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MAY I COME IN?:

Social identity and investment issues for a group of Ukrainian military officers in a NATO-sponsored immersion program

by

Paula Charbonneau-Gowdy

Department of Second Language Education

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ABSTRACT

After a decade of suffering from a lack of attention in second language research, interest in motivational issues has recently shifted the focus of its analysis from the individual as learner to learning as participation in social activities and social worlds. If we accept the notion that language learning results from involvement in communicative events, then to what degree learners participate in an event, if at all, is crucial to that learning. In this thesis I add to the body of research that has begun to examine the complexities of the interface between individuals and learning contexts. I examine the historical, cultural and personal influences that a group of Ukrainian military officers bring to a NATO sponsored immersion program, as well as their perceptions of their place within the power structures that are inherent to this setting.

I argue that for the group of learners in this study, second language acquisition theories have not provided an adequate explanation for the reason why they did or did not participate in communicative events both inside and outside the classroom. Drawing on Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) language learning theories and Peirce's (1989, 1993, 1995, 1997) notions of social identity and investment to support my findings, I identify elements that served to marginalize these learners and disempower them, and which were responsible for their apparent lack of investment in language learning. I also suggest how, for some of these officers, changes in their social identities led to more opportunities to practice English and eventually to feel empowered both during the language course and once they returned home.

RESUMÉ

Après une décenie de pénurie de recherches en Acquisition en Langue Seconde, l'intérêt dans la domaine de motivation a récemment dirigé son attention de l'individu comme l'apprenant, vers l'apprentissage en participant dans une évenement sociale. Si on accepte l'idée que l'apprentissage d'une langue est le résultat de la participation aux évenements communicatives, à quel point les apprenants participent dans une évenement, si tant est qu'ils participent, est ce qui est essentiel à cette apprentissage. Dans cette thèse, j'ajoute au fond de recherches qui viennent de regarder de plus près les complexités qui existent entre les individus et les contextes d'apprentissage. J'examine les expériences historiques, culturelles, et personnelles qu'un groupe de militaires Ukrainiens amènent à un programme d'immersion patronné par ONAT, et aussi bien que leur place dans les éléments de pouvoir qui font partie d'un tel environment.

Je présente un argument qui dit que pour le groupe d'apprenants qui faisaient partie de mon étude, les théories proposées dans l'Acquisition de Langue Seconde n'expliquent pas suffisamment la raison pour laquelle ces apprenants n'ont pas participé aux événements communicatives et dans la salle de classe et hors de la salle de classe. Afin de donner de l'appui à mes constatations je base mes arguments sur les théories de langage de Vygotsky (1962, 1978) autant que celles de "l'identité sociale" et de "l'investissement" de Peirce (1989, 1993, 1995, 1997). J'identifie les éléments qui ont servi à défavoriser ces apprenants et de les laisser sans pouvoir ce qui les a amenés à refuser d'investir à l'apprentissage de langue seconde. Aussi, je suggère que, pour quelques officiers, des occasions à pratiquer l'Anglais était le résultat des changements qu'ils ont éprouvés en identités sociales. Ainsi, ils se sentaient valorisés dans le contexte du programme ainsi qu'une fois de retour en Ukraine.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

May I come in?

Vitalii, a Ukrainian military officer standing at my classroom door, January, 1999.

When I first heard Vitalii's phrase as a precursor to his entrance to my class with fellow Ukrainian military students, I chuckled for all that it symbolized to me at the time. It seemed to be bestowing some kind of power that I hadn't assumed or felt, or wanted for that matter, in other teaching situations. Despite my extensive travels throughout the world, this cultural difference, that is a student requesting permission to enter my classroom, was new to me. More importantly, Vitalii's words capture for me an important theme that reflects a lot of my current thinking about motivational issues in second language learning. In this chapter, I introduce some observations which provide background and rationale for this inquiry. I refer to the relevant research that has helped me formulate the aims and theoretical framework for this inquiry. I present my research questions and define some of the terminology that I use throughout this thesis.

