also about the relationship between researcher and (ESL) participant and how working with non-native English speakers impacts the research process. And so, for my thesis, I wished to explore how researchers working with participants who are non-native speakers of English conduct research ethically.

Guillemin and Gillam (2004) argue that "research involving human participants starts from a position of ethical tension" (p.271). They maintain that

one individual asking people to take part in a procedure they haven't sought out and one that is not primarily intended for their direct benefit is problematic, and yet this is what most research fundamentally entails. So I endeavored to look closely at the ethical issues that are most relevant for researchers. I realize that even though I have worked many years teaching English to non-native speakers of English in a university setting, I approached this project as somewhat of an outsider as I am without a great deal of experience conducting research. Bresler (1997) suggests that all researchers "[have] encountered some troubling incidents in the course of doing research that have occasioned plenty of private soul-searching" (p.4). It is our *response* to these "incidents" that is the true test of ourselves as researchers. In her discussion on educational research, Cooper (2009) "often [wonders] who is the questioner behind the words" (p.186) when reading others' research. She also questions whether the researcher takes into account his or her own prejudices. Removing our personal bias is a nearly impossible and perhaps unrealistic goal; however, there may be other possibilities allowing consumers of research a glimpse into the biases and baggage we bring to the "doing" of research.

In discussing the challenges of determining whether participants' consent is informed and freely given, Torczyner (1991) claims "judgments are relative" (p.126). The researcher is responsible for accurately, fairly and authentically storying the lives of others, but that is a challenging undertaking and one that is not undertaken lightly. Nevertheless, ethical issues occur. How likely is it that some may be avoided? And when an ethical issue is raised, how is it addressed

by the researcher? These are questions that I believe should be discussed and explored. Because cross-cultural researchers must be cognizant of the ethical concerns raised by working with participants who are non-native speakers of English, they may in fact have a great deal to offer educational research as a whole. It is this heightened sensitivity to the needs of participants that may yield useful insights to research in general.

Late in 2008 I undertook a small pilot research study to investigate the ethical concerns of researchers in the education faculty at a Canadian prairie university whose participants are frequently non-native speakers of English and to consider these concerns in light of the research review boards (REBs) at that university. Qualitative inquiry and data analysis were used to identify the key themes, which centered on honour and respect for participants' voices and the researchers' perceived limitations of university REBs to address adequately their concerns when working with non-native English speakers. In particular, the researchers expressed the desire to represent accurately and fairly participants' voices. Each recognized the role university REBs play but also expressed the challenges of meeting both the demands of REBs and the needs of their particular participants. It is not insignificant that each of the researchers seemed to welcome the opportunity to discuss ethical concerns in research with non-native speakers of English as there currently has not been much discussion on this topic.

And so, that pilot research study has helped me formulate the parameters of my thesis research. My current research has been guided by the following

research question: what are the main ethical concerns among university researchers working with non-native speakers of English? An additional purpose of this research has been to explore to what extent and under what circumstances researchers reflect on whatever ethical concerns they may have as a result of working with participants who are non-native speakers of English and how such concerns inform their research practices. It is hoped, therefore, that the findings of this research will contribute to the discussion of ethics in research within the field of TESL and perhaps, by extension, to research in general.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This review is a survey of research studies and articles that have focused on ethical issues in research with human subjects, or participants. As little research in the TESL field specifically addresses the issue of ethical research, I include in my literature review research from other disciplines, such as nursing, medicine, anthropology and psychology, as well as research conducted with vulnerable populations, such as children and youth. In doing so, I identify some ethical factors that are crucial to consider when conducting research with participants for whom English is not a first language. I conclude that there is considerable room for discussion in the TESL field about the ethical issues that researchers working with non-English speaking participants need to be mindful of and that researcher reflection, both individually and as a community, is crucial.

Defining participants

Research participants for whom English is not a first language are commonly referred to as non-native speakers of English (NNSE). This term, however, is not unproblematic. As Sridhar (1994) points out, in many educational and research contexts, the target model for success in acquiring a second language is “an idealized form of the native speaker’s competency” (p.801). But who is this hypothetical native speaker? Does the language learner actually need or even wish to emulate what it means to be a “native” speaker? With the world becoming increasingly multilingual and multicultural, much English is spoken in

locations where English is not the primary or dominant language (Matsuda, 2003; Nault, 2006; Nunan, 2005). Therefore, the model of the native speaker as the standard of proficiency is problematic. However, the terms *native speaker* and *non-native speaker* are the terms predominantly used in the literature; therefore, for simplicity, I continue to employ these terms here. Loosely, I refer to participants who may be English language learners, whether receiving formal English as a second language (ESL) instruction or not, and recent immigrants and newcomers to Canada. To cluster all groups of non-native speakers of English together in the same group may also be problematic, but my purpose here is to look at this larger grouping as it represents similar realities, challenges and needs that are different than those of participants who are native speakers of English.

Historical Context of Ethics in Research

The natural starting point in a discussion of ethics is a brief clarification of how the ethical treatment of research participants developed. The Nuremberg Tribunals were established in 1947 to investigate and hold accountable Nazi doctors who performed horrific experiments on unwilling “subjects” during World War II, thereby bringing considerable international attention to the issue of human experimentation. The Nuremberg Code (1947) was created in order to set up guiding principles for the humane treatment of research subjects. But, in part as a response to several medical experiments conducted in the first half of the last century, including the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, the cancer tests at Brooklyn’s Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital and the Tulane Electrical Brain

Stimulation Program[1], physicians came together at the World Medical Assembly in Helsinki in 1964 and developed more stringent guidelines for medical experiments. The Helsinki Declaration (1964) stated that the purpose, process, proposed benefits and potential harms must be made known to prospective subjects. Subsequent documents, within individual countries, outlined and clarified additional principles for the fair treatment of research participants.

In Canada, for example, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and the National Research Council have prepared ethical guidelines for researchers working with human subjects. The SSHRC has recently revised the Tri-Council Policy Statement, which sets out ethical principles for researchers to follow, including such issues as informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, conflicts of interest, inclusion in research and research involving Aboriginal Peoples. Included in the Tri-Council Policy Statement is a chapter addressing inclusion in research, which highlights the ethical obligation of including individuals from vulnerable populations in research that might benefit them or the groups to which they belong. It would seem reasonable to include NNSE in this category, even though they are not specifically mentioned. Over the years, professional organizations have

[1] All of these studies raised various ethical issues. In the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, which was conducted over forty years beginning in the early 1930s, participants who had syphilis were recruited for a study to analyze the natural progression of the disease if left untreated. Although at the onset of the study treatments for syphilis were unsafe and ineffective, a safe and effective treatment was found in the 1940s. Researchers, however, did not make this treatment available to participants. Researchers conducting tests at Brooklyn's Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital were interested in exploring the body's ability to fight cancer and wondered if the immune systems of people who had another disease would be able to reject cancer cells. Only some patients were informed that they would be participating in an experiment and none was told that they would be injected with cancer cells. In the 1950s, patients at Tulane University's School of Medicine who were being treated for schizophrenia were subject to experiments to alter and control memory and

translated principles such as these into specific guidelines as to what constitutes ethical research within their respective fields. The net result is that across disciplines there is some consensus, in principle, as to what ethical research entails, which is what I will now discuss.

Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research

Perhaps a natural starting point is a brief discussion of ethical issues in qualitative research. Helgeland (2005) contrasts *dutiful ethics* and *discursive ethics*. Dutiful ethics refers to the ethics a society as a whole has agreed on. Dutiful ethics emphasizes the need to act ethically as a member of a social group and in relation to others; respect for others is key. It may be true, however, that the notion of dutiful ethics neglects the realities of cultural differences. Different cultural groups do not always share the same values and even the values they have in common may be upheld differently across cultures. In contrast to dutiful ethics, discursive ethics emphasizes dialogue between people. This notion is less absolute; it requires an understanding of the interests of all parties involved. Helgeland argues that ethical principles cannot be rigidly maintained in isolation; instead, they need to be adapted to the social context where, for example, researchers find themselves.

Guillemin and Gillam (2004) are perhaps more pragmatic. They distinguish between *procedural ethics* and *ethics as practice*. Procedural ethics is concerned with obtaining ethics approval from the relevant governing institutions, such as REBs, whereas ethics as practice is less fixed and refers to the ethical

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behaviour through such means as hallucinogenic drugs, electric shock treatment, sensory deprivation and hypnosis. Patients were not informed of the true purpose or nature of the treatment.

issues that arise during the course of a research study. Guillemin and Gillam maintain that these “ethically important moments” may arise at any time and although they may not always manifest as dilemmas per se, they are just as critical. Moreover, these ethical moments may require decisions and action on the part of the researcher in ways not anticipated by procedural ethics. As the authors point out, for example, the standard consent form is a guarantee of informed consent, although it can be a means of documenting that consent. Instead, “informed consent is at heart an interpersonal process between researcher and participant” (p.272). Gullemin and Gillam believe that neither protocols nor guidelines can adequately address “ethically important moments” because they are too diverse, subtle and nuanced, and so, ethics as practice is more relevant and crucial to the realities researchers face.

Clark (1995) offers a more concrete discussion of ethical factors to consider when conducting qualitative research, focusing on informed consent, the researcher-participant relationship, the social context of the research and the potential harm to participants. Clark’s discussion focuses on questions he – and fellow researchers – may have regarding these ethical issues. His goal is not to provide answers but to stimulate reflection and discussion among researchers. As do Guillemin and Gillam (2004), Clark urges researchers to weigh carefully and prudently the research contexts in which they find themselves against whatever general professional and personal ethical principles they deem most appropriate. Having looked at ethics in qualitative research in a very general

sense, I will now consider research ethics in the context of TESL and related disciplines.

Ethical Considerations in TESL and SLA

Over the last thirty years, research into ESL acquisition and instruction has expanded exponentially. As comprehensive and varied much of the research is, very little of the literature addresses the ethical issues inherent in or raised by TESL research. Although there is a small body of research that examines the ethical teaching of ESL (Baumgardner and Brown, 2003; Dekert, 1996; MacPherson, 2006; Matsuda, 2003; Nault, 2006; Nunan, 2005; Varghese and Johnston, 2007), the identification and discussion of ethical considerations when conducting research with NNSE is negligible.

In discussing qualitative education research, Gottlieb (1997) warns that any interrogation of the research endeavor will yield numerous ethical issues and complexities. As with any research, questions surrounding the ethical treatment of NNSE participants need to be considered. It is not sufficient to assume that all research involving NNSE is being conducted ethically. The TESOL Research Committee (1980) recognizes that NNSE participants comprise a “special population” within the larger population of research participants in research governed by institutions such as universities and provincially-funded agencies. The TESOL Research Committee then outlines the six major areas of concern; namely, informed consent, deception, consequences, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, and research applications. This committee is made up of a group of volunteers from universities around the world whose goal is to further research in

the TESOL field. This committee prepared the guidelines and presented them to the TESOL Executive Committee, who endorsed the guidelines and asked that they be published in TESOL Quarterly (1980, p.383).

To illustrate the importance of consent and how it may be realized, the committee provides a sample consent form. However, the language of this form may render it inappropriate for use with most NNSE; the vocabulary is advanced and the grammar complicated. It is written in “researcher-speak” and NNSE participants would likely have difficulty making sense of it. For example, the writers advise potential participants that their participation in a given study “in no way reflects [their] intellectual abilities or personality” (TESOL Research Committee, 1980, p.387). Later, in the same form, the committee reminds potential participants that they “are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice” (p. 387). Language such as this suggests that the TESOL committee might reconsider how better to implement the guidelines they put forward, as in the case of informed consent, and that ongoing discussion and reflection are needed. Yet, as DuFon (1993) points out several years afterwards in her response to the guidelines proposed by the TESOL Committee (also in TESOL Quarterly), “these guidelines appear to have fallen into obscurity” (p.158). DuFon accounts for this lack of subsequent discussion of the ethical guidelines as researchers’ preoccupation with the technical aspects of the design and implementation of research projects. She argues, though, that the time has come to raise and reflect on the ethics of TESL research. Of primary concern is the issue of informed consent, whereby a research participant is given all relevant

information about a research project so that he or she can make an informed decision about whether or not to take part. In addition, consent must be freely given, without coercion, and may be withdrawn at any time during the research process without penalty or prejudice. DuFon argues that with the ongoing growth of technology and the subsequent ease of information transmission and sharing, new challenges to informing participants about the ways in which their data may be used have been raised. Therefore, DuFon suggests that the guidelines be revisited and revised. She further suggests that the guidelines be made more specific, providing concrete practical suggestions.

Although I agree with DuFon that more attention should be paid to ethical issues in TESL research, I wonder whether it is possible to create a set of guidelines that could adequately address any and all ethical dilemmas that may arise when conducting research with NNSE. My current research project is therefore aimed at DuFon's final suggestion for a public and ongoing dialogue among researchers about the ethical issues that arise when working with NNSE.

In the fall of 2008, I conducted a pilot study to identify the ethical concerns of educational researchers working with NNSE participants. I found that the issues of informed consent, language and translation, researcher positionality, participant voice and working with REBs were of importance to the researchers interviewed. Rather than provide a set of guidelines for researchers, my study highlights some areas in which ethical concerns play an important role for educational researchers working with NNSE. Additional studies of this kind are needed to probe further into the ethical issues most salient for researchers.

Ortega (2005) also argues for an open dialogue about the ethical concerns when conducting research with NNSE, but she laments that “little published discussion of ethical dimensions can be found in publications devoted strictly to SLA [Second Language Acquisition]” (p. 429). In considering SLA research, Ortega proposes three principles for the conduct of ethical research. She believes that research should “be judged by its social utility” (p.427), that no research is ever value-free and that epistemological diversity is necessary for the SLA field. Of particular interest is her second principle, that “value neutrality is an illusion at best” (p.432). Specifically, Ortega argues that in SLA research certain learner populations are largely ignored. Participants are seldom drawn from either linguistic minorities or marginalized groups; instead, “SLA as a field has tended to investigate formal L2 learning across contexts and populations where elective bilingualism and middle class privileges are the norm” (p.433). This would suggest that researchers need to consider who their research is for. It is clear that researchers constantly make decisions about the research and that their values shape these decisions, and if the ways in which this happens go unquestioned, ethical concerns may be raised.

Lucas and Lindstone (2000) share this sentiment. In writing about the teaching of ethical issues to student researchers, they express skepticism about their graduate students’ desire to “bracket their prior conception or suspend their personal involvement” (p.63), but such skepticism need not be reserved for less-experienced researchers. In discussing ethical issues in anthropological research, Gottlieb (1997) argues that “researchers, as human beings, are

continually subject to emotional reactions to their research [which] must be interrogated" (p.8). She applauds the changes in the field of anthropology, whereby the assumption that the researcher is transparent is being challenged. Gottlieb argues that all researchers have experienced ethical dilemmas during the course of their research careers, so "a richer written corpus would have been at least some help in trying to carve an unintentionally damaging response" (p.4). In addition, she believes that the researcher's own "moral position" must be constantly questioned. It is not insignificant that Ortega's (2005) primary goal in exploring ethical concerns is to open a space for productive researcher dialogue or "genuine engagement" (p.429) about ethical issues in research so as to advance the relevance of SLA research as a whole. It would seem, therefore, that researcher reflection is needed in the SLA field as well.

Ethical Concerns in Cross-cultural Research

As there is yet little discussion of ethical research in the field of TESL, it would be beneficial to widen the scope of this literature review and consider the ethical issues being raised and discussed in other fields. Recently, there has been some interest in research across cultures (Marshall and Batten, 2004; Robinson and Curry, 2008: Turale, 2006; Tilley and Gormley, 2007). Tilley and Gormley (2007) examine the ways in which cross-cultural educational research can result in unexpected ethical dilemmas. While conducting research in Mexico, the authors discovered that the requirements laid out by REBs failed to address adequately the realities of cross-cultural research. For example, in order to "prove" that informed consent has been obtained, researchers are required to get

participants to sign a consent form. However, in Mexico, such a form is viewed with suspicion. Consent is based on mutual trust and understanding. If a signature is required, this is seen as an indication that the researcher may not be an honorable or trustworthy person. The formality considered so crucial in some cultures may lead to distrust in others.

Robinson and Curry (2008) are also concerned that the idea of a signed consent might violate “cultural norms regarding written documents” (p.46). They warn against potential dangers that may arise when researchers are unfamiliar with participants’ cultural norms and values, which may not align with those of the researcher and Western-based research constructs. The writers recognize that “efforts to understand and help diverse groups through multicultural exploration, particularly with regards to international research, may present [REBs and researchers] a plethora of new concerns” (p.46). They call for an understanding between researcher and participant as well as flexibility in REB protocols, such as how consent is realized.

Consent is an ethical concern for Marshall and Batten (2004) as well, particularly as they feel it is a key dimension of power. The writers argue that “power is a central aspect to consider in cross-cultural research relationships” (p.2). They recognize that members of marginalized groups frequently lack power in, for example, academic settings. Although Marshall and Batten encourage the creation of “a partnership” with research participants both on an individual and group level, they acknowledge that the community to which the participants belong “may not always have the information and knowledge to make sound

ethical decisions" (p.2). Marshall and Batten believe that consent, for example, needs to be more clearly and operationally defined for participants from cultures other than that of the dominant group, and such a redefinition of consent is best done on a case-by-case basis.

Another ethical dilemma is raised by the notion of reciprocity, whereby "researchers … ensure that the benefits of their research are available in their host country" (Tri-Council Policy Statement, p.1.12). Yet there is a real danger that the perceived benefits of the research are not valued by the host communities. Marshall and Batten question whether researchers from privileged academic backgrounds can or should endeavor to "fix" the social problems of poor, developing countries because the writers feel there is a strong undercurrent of racism in such an attitude.

Tilley and Gormley (2007) also discuss anonymity and confidentiality. Although REBs urge researchers to safeguard participants' anonymity and confidentiality, the authors found that several of their Mexican participants wanted the researchers to use their names rather than pseudonyms in the dissemination of the research. Seeing their names in print, for example, gives participants a sense of pride and acknowledgement, which perhaps speaks to the ways in which participants view the research process. They may see themselves not merely as passive participants but as co-contributors, which raises ethical issues concerning the role of participants and how that role is defined and realized across cultures. That these issues presented themselves during their research suggests to the authors that formal institutional ethical

requirements can, at best, “play only a limited role in ensuring ethical research practices” (p.369).

Marshall and Batten (2004) believe that cross-cultural research empowers the community and that that relationship should be viewed as a partnership. Thus, data ownership can help lessen some ethical problems by involving participants in a way that is mindful of their cultural norms. Tilley and Gormley (2007) claim that ethical issues only manifest themselves once the research is underway and, therefore, cannot be adequately addressed beforehand. However, I wonder if the goal of the researcher should not be to eliminate all possibility of thorny ethical problems before the start of a research project but, instead, to anticipate the areas, such as consent, confidentiality, anonymity and reciprocity, in which ethical questions may be raised.

What is perhaps more interesting for my purposes here is Tilley and Gormley’s (2007) inclusion of a research study conducted with female inmates at a Canadian prison. The authors argue that female prison inmates make up a cultural group of their own within the larger Canadian community. They found that ethical issues concerning consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and reciprocity were raised when conducting research with this cultural group. The writers urge more work on “the cross-cultural complexities of translating ethical principles” (p.384) within an international research context, but such discussion could also be focused on research with distinct cultural groups within Canada.

Marshall and Batten (2004) also recognize that “academic investigators work across a broad range of cultures that goes beyond ethnicity” (p.1). With

greater recognition that different cultural groups exist and that each may have its own unique needs and concerns, there may in turn be greater recognition of the needs of NNSE. Marshall and Batten (2004) argue that researchers should not adhere to some perceived “universal ethic” but instead be tolerant of cultural differences and flexible in their approaches to addressing and respecting these differences.

Turale (2006) also wrestles with numerous questions concerning ethical issues when conducting international research. Not unlike Marshall and Batten (2004), Turale emphasizes the need to balance the ethical values of the researcher with those of the participants. Turale finds that when REBs, for example, give ethical approval to researchers, they may be “unaware of the local complexities of researching in the host country” (p.131). In response to this, Turale urges researchers to learn as much as possible, in advance, about the host country. But Turale’s advice may be challenging to follow for researchers working with diverse cultural groups of NNSEs within a Canadian context, for example. NNSEs may come from diverse cultural backgrounds and the logistics of familiarizing oneself with the cultural values of each participant’s home country may be overwhelming. Nevertheless, Turale’s insistence that researchers share the ethical concerns or dilemmas they encounter when conducting research in order to contribute to general knowledge and to raise overall standards of research is valid.

Ethical Issues in Research with Aboriginal Populations

Researchers working with Aboriginal populations within Canada and/or the United States have found that the numerous ethical concerns that are raised often stem from the differences between Aboriginal cultures and values and those of the dominant cultural group, of which researchers are often members (Davis and Keemer, 2002; Davison, Brown and Moffit, 2006; Ellis and Earley, 2006; Fitzgerald, 2005; Piquemal, 2001). With respect to research with Aboriginal populations, Piquemal (2001) argues that "the researcher's ethics, and not those of the researched … often seem to govern the relationship" (p.65) between the researcher and the participant, which is a sentiment echoed by Fitzgerald (2005) and Davison, Brown and Moffit (2006). Davison et al (2006) examine the obstacles that REBs create (albeit, unintentionally) to obtaining informed and meaningful consent from Aboriginal groups. Not unlike Piquemal (2001), Davison et al (2006) find that the need to obtain written, formal consent from participants in order to meet REB requirements may, in fact, run contrary to the needs of the community. Oral consent may be more appropriate to Aboriginal communities as written consent may be perceived as offensive or insulting. Moreover, both Davison et al (2006) and Piquemal (2001) consider how the signed consent form indicates a static consent at odds with a more ongoing and negotiated notion of consent, which may be preferable for Aboriginal communities. Oftentimes, researchers assume that participants are "able to give full permission in a communicative code that happens to belong to the researcher" (Piquemal, p. 65). Issues of interference, acquiescence versus consent and the ownership of

cultural knowledge are critical. Student researchers, when confronted with these issues and others, are often in the unenviable position of having to meet the sometimes incompatible requirements of REBs and the needs of their participants.

In response to this dilemma, Ellis and Earley (2006) believe that researchers have a responsibility first and foremost to build “a research relationship constructed on a foundation of mutual respect and trust “(p. 2). To that end, the writers suggest that there should be greater participant involvement in the shaping of the research. Moreover, they suggest that being culturally sensitive to participants’ cultural groups may mean challenging REB protocols. Fitzgerald (2005) also believes that the research process should be based on culturally-appropriate relationships, which may challenge the traditional Western researcher-participant dynamic where the participant is “typically … less powerful” (p.18). Fitzgerald urges researchers to “reject Western methodologies and position indigenous peoples and their voices as powerful” (p.18). Davis and Keemer (2002) also call for researchers to respect participants’ communities, which means acknowledging the diversity among Aboriginal groups. Being respectful includes explaining, in culturally-appropriate ways, the process and goals of a research project to the community. Therefore, language becomes a critical factor. Davison, Brown and Moffit (2006) also stress the importance of language; specifically, they encourage researchers to recognize and accommodate the long tradition that *oral* language plays in Aboriginal cultures.

This discussion of ethical issues in research can be extended to research with NNSE. Issues of understanding and respect for the cultural differences between participants (and among participants) and researchers is called for. This, in turn, has implications for the language researchers use and the ways in which consent is realized, for example. No less important is the recognition that REBs, though providing important ethical protocols, may not have created guidelines that give researchers enough space to maneuver between the requirements of REBs and the cultural needs and expectations of their participants.

Ethical Issues in Research with Vulnerable Populations

Another means of identifying ethical issues relevant to research with NNSE is to examine the literature across disciplines where research is routinely conducted with other vulnerable populations. Vulnerable populations include the bereaved (Beck and Konnert, 2007), inmate populations (Tilley and Gormley, 2007) and patients undergoing drug treatment and counseling (Edwards, Lilford, Thornton and Hewison, 1998; Etherington, 2007; Helgeland, 2005; Sieber and Stanley, 1988; West, 2002). But research involving children and youth, another vulnerable population, is perhaps the most relevant for my purposes here; many of the ethical issues pertaining to research with children and youth can be extended to research with NNSEs. I do not mean to imply that NNSE participants should be treated as children for that would be both patronizing and simplistic. I am suggesting, though, that there are some useful parallels.

Much research is conducted with children and youth, as in the fields of psychology (Fisher, 2004; Lefaivre, Chambers and Fernandez, 2007), social work (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998) and medicine (Coch, 2007; Harth and Thong, 1995). Fisher (2004) clearly and succinctly outlines key ethical issues surrounding psychological research with children and youth. Fisher discusses informed consent and its documentation, appropriate use of language and interpreters, confidentiality and privacy, and conflicts of interest. Fisher argues that informed consent, for example, should be a respectful and continuous process. Moreover, children can and should expect that researchers will "communicate with them honestly, do them no harm, treat them fairly and protect their autonomy and privacy [and respect] their way of thinking" (p. 838). Fisher advocates the use of "language that is reasonably understandable to the individual" (p.834) and urges translations of consent information for participants for whom English is not a "preferred language".

However, as is the case with children, considerations for NNSE participants must be made. If it is unfair to assume that a child is at the same cognitive level as an adult researcher, it is equally unfair to assume that NNSE participants are at the same *linguistic* level as the researcher? And, therefore, shouldn't allowances be made? The language used to explain and used throughout the research process must be accessible to participants without distorting what the research process entails.

Fisher also points to the danger of interpreting children's silences as assent. Consent for children and NNSEs – and, indeed, with any participant –

needs to be active rather than passive. This is particularly relevant when conducting research with NNSEs who may find it culturally inappropriate to question or disagree openly with what is being asked of them. NNSE participants may not have the same world views and/or values as the researcher, and these differences may manifest themselves in a variety of ways, including participants' responses to consent.

An issue that Fisher briefly mentions but Thomas and O'Kane (1998) consider in more detail is the issue of control. In exploring the ethical implications of conducting research with children, Thomas and O'Kane observe that several "ethical issues salient in doing social research with children are common to work with subjects of any age" (p.337). In particular, the writers consider the power imbalance between child participant and adult researcher. They advocate allowing children to participate in research on their own terms wherever possible. Thomas and O'Kane want the research experience to be meaningful and relevant for participants, and this is a goal to which researchers working with NNSE can strive.

Tilley and Gormley (2007) regret that "ethical issues often become visible only as research proceeds and, as a result, cannot be addressed outside the research context and before the research begins" (p.369). But are there not certain key *areas* where ethical issues are likely to arise? Wouldn't a better understanding of these areas help a researcher deal with these ethical instances? For example, the issue of consent is key across research with vulnerable populations. Tilley and Gormley acknowledge the possibility that

consent from prison populations may never be voluntary in the truest sense. A marginalized population, prison inmates (in this case, female inmates) are seldom given a voice. The reality of their daily existence is that it is often safer to say “yes” than to ask questions. But acquiescence is not consent. Consent includes the right to ask for clarification and the right to reconsider that consent and even to withdraw it.

In doing research with the bereaved, Beck and Connert (2007) also examine “the competency to consent” (p. 792). Beck and Connert find that the bereaved, though competent to give consent, must be treated with greater sensitivity by researchers. The writers argue that bereaved individuals must be given more time to reflect before and during the research process, that the researcher must be mindful and respectful of their bereavement and that interviews should be conducted by trained and knowledgeable people.

Similar recommendations could be made to researchers working with NNSE participants who do not normally work primarily with NNSEs. In discussing the relationship between discourse and power, Fairclough (2001) urges greater sensitivity to cultural differences. He argues that “interviewers tend to assume, for instance, that interviewees are familiar with dominant ways of conducting interviews” (p.40). He warns that when an interviewee gives an unexpected and/or disappointing response to a question, most interviewers rarely consider “the possibility of differences in discoursal conventions” (p.40). This would suggest that extra time, respect and understanding of what it means to be a NNSE is called for.

Working with patients receiving psychological counseling, West (2002) questions the validity of patient consent if they have no prior experience with counseling. If patients are seeking help because of a life crisis, for example, West wonders if they are able to provide a truly free consent. Another issue raised by West is the “after-effects” once a research study is completed. West refers to “hit and run” research where “the researcher [uses] counseling and other research skills to gain deep and intimate data from the interviewee and then they [sic] leave almost immediately afterwards with little thought for the impact of the research interview process on the person” (p.264). West questions the ethics of severing the researcher-participant relationship if the participant is not ready for its termination. The ability to differentiate between researcher and counselor may be challenging for some participants, and the same may be asked of NNSE participants, particularly when the research concerns English language learning, instruction or usage. The distinction between researcher and teacher-practitioner may be easy for the researcher to make, but such a distinction may not be so clear for the participant. And if the participant feels that he or she is gaining valuable English skills, knowledge or practice from the research process, is it ethically reasonable to terminate that relationship without providing some after-research care to the participant? In addition, both West (2002) and Stuart (1998) argue that researchers must recognize and respect participants’ voices, and one way to do so is to share with them the material intended for publication “so that consent and editing is built into the publication process” (West, p. 265).

Conclusions

By considering the literature in the fields of TESL and SLA and then broadening this review to include cross-cultural research, research with Aboriginal populations and research with vulnerable populations, I believe it is clear that ethical issues in research is a challenging topic to which there are no straightforward answers. It is not insignificant that few researchers in other disciplines are advocating for more guidelines and none seems to be suggesting that a prescriptive set of rules and regulations is needed. Instead, researchers are looking for a space in which they can voice their issues and hear how other researchers have navigated these sometimes murky waters. Ethical issues that are being raised and examined include the notion of free and informed consent, power issues and the researcher-participant relationship, participant voice and awareness of and respect for participants' own cultural values. NNSE participants share many of the same concerns that other participants have, but by virtue of English not being their first language and because they come from a culture other than the dominant one, NNSEs have certain needs that researchers need to take into account when planning, conducting and sharing their research. By looking across disciplines, it seems that one common thread is a very genuine call to researchers to engage in an open dialogue of the ethical issues they encounter when conducting research.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction and Research Questions

Based on the literature reviewed in the previous chapter, the aim of this current study was to explore the ethical issues researchers encounter and take into account when conducting research with NNSE as well as how researchers then address these considerations during the course of their research. This is a topic that has not been adequately addressed in the literature thus far. For this study I have concentrated on researchers working with NNSE participants because there is little in the literature about research with this particular group of participants.

Initially, my goal was to interview primarily educational researchers here at the University of Manitoba both within and outside of the TESL field, but it is this absence of investigation specifically in the TESL field that is of greatest interest to me. However, to broaden my scope I also interviewed researchers from other disciplines at this university who conduct research, albeit not exclusively, with NNSEs. I have explored researchers' perceptions of how working with NNSE participants impacts the ethical issues common to working with human subjects.

Therefore, the overarching questions that guided in this inquiry were:

a) What are the perceived ethical concerns raised when conducting research with NNSE participants, and

b) How are these ethical concerns addressed by researchers during the research process?

The following more specific questions guided this study:

1. What ethical issues are researchers most cognizant of and concerned with when conducting research?

How do researchers address these issues?

2. Does working with NNSE in itself raise different ethical concerns?

How do these ethical issues come into play when conducting research with NNSE participants?