Background and Rationale

My current thinking about motivational issues in second language learning initially began from my interest in various levels of intrinsic motivation that I noted over the years in teaching students in various contexts. I would ask myself, for example, why did a class of high school students I taught seem so disinterested in learning a second language, while my adult second language learners would appear faithfully at my classroom a couple of nights a week, after a long day at work to spend several hours in class sacrificing personal and family time, to learn a second language? Why did the federal civil servants, who were being paid regular and substantial salaries to be absent from their work to take a second language

course, generally display low levels of enthusiasm and hard work and continually choose to use their first language in the learning environment, while my class of provincial civil servants, who were giving of their free time to learn the target language, would seek every opportunity to use their second language, in this case, French. For example, they would even get together over vacation periods to converse with their classmates in French. They were delighted when I planned any activity that involved interaction with French speakers. And, why, I asked myself, did my homeschooling children and other homeschoolers I met seem to have a burning desire to learn, while many of the students of the same age in the formal classrooms I encountered, seemed bored and lacking in inquisitiveness and intellectual curiosity?

In the context of my teaching a group of Ukrainian military officers, of which Vitalii was a student, I attempted to incorporate collaborative learning activities (Tudge, 1990). Collaborative learning has received much prominence in recent education circles and has become the buzz word of recent education reform. And yet Vitalii and others in the class, when asked to take part in a collaborative activity, would ignore my instructions and continue to work alone. What do we assume when we attempt to put adult learners whose educational backgrounds defy such collaborative efforts into such situations? In all of these contexts, there is a suggestion that we cannot continue to apply cookie cutter applications to our discussions of learners and learning contexts. I believe that each teaching and learning context is unique and requires conscious efforts on the part of educators to understand and to find creative solutions to enable learners to be active agents in their learning.

Nevertheless, questions like those I have posed above have preoccupied educators and researchers for several decades under the guise of motivation. Indeed, an entire area of research in psychology, motivational psychology, is dedicated to this field of interest. It is no wonder that the concept of motivation is accepted by researchers and educators alike as an essential predictor of how fast and how successfully a learner learns. Motivation has been considered by some as the initial impetus to learning (Dornyei, 1998), and often is the explanation for sustained effort over long periods of time in the face of numerous obstacles. Learning a second language is in most cases a life-time endeavor and without motivation even the most able of learners can fail to reach their goals. Conversely, high levels of

motivation can make up for deficiencies in language abilities and/or less than ideal learning conditions.

Two cases in point: I taught a seventy year old psychologist with ailing health and poor eyesight who moved from virtually having no language proficiency in French to acquiring a functional level within two years. This was even more surprising given that he had very little contact with French speakers. Likewise, I am currently teaching a retired Swiss physical education professor. He claims that after years of effort he had concluded that he was unable to learn English. During our first classes even the English that he did know was often incomprehensible due to a heavy French accent. Now, two years later, he is thrilled to be able to understand and to converse with his son's American neighbours in California who have had very little exposure to francophone second language speakers of English and who earlier were unable to communicate with this man. There have been other such examples of language learning in spite of serious challenges, such as the poor eyesight or strong accent mentioned here, both in my classes and with the students I have taught.

What is involved in some learning contexts that allows these learners to overcome obstacles – physical or otherwise, and to attain their potential? Is it purely motivation in the classical sense of some inner drive, or are there other factors involved? Indeed, there seems to be no lack of anecdotal evidence in Second Language Education circles for the power that motivation (or the lack of it) plays in the learning of a second language. However, it is in understanding the nature of that motivation, or more importantly how educators can intervene to motivate learners wherein lies the real crux of the matter. Is there something more powerful than inner drive at stake here? Does the term motivation really capture what is involved in why some learners have varying degrees of success? What is to be gained or lost if a learner chooses to participate in communicative activities within a learning context? Is the investment in learning worth it?

Some educators have sought answers to these questions by examining teaching **methods**. Historical accounts of second language methodologies over the last two decades (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991) describe early translation methods in which students were required to translate countless texts, and later audio-lingual methods in which students were asked to repeat scripted dialogue verbatim. The shortcomings of the latter method are

particularly vivid to me as I illustrate in the following vignette of a typical day in a high school language class I taught years ago.