3. To what extent, if at all, do researchers make adjustments in their research process in order to accommodate NNSE?

4. How useful do researchers think an open dialogue among researchers about ethical issues in research would be?

How beneficial would researchers find an open dialogue about the ethical concerns of other researchers and how such concerns are addressed?

In the following section I will explain the methodology and procedures I employed in order to answer these research questions.

This research study employed qualitative research methods, specifically one-on-one interviews, because they allow for insights into participants' beliefs and perceptions of events and experiences. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), the purpose of qualitative inquiry is to investigate the complexity and context of the topics from the understanding of participants rather than from some external source. And so, as a researcher, I need to be concerned with understanding behaviour from the participants' own frame of reference. A characteristic of qualitative research methods that is particularly relevant to this

study is the inductive nature of the analysis of data. Qualitative researchers do not seek out evidence to prove or disprove their hypothesis; instead, theories are built as the data is gathered and grouped together. As so little has been written about the ethical concerns of researchers working with NNSE participants, there exists a real need to let the reflections of the participants of this study inform my understanding of this topic. A theoretical underpinning of qualitative inquiry suggests researchers want to enter the world of participants so as to understand better the meaning participants construct around events in their lives. Fundamental to this approach is the assumption that human experience can only be understood via interpretation. In effect, I was interested in exploring how researchers interpret the research process to differentiate what ethical issues are crucial to researchers and how these issues are addressed.

However, there are many ways of trying to understand the world. In this study, I took a phenomenological approach. According to Van Manen (1990), “phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences. Phenomenology asks, ‘What is this or that kind of experience like?’” (p. 9). Primarily concerned with investigating how human beings make sense of our world, phenomenologists want to understand how we construct meaning in our lives (Bogdan and Kiplen, 2007, p.26). My goal in this research project was to try to understand my participants’ point of view; specifically, I have sought to discover what researchers working with NNSE participants consider to be important ethical considerations. Particularly as I am a novice researcher, I was curious to learn about what it essentially means to be a

researcher who is mindful of ethical concerns relevant to conducting research with NNSEs. For me, this has been a process of discovery and since the individual's own insights (i.e. my participants' perspectives on ethical issues) are key to this study, I believe that a phenomenological approach was well suited to my thesis.

Therefore, I investigated researchers' beliefs about and experiences conducting research through a series of introspective interviews. This has better allowed me "to describe and interpret the experiences of participants in order to understand the 'essence' of experience as *perceived by participants*" (McMillan, 2008, p. 291) and has yielded insights into the individual's perspective on the phenomenon being investigated.

Research Context and Participants

In order to address the research questions listed in the previous section, I recruited six researchers at a western Canadian university who frequently conduct research with NNSE participants. As there are a limited number of researchers at the university who specifically conduct research in the TESL field and, therefore, with NNSEs, I wished to include among my participants both graduate students working with NNSEs and researchers outside the TESL field who conduct research with NNSE participants. Potential participants were first contacted by phone as it more easily allowed for introductions and establishing human rapport. During the initial phone call, I asked prospective participants if I could email them. The email message outlined the study in more detail and invited them to participate. I contacted researchers whose research interests (i.e.

work with NNSEs) coincide with the parameters of this study. With the guidance of my faculty advisor, I was able to compile a list of potential participants. In addition, I recruited participants by using my personal network, as necessary.

I interviewed six participants for my study, all of whom have conducted research at a western Canadian university. Four of the participants are professors at the university, one is a senior administrator and the sixth is a graduate student. Four of the participants are female; two are male. One of the participants has self-identified as NNSE. All of the participants were assigned pseudonyms.

Interviews

After having gained ethics approval and having recruited participants for my study, I scheduled interviews with each participant. Participants were asked to discuss some of the factors they take into account when conducting research with non-native English speakers. Interviews took place at a time agreed upon and convenient for both researcher and participant. As anticipated, each interview took approximately one hour to conduct. Each participant was reminded of the purpose and nature of this study and that their participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time without penalty. Once each interview was transcribed, each participant was given a copy of his or her transcripts so that he or she could member-check the transcripts in order to verify his or her comments. Once each interview was transcribed and member-checked, the data was analyzed for emergent themes. Any clarification and/or elaboration on certain points were addressed in a second interview. Once the interview data was

analyzed individually, all the data was then analyzed comparatively so as to pinpoint any recurring themes.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Since this study included faculty members and graduate students at this western Canadian university who conduct research with NNSE participants, there is a possibility that they might be identified by their particular comments. This is the danger involved in any research study where the population size is limited. In order to address this issue, those who consented to participate were made aware of this possibility and were reassured of efforts taken to ensure the confidentiality of their comments. At the beginning of the initial interviews, participants were reminded that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time in the study without penalty. Had any participant chosen to withdraw from the study, his or her data would have been destroyed. Participants were assured that their responses would be anonymous and that neither their names nor any identifying marks would appear anywhere in the results. Direct quotations were used only if the language did not identify the participant, and pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of participants.

Validity and Reliability

Although with interviews there is little expectation that the results will be generalizable, there is some certainty that the results are valid. Given the diverse backgrounds and experiences of participants, any emerging themes that data from different participants yields would suggest that the results are valid. Internal validity was established through member-checks, at which time participants were

able to add, delete or expand on their collected data. Once a participant's interview had been transcribed, I gave the participant a copy of it, asking the participant to member-check the transcript and allowing him or her some time (generally, a few weeks) to make any changes. With regard to reliability, qualitative research views this as a match between what is recorded in the data and what exists in the real world rather than consistency across different studies examining the same phenomenon or taking place in the same setting. So to maintain reliability, I used qualitative research protocols addressing data analysis and interpretation as outlined by Bogdan and Biklen (2007). I also tried to be cognizant of and upfront about my own personal biases, beliefs and values that I have brought to this research study.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have reviewed the purpose of this study and my research questions. I have presented my theoretical approach as well as the methods I employed. Introspective interviews were used as this is an effective means of gathering data of participants' experiences and their perceptions of those experiences. Since little research has been conducted on the ethical issues surrounding research with NNSEs, it is paramount to investigate first and foremost my participants' (i.e. researchers') views on this topic. In the following chapter, I present the findings of my study.

Chapter 4

Findings

Six researchers at a western Canadian university agreed to take part in this study. They were asked to reflect on the ethical issues that they believe are relevant when conducting research with NNSE. Participants were also asked to discuss the purpose and efficacy of REBs and to consider how beneficial, if at all, some sort of ongoing researcher dialogue about ethical concerns in research might be. Before the findings of these interviews are presented, a brief description of the individual participants of this study is included.

Participants

I interviewed six participants for this study and they are presented here in the order in which they were initially interviewed for this study. Their main research interests and the participants they typically conduct research with are summarized in Table 1. My first participant was Dr. Emma Waverly, who has been conducting research for close to 20 years. We had our initial interview in September 2009 in her office. Her research focuses on literacy and language learning. Dr. Waverly's participants are usually Deaf children. In addition, she has worked with other teachers who may be deaf themselves and therefore NNSEs. We met for a second time in the middle of December 2009.

Two weeks after my first interview with Dr. Waverly, I met with Dr. Carla Markham and then Dr. Donald Bishop. Dr. Markham has been conducting research for fifteen years, nine of which have been as a professor. Her area of specialization is immigration; specifically, she looks at the transition and

Table 1

Breakdown of Participants

Participants for this study	**Research interests and participants**
Dr Emma Waverly	Literacy and language learning Deaf children; collaborates with deaf teachers
Dr Carla Markham	Transition and integration of young and adult immigrants into Canadian society/the labour market
Dr Donald Bishop	Inuit social organization and kinship and the history of Christianity in northern Canada Inuit; the elders of the community
Ms Marlena Stephan	NNSEs who immigrated to Canada as children or teenagers.
Professor Nicole Langtry	Nursing students, often NNSEs
Dr Andrew Kors	Transition of teacher candidates from being students to becoming professionals Teacher-candidates, often international students

integration of young immigrants into Canadian society. She has also conducted research with adult immigrants, studying their transition into the labour market. We had a second interview in the middle of January 2010.

Two days after interviewing Dr. Markham, I interviewed Dr. Donald Bishop, “an old-fashioned anthropologist” who has been doing research for 30 years. His research interests include Inuit social organization and kinship and the history of Christianity in northern Canada. His participants are typically Inuit and

include the elders of the community. We met for a second interview at the beginning of December 2009.

My fourth participant is Ms Marlena Stephan, who is a graduate student. I interviewed Ms Stephan initially in the beginning of November 2009 and then again one month later. She has been conducting research for fourteen years, as a student and as a research assistant. Her current research participants are NNSE who immigrated to Canada as children or teenagers.

Although we had spoken in the fall of 2009, it wasn't until late January 2010 that I interviewed Professor Nicole Langtry. She began her formal research career in 2001 and has conducted research both in Canada and abroad. Her research participants include nursing students and are often NNSE. One week after our initial interview, we met for the follow-up interview.

At approximately the same time I was interviewing Professor Langtry, I also conducted two interviews with my final participant, Dr. Andrew Kors. Dr. Kors is an administrator who has been conducting research for nearly 25 years. Much of his work involves looking at the transition of teacher candidates from being students to becoming professionals. He has studied diverse student populations as many teacher-candidates are international students and have trained overseas.

I will now present the findings of my research, which have been organized into broad themes, which include researchers' definitions of ethics, ethical issues that arise in research in general, issues of language and power, respect for

participants, and moving beyond REBs. The final three themes pertain specifically to research with NNSE.

Defining Ethics

Definitions from an emic perspective. As a starting point, each of the participants was asked to define what ethics means, in practical terms, as a researcher. Although the definitions varied somewhat, at the core of each was a fundamental respect for the participant. (To avoid confusion, I will refer to the participants of my study as “researchers”; and so, “participants” will denote the participants of the researchers’ own research.)

Dr. Waverly emphasized the “idea of respect and making sure that you are valuing the people you are getting information from” (Waverly, interview 1, page 4, lines 75-76). Dr. Markham shared these sentiments, but included the need to be respectful to the community to which the participant belongs. Dr. Bishop also spoke of the community. For him, ethics is shaped by the way the participant’s own community defines and interprets the term. Being ethical is being respectful of that world view, which involves behaving appropriately and respecting the interests of the community. In a similar vein, Ms. Stephan explained that ethics is:

> Respecting every aspect of your participants and being as charitable in your interpretation of the information they’re sharing with you as possible … It’s having the utmost respect for your participants through every aspect of the study, from the questions you ask and the way you design the

> study, and again, how you interpret the information. (Stephan, interview 1, page 3, lines 50-54)

When asked to elaborate on the term “charitable”, Ms Stephan explained that being charitable means having empathy for the participants and “giving them as much as possible” (line 58). And so, Ms. Stephan touched on another component of ethics: the respectful use and interpretation of data, which was mentioned by nearly all of the researchers.

Dr. Waverly spoke of the need to be mindful of how the data is used and to what end. Being ethical as a researcher means using data and knowledge to facilitate the improvement of participants’ lives and not to the detriment of the group in any way. Professor Langtry shares this belief, adding that not taking advantage of participants also means protecting participants’ anonymity and confidentiality and representing participants’ stories “in a way that is as fair as possible, in a way that they intended them[selves] to be represented” (Langtry, interview 1, page 4, lines 91-92). She argues that with NNSE participants, because of their potentially limited use of English, the risk of “misunderstandings or miscommunications” is greater than with native English-speaking participants, so researchers have a greater responsibility to be diligent (line 93).

Half of the researchers also feel ethics involves issues of power and authority. As Dr. Kors explains, behaving as an ethical researcher entails “being aware of some of the power and authority issues that can come into play when conducting research, particularly with vulnerable populations” (Kors, interview 1, page 3, lines 55-57).

Comments such as these suggest that the researchers' understanding of how ethics is defined within the research context is varied and complex, but all of the researchers take into account the very make-up of their own participant populations. Having presented the researchers' views on ethics in research in general, I will now briefly touch on their perspectives on the ethical issues that arise when conducting research with human participants, NNSE or otherwise.

Ethical Issues in Research

Before specifically addressing ethical considerations in research with NNSE, the researchers were asked to discuss the ethical issues that they feel arise when conducting research in general. Although the concerns they have vary considerably, some common issues were raised.

Four of the six researchers spoke of the need to respect their participants' world views and to recognize the context in which the research is being conducted. Dr. Waverly discussed the validity of her participants' world views, which may be different because of participants' personal experiences and which are "central to any research" she does (Waverly, interview 1, page 4, line 87). Dr. Bishop believes that the world views of his participants are integral to his research and he strives to conduct his research responsibly, which means respecting and upholding the interests and values of his participants. Professor Langtry also aims to avoid exploitation of her participants in terms of acknowledging the ideas of her participants. Of key importance to the researcher is "giving credit to [participants] for those ideas in the research project … and not claiming any of those ideas as [her] own" (Langtry, interview 1, page 5, lines 119-

121). Moreover, half of the researchers spoke about the need for accuracy; specifically, they emphasized the need to represent accurately and fairly participants' ideas. I will now present the ethical issues specific to research with NNSE participants, which include language and power, respect for participants, and moving beyond REBs.

Issues of Language and Power

During the course of this study, the close relationship between the issues of language and power for the researchers became apparent. Discussions about language led to discussions about power; similarly, discussions about language involved talk about power. There was a perceptible overlap of these two key areas of concern. For the purposes of simplicity and clarity, I will present these two issues individually, beginning with my findings on language. First, I will present my findings on language used during the research process, the use of English and translation, and the impact of language on consent. I will then address the power dynamic.

Language during the research process. Each of the researchers spoke at some length about the ethical elements of the use of language. Specifically, researchers discussed the possibility of misunderstanding and misrepresentation as well as the advantages and disadvantages of using English and of using translation during the research process. Dr. Waverly pointed out that when there is "more than one language in the [data], there is more room for misinterpretation, for things getting lost in translation" (Waverly, interview 1, pages 6-7, lines 145-146). Dr. Kors echoes this sentiment, warning that when

conducting research with NNSE participants, the researcher has “to be aware that what [the researcher thinks he or she is] hearing may not be exactly what the individual is trying to express” (Kors, interview 1, page 6, lines 142-143). Other researchers suggested the need to make adjustments in terms of language in order to accommodate better NNSEs. Ms. Stephan spoke of the importance of using “appropriate language” and advocates “altering the language just to make it simpler for [participants] to understand” (Stephan, interview 1, page 7, lines 166-167). She is in favor of modifying language, such as the type of academic vocabulary common to research, which may be confusing to some NNSE. Ms. Stephan feels that if researchers want to get good data, their participants need to understand the questions they are being asked. Dr. Kors, too, recognizes that there is considerable terminology, particularly in the field of education, and this may be confusing for some NNSEs. Therefore, he advocates researchers being aware of these challenges for NNSEs and making the language used during the research process more accessible.

Ms. Stephan also encourages prompting to help ensure that participants understand what is being asked of them and are able to respond fully. A NNSE herself, Ms Stephan feels that prompting on the part of the researcher would help her, as a participant, better express herself. She explains:

> It’s always such a stressful situation to work up there with language and ideas at the same time and all that, so even though my English does appear to be quite good, it’s still difficult for me to crunch all that information. At times, I think that if – and I’m not saying that I do need

> [prompting] all the time – if there is an opportunity for that, I think it could be helpful to a participant. (Stephan, interview 2, page 6, lines 142-146)

Two other researchers shared stories about meeting with NNSE students who admitted that they periodically needed prompting. Although, from the researchers' perspectives, these NNSE had very strong English skills, the students themselves felt that they might benefit occasionally from additional prompting or further explanations.

Use of English and translation. When deciding which language to use and how to use it during the research process, there is some disagreement. Some of the researchers interviewed favor the use of English; others prefer to use translation. What is consistent is researchers' concern that both approaches have limitations. Although some researchers were greater advocates than others for one approach over the other, all expressed some reservations for their method of choice.

In discussing the use of English during the research process, all of the researchers acknowledged that there are flaws in conducting interviews in English. A chief concern is participants' levels of comprehension in English and how fluent the participants may or may not be in English. As Dr. Kors points out, if participants are not fluent or proficient in English, "some of the nuances are likely to be lost by the people being interviewed" (Kors, interview 2, page 2, lines 33-34). Dr. Bishop also believes that "there are always problems whether [the participants] actually really understand what [the researcher is] talking about" (Bishop, interview 2, page 3, lines 51-52). Moreover, Professor Langtry feels that

the data may be diminished in-so-far as participants' responses may be more simplistic, lacking the depth to which they could communicate in their first languages. Their answers might merely reflect what they have the capacity to say. As Dr. Waverly explains, for NNSE, there may be parts of themselves that remain missing. The danger is that participants may not feel able to represent their "true" selves or feel at home in English. Dr. Markham argues that because most people can express themselves better in their first language, the use of English might limit some NNSE participants and, consequently, the data that is collected.

However, Professor Langtry sees some possible benefits to using English with NNSE participants. She feels that participants with less proficiency in English may lack the competency in English "to dodge the question" and, therefore, may answer the researcher's questions more directly. She argues that the data, in turn, may be richer than the data from a participant who "dances around … a concept and never really puts [his or her] finger on it" (Langtry, interview 2, page 3, lines 71-72). Dr. Waverly also finds that even though the use of English may limit how some NNSE express themselves, the data can still be rich. The data may provide valuable information about "how [participants] use the English that they do have and even some of the word choices or the ways they express themselves" (Waverly, interview 2, page 3, lines 55-56). The challenge, however, is to determine whether a certain word or phrase used is a reflection of a limited vocabulary or a deliberate choice. In either case, conducting interviews

in English may give the researcher some insight into the participant's familiarity with and interaction in the English language.

Moreover, two of the researchers saw some benefits in using English during the research process when conducting interviews with younger NNSE. Both Dr. Markham and Ms Stephan argue that young NNSE can often communicate more easily and fluently in English, depending on how much exposure they have had to English. In some instances, the preference of young NNSE participants to use English may not simply stem from an ease of comfort but also from a desire on the part of the participants to *show* that they are comfortable in English. In this type of situation, using English may allow researchers greater understanding of their participants.

An alternative to using English during the research process is to use translation and translators or interpreters. The researchers' degree of enthusiasm with the use of translation was varied. However, each acknowledged limitations with this approach as well.

One concern that several of the researchers raised is the quality of the translation. All translations are not created equal; nor are all translators or interpreters. Several of the researchers suggested that the quality of the translation rests, in part, with the particular translator. Dr. Waverly pointed out that professional translators and interpreters "follow a code of ethics – they're very confidential, they're very true to the message, they understand all those principles that would be very similar in collecting research" (Waverly, interview 2, page 3, lines 72-74). However, researchers occasionally work with translators

who may not be formally trained or familiar with the ethical principles governing translation. In such a case, it is the responsibility of the researcher to make them aware of these issues. Dr. Markham explains that sometimes the researcher will work with the community to identify a potential translator, but that person may not be a professionally-trained translator. In addition, there may be a variety of dialects within a given community, which might prove problematic for the translator. Dr. Waverly also cautions against working with translators who are family members or friends of the participants as their roles may become confused, which may, in turn, impact negatively on the data. Professor Langtry is also concerned about the potential relationship between the participant and the translator. She feels that:

> If the interpreter is your participant's colleague or boss or has a higher or lower position of power to yourself or the participant, that can influence what the interpreter reports or what they feel they are at liberty to report either to you or on behalf of the participant. So it's very hard to come across a neutral translator. (Langtry, interview 2, pages 4-5, lines 96-100)

Working with translators also raises issues of trust. Dr. Markham worries about the trust that may or may not exist between the participant and the translator if the translator is someone the participant knows. In addition, participant anonymity may be compromised if the translator is drawn from the participant's community. Dr. Bishop also stresses the importance of working with a translator whom the researcher knows well and with whose work the

researcher is very familiar. Central to this idea is the degree of trust that is built between the researcher and the translator.

Another limitation to the use of translation may be the translator's lack of understanding or familiarity with the concepts discussed during the research process. Four of the six researchers expressed their concerns that a translator might not understand what the researcher is trying to investigate. As Dr. Kors explains, "the translator may be able to translate language but may not understand the broader context of the study and the broader intent of the study". The researchers emphasized the responsibility on the part of the researcher to ensure that the translator understands well what a given research project entails. However, Professor Langtry cautions that the research may be compromised if the translator is "briefed" too much beforehand and afterwards.

Another difficulty with translation is that much translation is done "on the fly" and some meaning – either the researcher's and/or the participant's – may get lost in the process. There is always the risk that the translator, however unintentionally, may "use [his or her] cultural lens to put additional meaning" to the translation, according to Dr. Waverly (Waverly, interview 2, page 4, lines 87-88). At best, Ms Stephan worries that researchers "may not have that first-hand access to [the participants'] thoughts or feelings because they are being filtered through" (Stephan, interview 2, page 1, lines 23-24).

In discussing some of the limitations of translation, several of the researchers argued that translation, nevertheless, may be necessary. To address some of the ethical concerns discussed here, several of the researchers employ

what Professor Langtry terms a “double-blind” method, whereby a translation is done of an interview or questionnaire, for example, by one translator and another translator either translates that first translation back into English or confirms the initial translation. Such a method can be costly and time consuming, warn several researchers. Dr. Bishop maintains that if the researcher is familiar with the participant’s language, the researcher is better able to minimize some of these challenges. But Dr. Kors feels that even if the researcher were to do the translation him- or herself, there could still be “a potential for misunderstandings, misinterpretation” (Kors, interview 2, page 3, line 55).

Consent. The ethics surrounding language was also made apparent when the researchers addressed the issue of consent. Several of the researchers spoke of the need to consider the language that is used when attempting to obtain consent from NNSE participants. The discussions around consent seemed to centre on issues of power and how the power dynamic manifests itself in the ways in which consent is realized.

With respect to language, Dr. Markham questions whether some NNSE have the English skills necessary for making sense of the concept of consent and all that it entails. She prefers to have the consent form translated into the participant’s language of choice, which can be both time-consuming and expensive. Dr. Bishop is skeptical as to how much some of his Inuit participants understand about the legal aspects of consent, even when a translation is provided. He argues that “a lot of this technical, legal stuff is just meaningless in Inuktitut” (Bishop, interview 1, page 11, lines 251-252). And so, translation in

itself may not address these types of concerns. Issues of consent may involve both concerns about language as well as concerns about cultural differences which, in turn, must also be taken into account. For some cultural groups, the very idea of a signed consent form may seem foreign and culturally inappropriate. As Dr. Bishop explains:

> And the whole consent process up North is very different. They're not that interested in signing these forms and they will say to you, listen. If I want to talk to you, I will. And if I agree to talk to you and I tell you anything, then by definition I've agreed you can use the material. (Bishop, interview 1, pages 9-10, lines 217-220)

Dr. Markham shares some of these concerns and worries that, for some cultural groups, the consent form gets the researcher "started off on the wrong foot" (Markham, interview 1, page 15, line 343). If it is perceived as some kind of legal document, participants may become suspicious. Yet Dr. Markham worries that some participants, despite their reservations, may feel less empowered to question the researcher or to opt out of participating in the research. Professor Langtry also feels that consent may raise participants' suspicions, depending on their cultural backgrounds. Some participants may not feel very trusting of authorities. In her experience, some of her participants "have left their country for a reason, and they don't have a lot of the same trust" in authority figures that some of their Canadian counterparts have (Langtry, interview 1, page 9, lines 205-206). And so, they may not feel very comfortable signing a consent form. She also believes that some participants may be more questioning of the

researcher, particularly with regards to who is going to have access to the research and how it is going to be used.

Dr. Kors agrees that the concept of consent may have different connotations in participants' home countries. He therefore believes that the onus is on researchers to "untangle" what consent means before participants are asked to consent to participate in a given research project. He worries that some international students, who come from countries, for example, "where the government is much more authoritarian and there could really be repercussions for withdrawing [from a research project], not only for them but for their families", may not feel able to withdraw from a research project (Kors, interview 1, page 8, lines 173-175). And he believes, in part because his international students are often keen to comply to the requests that are made of them within the faculty, researchers must "be even more vigilant" in what they ask of potential participants and how certain aspects of the research process, such as consent, are presented. I will now present my findings on the issue of power.

The Power dynamic. In discussing consent, several researchers mentioned the perceived power differential between the researcher and the participant, which appears to be more pronounced when working with NNSE participants. As Professor Langtry explains:

> Power is huge in the research process. The person who inevitably has the most power is the researcher, and the participant, while their ideas may be valued, are inevitably in a more vulnerable position in sharing their information. (Langtry, interview 2, page 5, lines 114-116)

Many of the researchers feel the power dynamic manifests itself in what motivates participants to agree to participate in the research. For all the researchers, considering why NNSE participants agree to take part in a given research project is important.

Dr. Waverly worries that the difference in language ability in English between the researcher and the participant may inadvertently create an imbalance of power and, therefore, result in pressure on NNSE participants to participate. She worries that “simply because I am a native speaker of English and you are not might set up a [sort of] therefore what-I-say-you-must-do … kind of pressure” on participants to participate, resulting from a perceived difference in power (Waverly, interview 2, page 5, lines 99-101). Dr. Markham worries that the pressure to participate may stem from the fact that the research is connected to a university. She argues that:

> In some places, the university is held in very high esteem; and so, being asked to be in a research project is coercive in and of itself in the mind of the person who you’re approaching because how can you say no to a university. (Markham, interview 2, page 4, lines 84-87)

Dr. Markham cautions, though, that this is not likely to be true for all participants and/or cultural groups.

While Dr. Bishop agrees that with NNSE participants there is often an imbalance of power, he cites additional possible sources of that imbalance. He looks to Canada’s colonial past and the fact that researchers were “part of the colonialization apparatus [and] had power over the people [they] were working

with" (Bishop, interview 2, page 4, lines 83-84). Although there has been a shift to trying to give some of the power back to Aboriginal participants and their communities, Dr. Bishop maintains that researchers still have a considerable degree of power. In particular, he points to the resources, financial and otherwise, that allow researchers to engage in research.

Dr. Kors feels that the power balance may influence participants' reasons for taking part in the research, particularly when a researcher conducts research on his or her own students. He feels that if he were to conduct research on his own students, many international students would feel obligated to participate in order to please him. In such a case, Dr. Kors would not directly conduct interviews but have another researcher collect the data as an attempt to minimize the power dynamic. Dr. Kors feels that researchers who are also educators must be very cognizant of this and strive "to make clear to potential participants [who are NNSE students] that their chances for success down the road are not tied to their participation" (Kors, interview 2, page 5, line 116-118). However, he is unsure whether researchers can ever do enough to help prospective participants not feel obligated.

Dr. Kors also touches on the cultural dimension of power, which is an issue a majority of the researchers interviewed addressed. He recognizes that, in certain cultures, there is greater "deference to people in authority positions than in Canada" (Kors, interview 2, page 3, lines 68-69). And so, researchers need to be aware of the possible mindset of participants, who may be very sensitive to this imbalance of power. He stresses:

> So I think we have to be cognizant of the roles that we play within certain institutions and at least have a cursory understanding of the role that authority plays in certain cultures that are different than ours. (Kors, interview 2, page 4, lines 74-76)

Dr. Markham echoes these sentiments. She also feels that researchers want to minimize the power gap between researcher and participant, but she recognizes that “it is a cultural thing as well” (Markham, interview 2, page 4, line 83). Though not necessarily true for all cultures, a power gap may exist for some between the researcher and the participant, perhaps because of the researcher’s affiliation with a university or some government institution. But Dr. Markham cautions that:

> I don’t think the power relationship is unique to this context. It’s a problem throughout all of research. The mystique of the university is reducing greatly … I think that’s a good thing, but it just makes the job of the researcher more difficult – but in a good way. I think you want people to be critical. That said, I also find that newcomers are less likely to be critical. (Markham, interview 2, page 4, lines 90-96)

Similarly, Professor Langtry is aware of the role the participant’s cultural framework may play in issues of power. She believes that “some cultural groups and some individuals will see that power differential to a greater or lesser degree” (Langtry, interview 2, page 6, lines 134-135). And so, the researcher must be aware of these differences in perception. One way to do this, Professor Langtry suggests, is to ask participants about their reasons for taking part in a research study.

Dr. Bishop looks at the issues of power and culture from a slightly different perspective. In considering the power imbalance between researcher and participant, he acknowledges that, for different cultural groups, “there are very different notions of power and who has power” (Bishop, interview 2, page 4, lines 96-97). Being a good researcher involves making sense of this cultural dimension to power and working within these parameters. Understanding the power (im)balance between people within the same cultural group – who does and does not have power within a cultural group or community – may help the researcher better understand how the power dynamic can impact the research process.

Respecting Participants

Understanding how culture may impact the perceived power imbalance between researcher and participant and trying to minimize that imbalance suggest a respect on the part of the researcher for his or her participants. As the interviews with the researchers progressed, the fundamental respect they have for participants became more and more apparent. In the following section, I will share the researchers’ views on the need for familiarity with participants’ own languages and/or cultures, ways of recognizing the values of participants and their cultural groups, and ways of capturing participants’ voices.

Familiarity with participants’ languages and cultures. All of the researchers agreed that some sensitivity towards participants’ own languages and/or cultures is called for. Dr. Bishop is adamant that the researcher be familiar enough with the participants’ language to work in that language. Though the researcher

doesn't need to be fluent in the language, he or she has to be "competent enough to know what's going on" (Bishop, interview 2, page 1, lines 22-23). He maintains that "very different world views are carried in language", so the researcher needs to have an understanding of the participants' languages (Bishop, interview 2, page 2, lines 31-32). He offers the following example:

> I know that in Inuktitut, for example, the verbs clearly distinguish how somebody came about knowing something, which is important in Inuktitut and it's important for the people, whether they know from it from their own personal experience, whether they know it second-hand, whether it's hearsay, whether it comes from a traditional story – all that stuff is marked. One, if you don't know the importance of that, and two, if you don't speak the language, you're likely to miss all that. (Bishop, interview 2, page 2, lines 32-38)

Dr. Waverly argues that while it may not be necessary to be fluent in each participant's first language, familiarity helps – particularly when looking at linguistic behaviours, such as discourse patterns. Dr. Kors agrees with Dr. Waverly that there is some benefit in knowing something about participants' languages. This knowledge gives the researcher "more sense of context and perspective" (Kors, interview 2, page 1, lines 15-16). He believes that "it helps to be able to understand the nuances of what [participants] have to say" (Kors, interview 2, page 1, lines 13-14). However, he recognizes the challenges of trying to be conversant in "the myriad of languages and cultures" researchers working with NNSE participants are likely to encounter; he feels that the

“combinations are too great” (Kors, interview 2, page 1, line 26). Dr. Markham also questions whether it is possible to know all of participants’ languages. However, she argues that if a researcher is going to devote his or her life to the study of one particular cultural group, then the researcher should immerse him- or herself in both the culture and the language. Ms Stephan and Professor Langtry, in contrast, are not certain that the researcher needs to be very familiar with participants’ languages.

However, all of the researchers agree that the researcher should be familiar with participants’ cultures. As Professor Langtry explains:

> It certainly would be a lot more helpful if you had some understanding at least of the culture and the cultural context from which the individual looks at the world and the particular concept you’re investigating. (Langtry, interview 2, page 1, lines 15-17)

Dr. Markham suggests that some cultural awareness helps the researcher appreciate which questions, for example, might be considered intrusive or inappropriate by some cultural groups. As Ms Stephan points out, the researcher doesn’t want to offend participants, so some cultural awareness is useful. Professor Langtry has found that having some cultural awareness helps her to “understand [her participants’] frame of reference in situating their comments” (Langtry, interview 2, page 1, line 24). As does Ms. Stephan, Professor Langtry encourages asking participants questions about their culture, but she cautions that the researcher might only get perceptions rather than “truth”. Nevertheless,

all of the researchers interviewed agree that some understanding about participants' cultures is preferable to none.

Acknowledging the participants' values and those of the cultural group or community. Recognizing and acknowledging within the research project the participants' values and those of the cultural group or community to which they belong is of importance to all of the researchers interviewed. Most of the researchers advise learning something about participants' cultures beforehand while recognizing that it is not possible to learn everything. Dr. Kors believes that one of the best ways to acknowledge and respect the values of participants and their cultural groups is "to have some understanding of the particular culture and some of the norms within that culture so that you can show a respect or deference to them during the research process" (Kors, interview 2, page 8, lines 175-157). Ms Stephan advocates, for example, reading up on participants' cultures so as to be better informed and therefore less likely to offend participants. She adds:

> I think it's worth asking when you don't understand something – it may have something to do with their values and their culture. If you're not sure, just make sure that you understand. And I think that's paying respect to your participants. I think that's what you owe your participants – to make sure you understand them correctly. And so, that's one way of valuing their cultural background. (Stephan, interview 2, page 4, lines 92-96)

Dr. Markham advises that it is not enough that a researcher is informed about participants' cultural norms if the research assistants or interviewers are not. She feels that it is, therefore, the researcher's job to get them "up to speed".

All of the researchers spoke about the occasional disparity between what the researcher considers appropriate and what the participant feels is appropriate, as it pertains to the research process. One potential area of discord that Drs Waverly and Markham address is the researcher's qualifications to conduct the research. In Dr. Waverly's experience, the parents of the deaf children who usually make up her participants may not consider the educational qualifications, the experience conducting research or the background knowledge of the subject being investigated as "appropriate" if, for example, the researcher is a hearing person who is not working with a deaf researcher, interviewer or assistant, or has not been recommended personally by someone within the deaf community. Although Dr. Waverly is quick to point out that it is somewhat unconventional by standard protocols, the researcher's "school background, family background, [and] hearing status are important things to mention when [the researcher] first [meets] deaf people" (Waverly, interview 1, page 11, lines 262-263). So with some NNSE, particularly within the deaf community, she needs to introduce herself in different ways than she would normally do with non-deaf participants. Although working primarily with immigrant NNSE participants, Dr. Markham has similarly noticed that her qualifications can at times be assessed quite differently by her participants, depending on their cultural values. For example, when working with some immigrant populations, an interviewer

may be immediately asked where he or she was born or, if Canadian-born, where his or her parents were born. Although these types of questions – including others about race, religion and ethnicity – a researcher typically would not ask when hiring interviewers, they highlight the ethical concerns the researcher must take into account. “This is just the research process around non-English speakers and how you handle that sort of thing”, Dr. Markham explains (Markham, interview 1, page 18, lines 428-429). She also finds that interviewers may be expected “to divulge some information” to participants about their own backgrounds and experiences, particularly when interviewers and participants come from the same cultural group (page 19, lines 452-453).

Another possible area of disparity includes what participants consider to be appropriate researcher and participant behaviours, which frequently vary from standard research protocols. Half of the researchers spoke specifically about the ways and means of asking questions and how this relates to discourse patterns in participants’ cultures. Dr. Waverly explains:

> You know, there are different ways that people interact. We’re very used to a question-answer kind of format whereas other cultures may be more of a … You might ask them something or state a topic and it seems very circular or round-about and they might start telling a story about it, and I think there should be some awareness of that. They’ll get around to it – the topic will come up – but it’s not going to be in the way that you might be used to. (Waverly, interview 2, page 8, lines 185-190)

Dr. Waverly urges researchers to be aware of and respectful of the different ways of interacting in participants' cultures so as to avoid possible conflict with participants' cultural beliefs and values.

Dr. Bishop maintains that working, for example, in Inuktitut with Inuit participants is not simply a matter of language but a matter of culture as well. He explains:

> But it's not so much the language but the sort of … How do you put it? I don't like using the word, but the sort of cultural framework … that's more of an issue. It's very rude in Inuktitut to ask direct questions. And so, to ask people direct questions is just not appropriate and could be quite an affront. The other thing is that it's also very rude in Inuktitut to refuse anybody if they ask you something directly. (Bishop, interview 1, page 17, lines 390-395)

Dr Bishop thinks that the researcher needs to be sensitive to the differences between what the researcher sees as appropriate and what is culturally appropriate for the participant. Dr. Markham, too, feels that it is important for the researcher to have some understanding of the ways of responding with which participants are most comfortable. She believes:

> If you go to a community where a survey would be a foreign thing to them, you might not be getting the best information and it might be a bit exploitive, too, because you're putting them in a position where they feel forced to answer all of the questions when in fact they don't have to. So the mode of administration ought to be geared toward the way the

> respondent feels most comfortable. (Markham, interview 2, page 7, lines 158-162)

Dr Markham suggests some flexibility on the part of the researcher to help address this consideration. Ms Stephan shares this belief, advising that researchers not offend participants “with questions that they may not want to answer or if the way of asking questions is too direct or too stringent in [the researcher’s] approach to the interview” (Stephan, interview 2, page 5, lines 111-113).

Research protocols and the cultural values of participants may vary in other ways. For example, time is a relative concept and value. Professor Langtry finds that she has had to be flexible with respect to time:

> Many of the interviews didn’t start on time, many of the interviews got rescheduled, many of the interviews were interrupted because that was just part of the normal flow of that particular culture. (Langtry, interview 2, page 8, lines 186-189)

In addition, Dr Bishop points out that although researchers are required to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, many Aboriginal elders are not concerned with either confidentiality or anonymity; they often wish to be acknowledged for their words. So Dr Bishop feels that:

> One of the things we [researchers] do really need to work on is honouring the elders who teach us and treating them as scholars in their own right and in their own context and referencing them appropriately. Now, that means different ways of referencing, but that’s okay. So the business

> around anonymity and confidentiality shouldn't be assumed. (Bishop, interview 2, page 8, lines 178-181)

Dr. Waverly and Professor Langtry have similarly found that sometimes their participants do not want to be anonymous nor are concerned with confidentiality.

A related issue is the disclosure of ideas. Professor Langtry argues that what researchers feel are appropriate questions may not be appropriate for some participants, which may impact on "participants' willingness to disclose information" (Langtry, interview 2, page 7, lines 162-163). Some participants, for cultural reasons, might not be as comfortable discussing certain aspects of their culture, community or history, for example, as their Canadian counterparts, so researchers need to be sensitive to this potential difference. Dr. Markham believes that participants' degree of willingness to talk may be a consequence of gender roles and the expectations attached to these roles within certain cultures. She points out that, in some cultures, women are not permitted to talk to men, or, if this is permissible, husbands may insist on staying in the room while their wives are being interviewed. This becomes an ethical issue to take into account when conducting interviews.

Both Drs Markham and Bishop spoke about rituals and expectations surrounding food. Dr. Markham advises that the researcher may be invited into the participant's home and asked to partake in a meal. In such a case, a refusal on the part of the researcher would likely be seen as an affront by some cultural groups. For some, the researcher is a guest of honour and there are social protocols that must be followed. Dr. Markham feels that this involves

understanding the community. Dr. Bishop has found that the researcher may be expected to take part in a “feast” when working within some northern Canadian communities; the researcher may be asked to bring, prepare and share in the eating of the meal. Dr Bishop explains that this protocol is part of the research process in these settings and that the researcher has to be prepared to engage in this kind of cultural protocol.

A related issue is the giving of gifts. Whereas some of the researchers mentioned that giving gifts is standard practice in some cultures, others have found that some groups may be uncomfortable, for example, with receiving honoraria. In either situation, the researcher needs some flexibility and sensitivity to the cultural norms of the participants.

Another aspect of recognizing and acknowledging the values of participants and/or their cultural groups is being open-minded when interpreting the research data and presenting the findings. Dr Waverly cautions researchers against filtering the findings through our own biases and preferences:

> I think you can present your findings through your cultural lens and be quite judgmental about behaviours or answers or things that come up, and I don’t think that it’s appropriate as a researcher. I think what you need to do is also help people – readers, or whoever you might be distributing this to – get an understanding of why they have certain values or cultures and why they’re there for. And so, it’s not presented as, this is so different from us. Well, you can present it as a difference, but don’t put a negative judgment on that difference. (Waverly, interview 2, page 9, lines 198-204)

She believes that bringing awareness or “curiosity” without judgment to a different cultural group through the research is being respectful and, ultimately, ethical.

Professor Langtry shares this belief. She spoke about the care she takes, as a researcher, to “be a neutral observer or report those values that came out in the research in a neutral way, especially when certain values … were not [her] own” (Langtry, interview 2, page 8, lines 172-174). She feels that not being judgmental or forcing her own cultural values is essential to respecting participants’ values. Dr Markham echoes this sentiment, warning that researchers cannot “force [our] cultural norms” (Markham, interview 2, page 9, line 199). Dr Kors, too, offers a similar caution:

> There are certain institutional norms that we often – whether we agree with them or not – just take for granted, and we don’t always think about how those protocols are perceived by the people that we’re conducting research on or with. So I think that’s an ethical aspect that we do as researchers. (Kors, interview 2, page 9, lines 205-208)

It would seem that acknowledging and respecting the values of participants and their cultural norms is a multifaceted challenge but one that each of the researchers interviewed sees as crucial to conducting research ethically.

Capturing participants’ voices. Integral to showing respect for participants is “capturing” their voices. Most of the researchers feel that capturing participants’ voices accurately and fairly, is a challenging yet important endeavor. As Ms Stephan pointed out:

> It's very much an intuitive thing and you have to be in the moment dealing with it. (Stephan, interview 2, page 3, lines 72-73)

Nevertheless, the researchers interviewed shared some of the strategies they typically employ.

The most frequently mentioned strategy used to capture participants' voices is the use of direct quotes in the dissemination of the findings. Dr. Waverly believes very strongly in "quoting … participants to let their voices come through" (Waverly, interview 2, page 6, line 128). Dr. Kors also finds that "in the final manuscript, anecdotal comments from the individual participants of the study" are essential to capturing that voice (Kors, interview 2, page 6, lines 134-135). While the comments of Drs Waverly and Kors are reflective of this group of researchers, several of the researchers also discussed some challenges involved in the use of direct quotes.

Half of the researchers spoke about the need to provide some context to the quotations from participants. Dr. Markham warned that it is always possible to take quotations out of context. She explains:

> I think direct quotes are good, though. I certainly use them quite frequently in my research, especially when using mixed methods of data collection. You may find that what was discussed in an interview, if you're using direct quotes, can really help you understand … But I think trying to get the context in which those words were used … because you don't want to fall into the trap of being a bad journalist where they take your words out

> of context. There's always that danger, too. (Markham, interview 2, page 6, lines 134-141)

Dr. Bishop shares the belief that providing some sense of context is the responsibility of the researcher. He feels that:

> Those transcriptions are good and they're powerful, but I don't think that captures enough and I think we have to spend a fair bit of time in our writing trying to draw the picture, draw the context, get a sense of who the person is and why they're speaking, and all of that kind of stuff. So I think we need to work a little harder at that. (Bishop, interview 2, page 6, lines 128-131)

Dr. Bishop maintains that participants' voices should be placed in the forefront, but they must be contextualized. He acknowledges that there have been many instances in past research where the voices of NNSE participants have been misunderstood and misused, but he is not sure how to solve this problem.

With regards to context, Dr. Waverly feels that some language context may be needed when providing direct quotes from NNSE participants whose grammar, for example, may be imperfect. She explains her concerns:

> I believe very strongly in quoting your participants to let their voices come through. So you have EAL speakers using bad grammar. How does that portray them in terms of a source? … I don't think it's appropriate to keep it in that way in terms of if it's a minor problem [but] then sometimes I do because it's truer to their voice and it doesn't distract the reader from the content. However, if you have something that is broken or – these terms

> all sound so negative – something that comes across and doesn't really reflect the person's intellect or understanding or what they feel, then I think it's okay to correct some of that. (Waverly, interview 2, page 6, lines 127-136)

She argues that it is acceptable to "fix" the language as long as doing so does not alter or detract from the meaning. On the other hand, what may be grammatically incorrect may be very telling as well. Dr. Waverly thinks that "some of those turns of phrases or the ways [participants] use language do show their uniqueness and their experience of different cultures and how they put that together" (Waverly, interview 2, page 6, lines 143-145). In such a situation, this can help the researcher let the voice of participants come through, although, Dr. Waverly admits, this can be a challenge for the researcher.

In discussing the difficulty of capturing accurately and fairly participants' voices, the issue of translation was raised again. Dr. Markham feels that participants' voices get "filtered" through the translator. The translator's experiences and beliefs may get interwoven with the translation; therefore, participants' voices may be partially lost. Dr. Bishop feels that translation can sometimes diminish the power or eloquence of what the participants have expressed. He sees some merit in recording and then transcribing interviews with NNSE participants because transcriptions can be powerful, but researchers need to contextualize participants' comments. To help provide some language context, Dr. Waverly sometimes glosses words in the participant's language, particularly when a word-for-word translation does not allow the meaning to come through.

Professor Langtry and Ms Stephan both acknowledge the crucial role member-checks play in representing participants' voices. Professor Langtry feels it is important to let NNSE participants read and verify interview transcripts. She also thinks the researcher should continually ask for clarification and give participants the opportunity to elaborate or explain their ideas. Ms Stephan feels that member-checks of translations should perhaps be part of the research process. She wonders:

> Maybe that's something that should be part of it – part of one of the triangulation methods because, yeah, this is what you said, but are you happy with the way I interpreted it. (Stephan, interview 2, page 4, lines 77-78)

Professor Langtry, Ms Stephan and Dr. Markham see that time also impacts on the process of capturing participants' voices. Professor Langtry recognizes that NNSE participants whose English proficiency is low may need "a lot more time … to express their ideas" (Langtry, interview 1, page 6, line 142). Additional time may be required if the researcher needs more clarification from NNSE participants. For Professor Langtry, it is of the utmost importance that the researcher not manipulate the participants' words or ideas into what the researcher wants or expects them to be. Ms Stephan feels that extra time is sometimes needed for NNSE participants "to crunch all that information" surrounding the research project and their involvement in it, even when NNSE participants are very proficient in English (Stephan, interview 2, page 6, line 144). She believes that prompting can also help participants to express themselves

better, which requires still more time. Dr Markham feels that more time is sometimes needed between when the interview (conducted in the participant's language) takes place and when the translation is done. She finds that if the translation does not take place immediately and there is some time for the translator to reflect before completing the translation, the researcher has "a stronger chance of getting that full voice" (Markham, interview 2, page 5, line 109).

The discussions about how best to capture participants' voices led to a surprising observation: half of the researchers briefly touched on the fact that capturing the voices of native English speaking participants can also be challenging. When transcribing an interview with a native English speaker, it is possible to lose some of the participant's meaning. Language is an imperfect means of communication, so something may still get lost as language travels from the participant to the researcher and vice-versa. As Dr Markham explains:

> But I also don't think it's possible to get "the true voice" when you're speaking the same language because words have to filter through your brain as the speaker and they filter through the brain of the receiver as well, and so, we each have slightly different meanings behind our words. (Markham, interview 2, page 6, lines 123-126)

It would seem, however, that this challenge is magnified when working with NNSE participants.

Finally, two researchers offered a cautionary note: Dr. Bishop and Dr. Kors each warned that while it is important to strive to capture the voice of any

individual participant, it is equally essential not to take that voice and suggest it is representative of all NNSE participants who belong to the same cultural group. Dr. Bishop explains that “each person is going to speak to the cultural context slightly differently” (Bishop, interview 2, page 8, lines 185-186). Dr. Kors agrees, warning that researchers must not send the message that all NNSE participants “speak with the same voice” (Kors, interview 2, page 6, line 138). To do so would be to diminish the voices of NNSE participants.

REBs and Beyond

Any discussions about ethics with researchers affiliated with a university must inevitably lead to the subject of REBs, the organizations responsible for screening researchers’ research proposals in order to ensure that research projects are conducted in an ethical fashion according to a set of defined ethical standards. All of the researchers interviewed are familiar with the process of obtaining approval from these university boards. Although their reflections on the REB covered a wide spectrum, the responses of each researcher were impassioned. In this section, I will present the researchers’ perceptions of the flaws of REBs, their ideas on how to improve REBs, the role of colleague support, and an open dialogue among researchers.

The Flaws of REBs. The researchers offered their perceptions of what the role of the REB should be. Five of the six researchers feel that the purpose of the review board is to protect participants. As Ms Stephan explains, the role of the REB is:

> The protection of the participants, pretty much. I think it's really ensuring that participants are informed, that they know everything they need to know before they start, and ensuring that participants' rights are not infringed upon. Basically, it's just protecting people. (Stephan, interview 1, page 5, lines 109-112)

Four of the remaining researchers share this sentiment. In a similar vein, Dr. Waverly feels that the REB "protects those professionals and allows vulnerable people not to be taken advantage of" (Waverly, interview 1, page 5, line 119). She includes the need to provide protection for the researcher. In addition, several researchers spoke specifically about upholding ethical standards. Dr. Markham feels that "the role of the research ethics review board should be to ensure that researchers are following ethical standards, that their participants are protected" (Markham, interview 1, page 6, lines 137-138). Professor Langtry agrees, explaining that "the board is meant to protect the participant and to ensure that the research is done in a way that is ethical and valid and produces the best possible, highest quality research" (Langtry, interview 1, page 7, lines 159-161). Dr. Kors finds that the role of the REB includes a responsibility to ensure that the researcher is informed of ethically appropriate behaviour, stating:

> The safeguards are in place so that people are treated in an ethical way, so that people who are conducting research are highly aware of what these issues are. (Kors, interview 1, page 5, lines 112-114)

Although most of the researchers discussed what the role of the REB is –

or is meant to be – their assessments of REBs were mixed and the discussions often became very impassioned.

Only two of the researchers spoke positively about REBs. One researcher explained that:

> We can't do without [the REB]. I think it's essential. And, for the most part, fundamentally, I really believe that research ethics boards are very important and serve a very valid role in the whole process. I mean, you just have to look at the things that were done in the name of research before and the number of vulnerable people that were taken advantage of. So that's really why they're there – to protect that and not allow that to happen again. And I think they do do that. (Waverly, interview 1, page 5, lines 104-109)

Another explained that although it is "an imperfect process", REBs are still necessary and serve an important purpose. The researcher added that the process can be "frustrating" at times, but this researcher feels strongly that "in the end, one is a better researcher" for having gone through the research submission process (Kors, interview 1, page 5, lines 119-120).

And this perhaps touches on what all of the researchers feel, to varying degrees: namely, that the process of submitting research proposals to the respective REB is flawed. One researcher spoke of personal frustration and called the application procedure "a waste of time". In fact, several researchers described their frustration in dealing with REBs, citing several different reasons for their frustration. Some described the application process as "a power

struggle" pitting researcher against REB. One feels that the REB "ends up being a road block in the process rather than an opportunity to teach [the] researcher how to do research better" (Langtry, interview 1, page 8, lines 191-192). Many spoke about the time needed to go through the application process, from submission to final approval. Frequently under time constraints, many researchers feel that the entire process is too time-consuming; specifically, receiving feedback and then obtaining final approval can take far too long. Others feel that the nature of the feedback is often problematic. One researcher pointed out that there is a subjective dimension to the procedure as people make up the review boards; although there are guidelines for board members, "there are always individual interpretations" (Waverly, interview 1, page 5, line 112). Another researcher feels that the feedback that is given is often comprised of methodological comments rather than ethical comments. The researcher elaborates:

> And then the commentary that comes back from the REB … are methodological comments, they're not ethical comments at all. So, you know, a preference for doing research methodology this way as opposed to this way … that's not an ethical concern, it's the way that you collect the data and, quite frankly, the role of the REB shouldn't tell you how to do research. (Markham, interview 1, page 7, lines 158-164)

What seems clear from the majority of the researchers' comments and reflections is that researchers believe that REBs are not entirely successful in fulfilling their mandates. In fact, most of the researchers were very critical of

REBs at times, regretting that REBs “stall” or “block” research and calling REBs “a detriment to research” and “a point of discouragement” and even “utterly useless”. There is a discrepancy between what the researchers believe is the purpose of REBs – which, incidentally, most of the researchers see as valid – and what the REBs actually achieve. Next, I will present the researchers’ ideas on how to improve REBs.

Making REBs better. The researchers’ reflections on their own personal experiences with REBs led to some suggestions on how to help REBs better address the ethical considerations here discussed. Although their views differ somewhat, there is some commonality. Most of the researchers spoke about the need for more sensitivity on the part of REBs towards research with NNSE participants. Two of the researchers were quick to point out that even though researchers may not expressly set out to interview NNSE participants, given the current make-up of the Canadian populace, it may not be possible to conduct research without some NNSE being among the participants. Professor Langtry believes that many board members on REBs do not have first-hand experience working with NNSE participants, so including a board member who has such specialized knowledge or experience “may be useful to the process” (Langtry, interview 2, page 10, line 229). She feels that such a person could be responsible for considering some of the issues raised during the course of this study.

Dr. Markham feels that it would be useful to have someone on the board who is familiar with cross-cultural research. She explains:

> It would be handy to have somebody on an REB who knows about these kinds of things because, increasingly, researchers are doing cross-cultural research and somebody who isn't involved in this kind of research isn't going to know some of the issues around translation and cultural differences and may simply let something slide by. (Markham, interview 2, page 9, lines 209-212)

She also explains that some REBs have community members drawn from outside organizations. If these spots were to be targeted to people from different and diverse cultural groups, Dr. Markham argues, it might be possible to get "a different set of voices and a different set of concerns" (Markham, interview 2, page 10, lines 231-232). Dr. Bishop also feels that REBs "need to be sensitized to some of these issues" (Bishop, interview 2, page 9, lines 214-215). He worries that REBs may not be aware of the need even to ask some of the questions discussed here. Dr. Kors shares the belief that REBs might benefit from the inclusion of board members with expertise in cross-cultural, multilingual contexts, but is unsure if such a change is possible. He asks:

> How do you build capacity that way? If all of the research protocols of that nature are always sent to the same kind of people, how do you build capacity among the professoriate in general about being more aware of cultural-linguistic differences if they're never faced with these kinds of questions? (Kors, interview 2, page 10, lines 233-237)

Dr. Kors believes that the general population of researchers should become more aware of these kinds of ethical concerns.

Dr. Waverly believes that greater sensitivity to the issues discussed here is called for, but she wonders whether REBs should be more cognizant not only of their “own cultural sensitivity” but of individual researchers’ own personal degree of familiarity with these issues as well (Waverly, interview 2, page 10, line 225). She thinks that the role of the REB should include overseeing whether the researcher has “the qualifications around cross-cultural work or sensitivities to different languages and cultures” so as better to ensure that the research is conducted ethically (lines 232-233).

Several of the researchers question “the feasibility” of adding this extra element to the screening of research applications, which is a procedure that many of the researchers believe is currently laden with rules and regulations. Dr Markham wonders whether or not it is realistic to include this component. She explains:

> The ethical research boards are huge as it is and they’re encumbered by all kinds of rules and regulations from the university and from the funding agencies and from their professional associations, too. So to add on the cultural component is a great idea, but I’m not so sure it’s so realistic. (Markham, interview 2, page 10, lines 219-222)

Dr. Bishop worries that, ironically, more regulations, even those aimed at addressing ethical concerns, may restrict the ability of REBs to act ethically. He argues that if we “get too tightly wound into sets of rules, then the ability … to move ethically, to be able to ask these questions and challenge, but also to grant

permission when people have obviously thought about it might be thwarted" (Bishop, interview 2, page 10, lines 219-221).

One possible solution, according to Dr. Bishop, is that boards be allowed more flexibility. He advocates "a slightly more open way of thinking about, reading and evaluating these kinds of proposals" (Bishop, interview 2, page 10, lines 225-226). Dr. Kors also feels that more flexibility is needed. He recognizes that REBs have parameters within which they need to operate, but he argues that REBs need to be more flexible and more responsive. He suggests that REBs be more aware of and responsive to the concerns that are frequently raised by researchers. He explains:

> If there are patterns in the kinds of things that they're noticing in the submissions … someone should be monitoring that, it seems to me, and looking for those recurring themes and saying, okay … We're noticing, we're sensing a real resistance – is there anything else we can be doing as a research ethics board in working with people who are doing research … to try to help them understand where we're coming from or do we need to change our perspective? (Kors, interview 2, page 13, lines 302-310)

Similarly, Ms Stephan suggests that REBs be more responsive to the concerns of NNSE participants. She explains:

> I would say maybe someone on the research board should look out for those kinds of things. I definitely think that … we need to raise their awareness of these kinds of participants. I don't know if they ever just take it upon themselves to learn about participants who speak English as a

> second language. … I think in many ways they just treat all participants in the same way because they don't know of any issues that a non-native participant may have had to deal with. So maybe it might be worth asking participants about some of the things they've encountered or some of the problems they've had. I guess I'm kind of turning it around a little bit. (Stephan, interview 2, pages 5-6, lines 120-128)

And so, several of the researchers feel that REBs need to be more aware of and responsive to the realities of the research that is currently being conducted.

Colleague support. For several researchers, there is a need for trusted and respected colleagues when considering who or what they can turn to for advice should they encounter some ethical dilemma during the course of their research. The majority – five of the six researchers – feel that they would turn to a trusted colleague, either within the university or within the discipline. Several believe they would turn to research partners for advice. One researcher explains:

> I guess I don't ever really feel like I am a researcher on my own. I mean, sometimes it is my study or my grant, but I am always working with partners, and so I do feel like I have people to go to, to talk about those things. And even if they are not involved directly, because I am in the university setting I think I have the luxury of talking to people who are involved in research all the time and can give you that kind of feedback and advice. (Waverly, interview 1, page 15, lines 344-348)

One researcher who also believes that colleagues can be a valuable source of advice cautions that "there are some very competitive people" in academia and

would therefore consider carefully who to trust when sharing an ethical problem (Langtry, interview 1, page 17, line 391). Dr. Kors would choose to talk to colleagues specifically in the ESL field for advice. Dr. Bishop would go directly to trusted members of the participants' community in order to get their perspectives on the situation.

When considering who to turn to for advice, the REB was mentioned by two researchers, but their views were opposed. One of the researchers might return to the REB, specifically the chair of the REB, to seek further guidance, but this would not be this particular researcher's first strategy. This researcher would prefer first to get some input from colleagues. Another researcher specifically stated that the researcher would not turn to the REB. The researcher explained:

> When it comes to having trouble with my research, can I look to my REB? I really don't think so. I don't think that they're equipped to help you. (Markham, interview 1, page 23, lines 528-530)

This researcher would turn to colleagues within the field for advice instead.

An open dialogue. All of the researchers expressed interest in the idea of some kind of open dialogue or forum whereby researchers share some of their ethical concerns about working with NNSE participants.

One researcher feels that, increasingly, more and more researchers are studying different cultural and language groups and some may not be familiar with the ethical issues discussed in this research study. This researcher feels:

> I think [an open dialogue] would be very worthwhile and I would like to more about that. I would like to know more about other people's experiences. (Waverly, interview 1, pages 15-6, lines 361-363)

In addition, this researcher would be interested in hearing about the experiences of not only NNSE participants directly but NNSE researchers as well. The researcher is interested in finding out how welcoming research is to NNSE researchers.

Another researcher has a similar interest in learning more about the research experiences of NNSE participants and how other researchers address ethical concerns. The researcher explains:

> I definitely think that you need to have some sort of dialogue when it comes to working with non-native participants. I mean, there's so much we don't know about ethical issues in research because of culture. You really need to know a lot of different cultures to understand the people, you know … But a person from a different culture that you've never heard about before or don't really know much about at all, it's really deep and it's really hard. So sharing particular incidents or situations I think would be useful so others can learn from others' experiences. (Stephan, interview 1, pages 14-5, lines 326-327)

Dr. Markham thinks that such a dialogue might help new researchers better understand ethical issues and would "also help us old-timers, too, to make the system better" (Markham, interview 1, page 28, lines 548-549). She feels that an ethical forum would be "useful", particularly because ethical guidelines are

always changing and some sort of dialogue might help to make sense of this. However, this researcher is curious as to what form such a dialogue would take – a website, an online forum, a newsletter, a weekly meeting, etc. – because most researchers may not have the time to spare for such a forum.

Dr. Kors similarly believes that a forum "would be really useful" because "the ethical dimension of the work that we do … as researchers is not given nearly enough time" (Kors, interview 1, page 13, lines 297-298). He explains:

> So I think an open dialogue may be first within people who are of a common mind and, for example, in the same general field and then people across disciplines. I think there's some value in doing that ... to sort of heighten our awareness of the ethical work that we do and how we can sometimes get ourselves into awkward spots without meaning to. Yeah, I would be very open to that kind of opportunity. (pages 13-14, lines 307-312)

Dr. Kors is suggesting that the dialogue first start with like-minded individuals for whom ethical issues with NNSE participants are an important concern.

The two remaining researchers are also interested in an open dialogue but have a few reservations. Although Professor Langtry thinks an open dialogue could be beneficial, she is skeptical as to what degree such a discussion would reflect actual and current research practices or whether a dialogue would lead to better research. The researcher believes:

> Academics as a whole are very good at speaking about generalities and they're very good at rhetoric, so the danger would be that everyone would

> play nice and say all the right things and continue to do what they normally do. I don't know that you'd really know what the outcomes were. I would hope that some people would do things differently. (Langtry, interview 1, page 17, lines 400-404)

Another researcher has some doubts as to who might get involved in such a dialogue. Dr. Bishop feels that some colleagues already talk about ethical issues amongst themselves and with their students. The researcher explains:

> I think part of the problem is – and I guess I'm really cynical – is those of us who think a dialogue would be important and we should engage in a dialogue are probably the people who already have some kind of ethical sensibilities. Those who need to hear it, I'm sorry … they probably won't even show up, and I'm being very cynical there. (Bishop, interview 1, page 27, lines 516-520)

However, despite some doubts and reservations, the majority of researchers see some value in an open dialogue or forum about the ethical issues discussed so far in this research study.

In addition to defining what ethics means to researchers and considering the broader ethical issues in research as a whole, the findings of this study suggest the key themes center around language and power, respect for participants, and REBs and beyond. In the next chapter, I will present my discussion of these themes, connecting them to the current literature and the framework of this study.

Chapter 5

Discussion

During the interviews conducted for this study, the researchers reflected on what they consider to be the key ethical issues when conducting research with NNSE participants and how to address these issues. Some larger issues centre on researcher perspectives on ethics, language, culture and power, trust and respect and redefining REBs. These issues and their broader implications will be discussed in this chapter.

Researchers working in TESL and cross-cultural research as well as those in related disciplines urge greater discussion about ethics in research amongst their colleagues (DuFon, 1993; Etherington, 2007; Gottlieb, 1997; Ortega, 2005; Robinson and Curry, 2008; Thomas and O'Kane, 1998; Turale, 2006). Ortega (2005) laments that "the dearth [in the literature] is particularly noticeable when it comes to reflections" (p. 427) on ethics. Gottlieb (1997) asserts that all researchers have "encountered some troubling incidents in the course of doing research … for which a richer written corpus would have been at least some help" (p. 4). The researchers interviewed for this study were receptive to the idea of some kind of ongoing dialogue or forum whereby researchers share their experiences – ethical concerns, dilemmas and resolutions – conducting research with NNSE participants. Such a dialogue might very well include the perspectives of NNSE participants and NNSE researchers. Although researchers see some value in sharing their experiences, with the hope of helping other researchers make better sense of the ever-changing realities of doing research, particularly

as participants become more culturally- and linguistically-diverse, they do have some doubts as to what shape such a forum would take and whether or not those researchers perhaps needing to share in the discussion would actually wish to take part. Nevertheless, the warmth with which this idea was received – particularly when juxtaposed against the frustration with which REBs were discussed – suggests that ethics boards and universities would do well to consider and include new ways of addressing the ethical concerns relevant to research with NNSE participants. Research is changing and ideas about ethics are changing, too. Perhaps it is time to rethink how we define and assess ethical research.

When considering ethics within the context of the research endeavor, each of the researchers interviewed for this study shared his or her personal understanding of what ethics means. Not surprisingly, no two definitions were exactly the same. And yet, there were some underlying and perhaps startling similarities. More importantly, the very ways in which researchers interpreted ethics may suggest a new approach to how ethics are not only defined but realized in research.

Fundamental to each “definition” was the notion of respect for the participant, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. The researchers spoke of respecting participants both as individual people and as members of a larger cultural community. Specifically, they emphasized the need for respect for the interests, values and world views of participants and/ or their cultural communities as well as the information participants share, and being

respectful in the ways in which researchers use that information. Fitzgerald (2005) argues that researchers need to acknowledge and respect both the language and the cultural community to which participants belong (p. 19). Half of the researchers interviewed for this study mentioned the need to represent participants' ideas respectfully, accurately and fairly. That researchers define ethics in these terms suggests that the participant is central to the notion of ethics and that researchers are very conscious of the people who make up their participant populations. In this respect, *dutiful ethics*, which Helgeland (2005) defines as "the commonly upheld rules of action" (p.554) within the culture, does not seem to be of primary importance to researchers. They acknowledge that there are cultural differences not only among NNSE participants but also between researchers and participants. Instead, *discursive ethics*, whereby "conflicts are solved through dialogic processes between implicated parties (Helgeland, p. 254) seems better to encapsulate the researchers' perspectives on ethics. Ethics is defined by means of and in terms of the very interaction with and understanding of participants.

Another dimension to researchers' perspectives on ethics is perhaps surprising by its very absence: in discussing what ethics means to them, only one of the researchers interviewed for this study made reference to the REB. Each of the researchers mentioned one or two of the ethical principles identified in REB checklists, such as, confidentiality, anonymity, power and dissemination of findings, but these terms were not used to frame the researchers' own definitions of ethics. This suggests that these ethical principles – in part, a response to the

unjust and unethical treatment of research participants or “subjects” in the not-so-distant past, which I have discussed earlier in this thesis – do not entirely encapsulate what ethical research means to practicing researchers today. This underscores what Guillemin and Gillam (2004) see as the difference between *procedural ethics* and *ethics as practice*. Guillemin and Gillam believe that researchers do not act or think in terms of the ethical framework created by research institutions or REBs (procedural ethics). Instead, as this current research study suggests, researchers see ethics more as a reflexive response to actual participants and their realities (ethics as practice). So perhaps this distinction should be the place where a new discussion of research ethics begins.

For my purposes here, I will discuss my findings in terms of a new dichotomy as it appears to me to exist: institutional ethics and individual ethics. This may be related to notions of procedural versus substantive justice, in the sense of procedural ethics as opposed to individual ethics. What I term *institutional ethics* refers to ethics as it pertains to REBs, including researcher criticism of this institution and some possible new directions for REBs. *Individual ethics* refers to the ethical issues of greatest concern to researchers which, as my study suggests, do not align particularly well with the apparent concerns of REBs. The juxtaposition of these two perspectives on research ethics might suggest new directions for ethics in research, particularly – though not exclusively – as it pertains to NNSE participants.

Institutional Ethics

Redefining REBs. It is ironic that the REB, the board given the responsibility of ensuring that research is conducted ethically, should be the topic of the greatest debate and criticism during the interviews for this study. The discussions surrounding the role and efficacy of REBs were impassioned and lengthy. The majority of the researchers agree that REBs provide necessary protection for participants as well as protection for the researcher and the university. One researcher alluded to the atrocities committed against participants or “subjects” in the early to middle parts of the last century, and the general consensus is that REBs and the ethical protocols set in place are a response to the need to ensure that participants are treated fairly, respectfully and humanely. However, there is a chasm between the perceived purpose of the REB and the practical functioning of the REB. All of the researchers acknowledge that REBs are flawed and require some reworking; REBs are generally perceived as prohibitive, regulation-driven and out of touch with the research currently being done.

Ironically, perhaps the problems with REBs stem, in part, from their very laudable origins. There have been far too many examples, as discussed earlier in this thesis, of research being conducted unethically; participants have been deceived, taken advantage of, mistreated and harmed inexcusably (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Gray and Carville, 2008; Robinson and Curry, 2008). The REB became a governing board seeking to guarantee that participants were treated with consideration and respect throughout the research process. But, Berg

(2004) argues, the current danger is that REBs have begun “to moralize rather than assess the potential harm to [participants]” (p. 53). REBs may highlight key areas of concern but provide little in terms of tangible guidance to researchers should they find themselves in ethically-problematic situations. Robinson and Curry (2008) argue that, because of the disparity across different REBs, there is “skepticism about the strategies used in decision-making” (p. 44). Stuart (1998) believes that REBs approach research from “a legalistic perspective. They are designed to protect the researcher and the institution from lawsuits and are rule-based” (p. 305). Ortega (2005) regrets that “the traditional focus of [REBs]” (p. 427) is not being sufficiently discussed and challenged among researchers. Ellis and Earley (2006) agree, arguing that the time has come for REBs “to be challenged in terms of their protocols and assumptions” (p. 2). This current study suggests that researchers want and need to challenge traditional REBs protocols in order to be more culturally sensitive to NNSE participants and their cultural groups.

This touches on a common criticism levied against REBs by the researchers: despite the current cultural make-up of Canada and the likelihood that any research undertaken now may include some NNSE participants, REB boards have little first-hand experience conducting research with NNSE participants. On the whole, REBs seem unaware of some of the types of concerns brought to light during this study. REBs provide some guidelines about issues of consent, anonymity and confidentiality, and privacy, for example, but they are not informed as to what extent these issues are a concern when

conducting research with NNSE participants. The ethical issues of concern to researchers do not entirely align with the checklists of concerns REBs provide. A possible way of aligning the two may be the inclusion on REBs board members who have some first-hand knowledge of cross-cultural, multilingual research or community board members taken from diverse cultural groups. Doing so might better ensure that the voices and values of different cultural groups are heard. Including these perspectives at the application review stage may better ensure that research ethics is conceptualized in ways that are relevant and meaningful to one group of people the REBs are meant to protect – NNSE participants.

It may be that the time has come to refashion our ideas of what an REB is. We need to priorize the minority; specifically, NNSE participants need to be recognized. Looking at the make-up of Canadians, the percentage of NNSE is a significant number and continues to grow. According to the 2006 Canada Census, most immigrants speak a first language that is not English (or French) and Allophones make up 20% of the population (Canada. Statistics Canada, p.7). NNSE are found in all walks of life, so researchers today need to accept the likelihood that research involving human participants will include some NNSE participants, even if that is not a population that is specifically being studied. To acknowledge the presence of NNSE participants, REBs must ensure that researchers take these participants into consideration when designing their studies. The researching community as a whole needs to be aware of the ways in which they can make some accommodations – not allowances, which is a belittling term – for NNSE participants.

Certainly, the feasibility of adding an extra component to a procedure that is already rule-driven and time-consuming is questionable. But instead of adding more regulations, perhaps we should be revising the existing protocols as they frequently seem at times incompatible or insufficient to deal with the needs and concerns of NNSE participants. At the very least, REBs should be given more flexibility to allow for different understandings of what ethical conduct entails. Greater flexibility may result in greater awareness of and, in turn, greater equity towards NNSE participants.

So perhaps what is called for is a revamping of the procedures involved in obtaining ethics approval. I am not advocating the complete abolishment of REBs; indeed, the researchers, despite their general disappointment and frustration with REBs, did not suggest the dissolution of REBs. Moreover, I cannot imagine such a suggestion being taken seriously. Instead, might the role of REBs be reconsidered? This current study seems to suggest that the purpose of the REB – that is, to provide some guidance – is not being adequately met. In discussing who they would turn to should they find themselves in some sort of ethical dilemma or quandary about which they were uncertain as to how to proceed, the researchers felt they might seek the advice of trusted colleagues, research partners or community members. Only one of the researchers would turn to the REB as a last resort; specifically, this researcher might consult the REB chair. So, as for “after-service”, the REB provides little to researchers.

Furthermore, if the application process to the REB for ethics approval is the first stage a researcher encounters and considers seriously issues of ethics,

perhaps it is too late. The ethical checklists REBs typically provide are brief and easy to complete once a researcher has gained some experience submitting ethics applications, so I wonder how successful REBs are at gauging the ethical inclinations and actual practices of researchers. I am not suggesting that researchers are “fiddling” their applications in order to get ethics approval or are then proceeding with their research with a reckless disregard for ethical issues. On the contrary, based on my research interviews, I believe that researchers on the whole are very respectful of their participants and deeply concerned about treating their participants ethically. My research suggests that researchers who regularly work with NNSE participants and are aware of this population act ethically and conscientiously and follow a personal ethical “checklist” of their own, which is one that supersedes and exceeds any provided by REBs. And so, the issue to consider now might be how to ensure that the larger group of researchers – that is, those who may not be as well-versed in the needs of NNSE participants – attains this higher level of understanding. As I mentioned, the stage of submitting a research application to the REB may be too late a stage. Perhaps ethical issues in research, particularly in research with NNSE participants, need to be also addressed earlier on, in graduate school, for example. Currently, the topic of ethics is covered briefly in research courses and frequently comprises only one chapter of research methods textbooks. Instead, an entire course could be devoted to the study and application of ethics in research. Doing so would also allow the discussion of the specific issues and concerns associated with research with NNSE participants. An additional

component might include some sort of sensitization to the process of learning another language and/or culture. Assuredly, my suggestions may not be feasible or acceptable to researchers, but if REBs are no longer perceived as adequate, other approaches and solutions need to be considered. Since this study would suggest that institutional ethics as conceptualized by REBs are not unproblematic, it is worth revisiting individual ethics or the issues of greatest concern to researchers working with NNSE participants.

Individual Ethics

Language, culture and power. Amongst the various themes that were raised by this study, three interrelated themes essential to this discussion on ethics – language, culture and power – seem paramount. These three threads are frequently entangled as they run through most of the fabric of this study, and while it is possible to separate the three strands at least temporarily, it does not take long before they are intertwined again. It appears that a discussion of one of the themes of language or culture or power inevitably leads to a discussion of all three. Therefore, I include all three together.

Central to the discussion of language is the ethical choice of whether to conduct the research in English or to use participants' language(s) and, therefore, translation. The choice of which language to use is an ethical decision and a complicated one. There are risks of miscommunication that may result from both the use of English during the research process and the use of translation. Although most researchers interviewed for this study had a decided preference for one of the two options, each was mindful of the limitations of his or

her preferred approach. Two researchers, in discussing the use of English, spoke of the need to simplify the language used so as to ensure better that participants understand. Fisher (2004) advocates “using language that is reasonably understood by the individual” (p.834). Even though participants may understand what is being asked of them, they may nevertheless lack the competency in English to make themselves understood. The researchers are divided on this point. Some worry that the responses of some NNSEs may be simplistic, lacking the depth of what they could express in their own languages. And so, the researcher may not have access to the “true self” of the participant. Other researchers surmise that, ironically, this might lead to richer data. One researcher explained that the English an NNSE participant uses might yield valuable insights into how NNSE participants use English.

However, not all research conducted with NNSEs is aimed at exploring non-native speakers use of English. In addition, it is difficult for a researcher to know if a particular word selection or turn of phrase is a deliberate choice on the part of the participant or merely a reflection of his or her limited English proficiency. If participants themselves feel that they don’t understand English as well as they might and feel unable to communicate their ideas accurately in English, they may feel powerless. The imbalance in English ability between researcher and NNSE participant may create an imbalance of power. Therefore, using English may exacerbate any feelings of powerlessness on the part of the participant. On the other hand, younger NNSE participants may prefer to use English during the research process because the use of English, for them, may

be tied to a sense of empowerment. Or, perhaps the fact that the choice is possible for them is what empowers these participants.

With respect to the use of translations, there are potential limitations. The quality of translation may vary considerably and some translators (and interpreters) may not sufficiently understand the content information, the governing ethical principles of research or, particularly when not using professional translators, the ethics surrounding translation. However, more pressing concerns are the power issues that working with translators may inadvertently raise. Specifically, there may be challenges to deciding who should provide the translation. When the potential translator is personally known to the participant, such as when the translator is chosen from the participant's cultural community, there are both advantages and disadvantages relating to power. If the translator is a friend, a family member, a member of the participant's community, a work colleague or boss, for example, the participant may feel less inclined to be open and willing to share his or her insights. Conversely, the translator may feel unable or unwilling to share all that the participant has expressed. This may be magnified if there is a perceived power difference between the participant and the translator. However, some participants may prefer or expect that the translator comes from their community. Such a translator might be more credible or trustworthy in the eyes of the participants and/or the participants' communities. This recognition of the participant's community and the role it plays in the research process is linked to issues of power.

One specific area where the debate over the use of English versus the use of translation plays out is the issue of consent. Consent is typically realized through the consent form, which most of the researchers find problematic to some degree. Marshall and Batten (2004) advise that “concern about power often centers on informed consent procedures” (p.2) The English used in consent forms is often legalistic or academic and some NNSEs may have difficulty making sense of it. Translations are possible, but they can be time-consuming and expensive, depending on the number of participants’ languages of choice. However, a deeper problem is the cultural dimension of consent. Robinson and Curry (2008) warn that the researcher might not be able to assess accurately the risks to participants from different cultural groups because of a lack of familiarity, on the part of the researcher, with the norms and mores of the participants’ cultural groups. Two thirds of the researchers interviewed for this study expressed concerns that the idea of a consent form may be inappropriate, suspicious or offensive for some cultural groups. Some NNSE participants, despite their misgivings, may feel that they do not have any other option but to sign the consent form or they may not realize that their consent can be withdrawn at any time without prejudice. This may be attributed to the connotations and repercussions of signing legalistic documents in their own cultures. The implication is that “the community may not always have the information or knowledge to make sound ethical decisions” (Marshall and Batten, p. 2).Thus, the consent form may accentuate the power difference between the researcher

and the participant, adding to feelings of powerlessness on the part of the participant.

And so, it seems that the roots of the power imbalance between researcher and participant are, to some extent, cultural. Marshall and Batten (2004) believe that researchers "as members of colonial cultures … have traditionally had power in terms of money, knowledge and 'expertise'" (p. 4). They also recognize that "Western thinking" informs academia and research but that such constructs should no longer "be taken for granted" (p. 2). We need only to look at this country's colonial past, during which time Aboriginal peoples, for example, were stripped of not only their land but also their languages and cultures to varying degrees. The effects of a dominant majority culture and language (i.e. English) are still felt today, and these feelings of imbalance may very well exist for other cultural – and perhaps marginalized – groups in the larger society. Tilley and Gormley (2007) acknowledge the impact culture may have on power and the ensuing problems, particularly when researchers do not recognize "the cultural implications arising from their positioning in relation to the research" (p. 369).

The researchers in this study also highlighted the cultural dimension to power and the perceived power imbalance between the researcher and the participant, which are key. They realize that power may play out somewhat differently in participants' own cultures, which sometimes results in a greater deference to the researcher. Fitzgerald (2005) warns of the "politics of position" in the research process, which creates an imbalance in power between

researcher and participant that may be exacerbated in cross-cultural research (p. 17-18). The researchers expressed concerns that, for some cultural groups, the idea of questioning the researcher is unheard of. And so, NNSE participants may take part in a research study because they feel obligated to do so and/or unable to withdraw. As researchers, we need to be aware of and sensitive to this cultural dimension of power. We should have at least some understanding of the role that power plays in different cultures. Doing so might help researchers understand or even anticipate how different cultural perspectives on power can impact a research project.

Language and culture are two concepts that are strongly linked to one another; language can capture and define culture. It also appears that language and culture are linked to power, too, particularly as they pertain to research conducted with NNSE participants. Those who have the language and the power also typically have some power in the research process, and it is essential to recognize this dynamic when conducting research with NNSE participants as they frequently belong to cultural groups other than that of the researcher and may not be proficient in the language of the research. Being aware of this potential power imbalance may help the researcher conduct research with NNSE participants more ethically.

Respect for participants. Whether the researchers were defining ethics or considering language and culture, issues of power or REBs, at the very heart of the discussions was a deep and genuine respect for participants, regardless of whether the researchers work with immigrants, refugees, international students

or Aboriginal people. Although I cannot claim that each transcript of each interviewed is peppered with the word, respect is undeniably at the core of what the researchers had to say about conducting research ethically with NNSE participants. I have been inspired by the degree to which the researchers strive, in the decisions they make and the actions they take when working with NNSE participants, to honour and respect their participants and their participants' cultural groups. Ellis and Earley (2006) feel that it is paramount to build a research relationship between researcher and participant that is built on a foundation of mutual trust and respect. They believe that this requires being sensitive to what is appropriate within participants' cultural groups (p. 2). In addition, Fisher (2004) believes that being respectful of participants necessitates an understanding of both the ways participants think and of their concerns. The researchers interviewed for this study seem to be in agreement.

The respect the researchers have for their NNSE participants is apparent in the efforts they take to capture their participants' voices. They strive to recognize, understand and acknowledge as best they can throughout the research process those values – sometimes cultural in origin – that their participants hold dear. This often begins with the researcher's own interest in participants' own languages and cultures. Although the researchers' views do differ somewhat, the majority (four out of six) see some benefit in being at least familiar with participants' languages. Familiarity with other languages allows researchers some insight into the world views of participants because language and culture are so closely linked, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Perhaps all

researchers working with participants should be required to complete some sort of compulsory cultural sensitivity or language-sensitivity course. Another benefit of being familiar with participants' languages is a better understanding of what concepts, feelings and ideas participants are trying to express. In practical terms, this is especially useful when investigating discourse patterns, for example. Similarly, Fairclough (2001) argues for greater sensitivity when conducting interviews in order to understand what may be "differences in discoursal conventions" (p. 40). The challenges of obtaining even a modicum of familiarity with participants' languages when the participants come from diverse language groups are undeniable, but learning the languages is important, especially if a researcher intends to devote his or her lifetime to the study of a particular cultural group. It may be a reasonable expectation that a researcher have this awareness, particularly if he or she regularly works with NNSE participants. Despite their differing opinions on the optimal amount of familiarity with participants' languages, each of the researchers interviewed for this study strives to be respectful of participants. This is particularly clear in the researchers' unanimous belief that the researcher should be familiar with participants' cultures. Several expressed their unwillingness to offend their participants with, for example, the types of questions they ask. Being familiar with participants' cultures may yield some understanding about how participants frame, make sense of or define their worlds. The need to achieve such an understanding stems from a respect of participants and their world views, and is a valid expectation to have of researchers working with NNSE participants.

This, in turn, leads to a respect for those values participants and their cultural groups hold dear, which is crucial. Marshall and Batten (2004) firmly believe that researchers must strive to “respect the particular and contextual cultural norms of a given social or ethnic group” (p. 4). I am inclined to advocate taking the time beforehand to learn about participants’ cultures. Stuart (1998) believes that respect “must be demonstrated through a process of continual communication between the … researcher and the participants” (p. 303). While it is not possible to learn everything about participants’ cultures, some degree of familiarity may help the researcher avoid offending participants. For example, the researcher may be better able to create questions and questioning techniques that are more culturally appropriate or to choose interviewers, by virtue of their qualifications, including religion, ethnicity or gender, for example, with whom participants may feel more comfortable. Certainly, such awareness and sensitivity has benefits for the researcher, but the primary objective is to be respect toward participants.

Davis and Keemer (2002), in discussing research with Aboriginal communities, urge researchers to show respect towards participants’ communities. One way of showing respect involves explaining the research and what participation entails in culturally-appropriate terms. Moreover, a disparity may exist between what the researcher and the participant consider appropriate ways of interacting and the rituals of talking and sharing information with people, for example. Another tangible way of respecting participants is to avoid filtering the data through the researcher’s own perspective, values and views. Though by

no means easy, the values and beliefs of participants must be presented fairly and accurately so whoever is reading the final dissemination of the research findings better understands the participants and their views and experiences. To do so is to conduct research ethically, and being ethical necessitates being respectful.

The final component of being respectful toward participants is the attempt to capture participants' voices accurately and fairly. Stuart (1998) argues that, in research, "there is an obligation to render an account that is true to the participants" (p. 301). Certainly, quoting participants so as to capture their voices is fundamental. West (2002) believes that the data "must be rich in detail so it comes to life in the eye of the reader" (p. 265), and one way of achieving this goal is to include participants' own words. However, providing some context is necessary so that NNSE voices – in the past, frequently silent or, if heard, often misrepresented or misunderstood – are respected and valued. Ensuring that participants' voices are understood may, in practical terms, require some adjustment to the grammar and vocabulary used if doing so allows a truer sense of their voices to come through. Participants should not be reduced to their (if any) grammatical mistakes, for example. Yet keeping the grammar intact, even if it is not perfect, may better reveal what participants have to say and how they express themselves. The issue of translation enters into this discussion because translation is one more filter through which the essence of participants' voices may not pass through entirely.

Moreover, capturing the voices of participants does not mean presenting them as representative of all members of a given cultural group or community or all NNSEs. Not all NNSEs speak with the same voices; as with native English speakers, NNSE voices are diverse and, at times, discordant. While it is disrespectful not to allow their voices to be heard, it is equally disrespectful – and unethical – to meld all their voices into one. Thus, central to research with NNSE participants is researcher respect for participants, which should infuse the ethical choices all researchers make.

Finally, it is important to address the fact that there is a less-than-perfect alignment between the ethical issues my literature review uncovered and those issues that came up during the course of my interviews. Assuredly, there was not a complete mismatch: the issues of power, participant voices, respect for participants' cultures and communities, limitations of REBs and the need for a dialogue among researchers were pertinent issues in both the literature and this current study. However, the ethical issues of concern to the researchers in this study were not limited to the issues that are typically conceptualized in REB ethics checklists. Many of the issues identified on REB checklists were raised during the course of this study but, generally, larger, global issues were of the greatest importance. There are some possible explanations for this.

First and foremost, the discussion in the literature about ethical concerns in research with NNSE participants is most noticeable for its absence; there is little to no literature on this specific topic. Consequently, this current research study may be breaking new ground. And so, I had to look at the literature in

related disciplines. The ethical issues raised were varied and many could be applied to research with NNSE participants, but to do so is not the same as to look at research within my own discipline.

Moreover, that the researchers did not provide a “checklist” of already identified topics reminiscent of REB checklists may speak to the degree of dissatisfaction the researchers feel with REBs and what they have come to represent. Perhaps this is indicative of the move away from the use of checklists. Ethics is far more complicated. When considering the values and concerns of diverse cultural groups, it is not surprising that ethical issues cannot be so neatly separated and self-contained. For researchers, ethics involves larger, broader, farther-reaching issues that reflect the changing realities of research.

Finally, whatever mismatch there is may be due, in part, to my personal approach to this study. I was loath to prepare a list of possible ethical issues derived from an REB checklist and ask researchers to comment on each point on such a list. I did not want to predefine or limit what ethics is and how it is conceptualized. Instead, I preferred to have the researchers I interviewed – all of whom have considerably more experience in conducting research than have I – speak about ethics in and on their own terms. As the researcher of this study, I needed to provide some structure, of course, but I wanted the discussions to be driven by the researchers’ own perspectives and experiences as much as possible. I do not apologize for the result. Thanks to my participants and their willingness to share their opinions about and observations on research with NNSE participants, I believe that the insights obtained for this study make a

contribution to the little-explored topic of ethical concerns in research with NNSE participants.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

Although the literature on ethics in research with non-native speakers is meager, the findings of this study suggest that this is a relevant topic worthy of discussion and ready for further exploration. This assertion is supported by the relative ease with which I was able to find participants for this study. University researchers (professors and graduate students) have numerous demands on their time, yet over a period of only a few months I was able to find researchers not only willing to talk about ethics but also intrigued by this topic, without having to contact dozens of prospective participants. Certainly, the researchers interviewed for this study may have been accommodating because they are very familiar with the challenges of conducting research and were sympathetic of my efforts to complete my master's degree. They acted with kindness and generosity in helping me conduct my research on this seldom-explored topic. However, their willingness to participate may have been primarily motivated by what I sensed was a genuine interest in my topic. This was very encouraging on practical terms because, as a graduate student, I was anxious to conduct the necessary interviews. But, more importantly, the researchers' enthusiasm for this topic reinforced my own belief that ethical considerations in research with NNSEs is a crucial issue for researchers with NNSE participants, despite the fact that the near-absence of this topic in the literature would seem to suggest otherwise.

Happily, there was no shortage of ideas and insights, most of which centre on researchers' genuine and profound respect for their participants. This study

suggests that respect is fundamental to the multitude of decisions researchers make, from the choice of using English and/or translation during the research process to the types of questions most culturally appropriate for NNSE participants. Researchers take pains to be familiar with participants' cultural values and beliefs and are sensitive to the norms of the cultural groups or communities, making adjustments in their research to accommodate the cultural and linguistic needs of their participants. They strive to ensure that participants' voices – not often heard in research – come through accurately and fairly. The researchers' own definitions of the term "ethics" reflect their deep respect for participants. Yet sometimes at odds with researchers' understanding of respectful and ethical conduct is the university REB. Researchers are, to varying degrees, critical of REBs and uncertain as to the efficacy of REBs in ensuring that research with NNSE is conducted ethically. Researchers' suggestions on how to improve REBs may hint at the possibility that the time has come to rethink how ethics in research is defined, conceptualized and negotiated. It seems that more discussions among the research community is needed, perhaps in an open forum of some kind. Researchers' interest in and impassioned discussions about ethics and their dissatisfaction with REBs are not coincidental; instead, their responses may be indicative of a real need to reassess what we think about ethics, particularly as it pertains to research with NNSE participants.

Although all of the researchers work with NNSE participants to varying degrees, it is worth pointing out that there is some difference between international students, immigrants and refugees, the deaf and Aboriginal people,

and, arguably, clustering all these types of NNSEs together may raise some concerns. However, the purpose of this study is to look at this broader grouping in order to discover what similar types of challenges, issues and concerns researchers have.

Another possible limitation to this study may be that researchers most concerned with the ethics of research and likely to consider the specific needs of their participants, many of whom are NNSE, may be the researchers who expressed a willingness to participate in this study. It became immediately clear during the course of my interviews that for the researchers who participated in my study the topic of ethics – and research ethics with NNSE participants in particular – is both a meaningful and relevant topic. I wonder if researchers less concerned about research ethics or the specific needs of NNSE participants would have been interested in taking part in this study. It may be that the researchers for my study and I are of like mind and have similar sensibilities. We may be members of the same club.

I also hasten to point out that my interviews were conducted with researchers, not participants, and all but one were native English speakers. Because I did not interview NNSE participants, we are seeing ethical considerations through researchers' and not participants' eyes. Certainly, the researchers were very sensitive to and concerned about the needs of NNSE participants, but the voices of actual NNSE participants are needed if this topic is to be explored further.

Moreover, I never envisioned this research culminating in some definitive set of research guidelines. Judging from several researcher critiques of the checklists created by REBs, more rules and regulations are neither wanted nor needed. Instead, I have been more interested in getting a dialogue started. How can anyone hope to create a set of guidelines – such as those created by institutions – without having first engaged in some sort of discussion? Would prospective homeowners select a house by ticking off boxes on an industry-produced checklist without first talking among themselves about what they are looking for in a house? My study suggests that researchers currently tend to discuss ethical issues with trusted colleagues and/or other researchers, so it may be beneficial to open up this discussion. If six researchers in one-on-one interviews conducted for this one study could provide such rich data, filled with intelligent and insightful comments and observations on ethics in research, surely an open, ongoing forum, be it a series of meetings, lectures or regular journal columns, for example, could reshape and redefine what ethics in research with NNSE is and further our understanding of how to conduct research with NNSEs ethically.

Clearly, there are broader implications for research as a whole. This current research study centres on research with NNSEs, but many of the findings could be applied to research with participants who are not NNSEs. Only one of the researchers interviewed works specifically in the TESL field; the others come from different disciplines. In fact, two of the researchers interviewed specifically mentioned that they feel some of their concerns regarding research with NNSEs

could be extended to research with native English speakers. Neither I nor the researchers ever implied that NNSE participants require *allowances* to be made; no one at any time suggested that NNSE participants are somehow “less” than their native-English speaking counterparts. However, several researchers spoke of a heightened awareness of issues in research, such as ethical issues, that conducting research with NNSEs has helped to develop. Therefore, this awareness of and sensitivity to ethical considerations could be shared with and proven meaningful for the general population of researchers.

Questions for further study are numerous as are the directions future researchers could take this topic, particularly as it has been little explored thus far. Certainly, more research needs to be undertaken. A possible future study might involve surveying researchers in larger numbers, asking the kinds of questions I have asked but probing further, asking additional questions as well. Large-scale surveys could be conducted; key areas of interest, once determined, could be used by later researchers to formulate questionnaires so that large numbers of researchers could be heard from. Moreover, research asking NNSEs specifically about their experiences as NNSE participants is missing from the literature. It would be useful, informative and revelatory to hear their responses to and interpretations of the research process. It would also be beneficial to explore what ethics means to participants – NNSEs and others – and what value they place on the ethical issues discussed in this study.

Additional areas to explore might include trying to determine to what extent the larger research community would value some sort of forum on ethics

in research. Would universities, for example, be willing to host seminars or workshops, for example, on research with NNSE participants targeted at the general research population? And, were such a forum offered, would researchers wish to take part? In addition, future researchers might wish to inquire whether journals are interested in allocating precious space to an ongoing debate and discussion of ethics in research with NNSEs. And, if they did, would they receive any submissions from researchers? Turale (2006) encourages researchers to write about their own encounters with ethical issues or dilemmas, believing that "a wide variety … will contribute to the richness of international ethics knowledge and help to raise standards in the conduct of research" (p. 132).

Hostetler (2007) believes that "good research requires our careful, ongoing attention to questions of human well being, and [he urges] researchers to think about how to achieve the conditions under which that attention can flourish" (p. 16). This study, I hope, plays some small part in that "attention to questions of human well-being"; specifically, this study addresses questions surrounding ethical considerations in research with NNSE participants. I am aware, however, that this study raises more issues of concern than it offers solutions. My purpose has been to highlight some of the key ethical considerations that are foremost in researchers' minds. As I have indicated, much more research is needed. I hope that this work will be continued and expanded by others so that our understanding of the ethical dimension of research with NNSE participants, both within and outside the TESL field, can be advanced.

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