> **Monday Morning**
> Monday morning and the students will be arriving shortly. I check the filmstrip to ensure that it is ready to go and have a big drink of water that I hope will sustain me through the next forty minutes of constant speaking. As the students take their seats I notice they look sleepy and I wonder how I will manage to get them to take part in the scene that is about to unfold. When all are settled I begin by turning on the projector and pointing to the screen. Then after a second of delay to be sure all are listening I say the phrase: Paul va a l'école. I then indicate to my students to repeat and a small chorus of them say the phrase: Paul va a l'école. No one dares ask who Paul is or what he has to do with the fact that it is Monday morning and they are tired and that most would rather be in bed at that moment. I run up and down the aisle hoping that my enthusiasm and if not my proximity to the students will encourage their participation. After five or six repetitions I change the frame on the film strip. This time it is Marie. Marie va a l'école is my next line and again I repeat, snap my fingers or tap the desk and the students who are awake repeat: Marie va a l'école. After forty minutes the students get up to leave and I sink into my chair at the front of the class, catch my breath, wonder what the students have learned and wait for the next group to arrive.

In retrospect, it was a good form of physical exercise for me as teacher but for the students the lack of real language learning, that is the ability to use the second language, was evident in field trips to the target language environments. On one such trip to a francophone city, I remember a student saying frustratingly to me "I repeat and repeat but when I go to speak, the words come out all jumbled" (Grade seven student, personal communication, April, 1977). It appears that repeating the phrase "Paul va a l'école" had little relevance to this student's interactions in the target language environment!

These earlier methodologies have been replaced, or assimilated by a communicative approach to instruction, although not without some controversy (Krashen, 1994; Lightbown & Spada, 1994). In this approach to language learning, the emphasis is on encouraging dialogue both between teachers and students and amongst students themselves through supposedly learner-centered activities. In reality though, this type of instruction often involves teachers faced with the daunting task of re-creating the natural setting of human conversation in a classroom of up to thirty individuals – a striking contradiction. Placing three or four students together and giving them a topic to discuss presupposes that the students want to discuss the topic, want to speak the second language with someone who

speaks their own language and want to speak with the specific students who are in their group. In the larger group, that is between teacher and students, and where turn taking is essential, the possibility of each student responding is virtually impossible. In my experience, it is only a few students who choose to respond and the others are left to be mere witnesses to the interaction. Furthermore, whether the predominance of this approach in current second language programs reflects what is actually going on in classrooms leaves room for doubt in my mind and the minds of others (Pennycook, 1989). In fact, whether any classroom is ever truly communicative in practice, is questionable (Thornbury, 1996). As Sergei, one of the Ukrainian students in my study recently explained to me in a conversation about the shortcomings of learning English in the classroom:

> When I am in class I am all the time preparing answers for questions but in the bar I can't prepare for a question. I don't know when and what are the questions (Sergei, personal communication, May 23, 2000).

Moreover, the less than illustrious results of students suggested in the literature on school-based reform attest to the fact that "the so-called communicative method" is also not a secret fix to second language learning. I have met second language learners who have spent up to eleven years learning a second language – for example, many of the high school students I have encountered in classes for which I have acted as a substitute teacher, adolescent children of my friends and even college level francophone students in government sponsored summer English language programs, who lacked the skills to ask basic questions and form simple statements in their second language.

Some second language researchers have looked for answers to the questions I pose in providing comprehensible *input* (Newport et al., 1977; Hatch, 1978; Krashen, 1981); others in providing negative input through error correction (Tomasello & Herron, 1988); and still others in form-focused input (Pienemann, 1987; Lightbown, Spada, Wallace, 1980). However, all the input in the world (the digestive model of language learning, as Maguire, 1999, refers to it) will not motivate learners if there is no willingness on the part of learners to invest in that learning (Peirce, 1993). Corder (as cited in Slimani, 1992) points out that lessons are "co-productions" in "socially constructed events" and that "no teacher teaches without consent" (p.198), or, one could add, without assent or dissent!

Meanwhile theorists tried to respond to questions on motivation by developing *theories* on the issue of language and motivation from a socio-cultural perspective (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Clement & Krudinier, 1983). The classic work of Gardner and Lambert was based on creating elaborate lists of attitudinal variables which were tested to view their significance in affecting language learning achievement. The resulting theory focused on the integrative and instrumental aspects of L2 learning motivation. Integrative motivation was defined as the motivation that learners have due to a desire to mix with the target language group. Instrumental motivation was the motivation that learners have whose reasons for learning the target language are financial or a desire for prestige. It is interesting that these early studies did not go unchallenged. Some follow-up research supported the findings, but others found contradictory results (Lukmani, 1972; Clement & Krudenier, 1983), or no support for the findings at all (Oller et al., 1978; Strong, 1984). The confusion over the contradiction of the meaning of these terms, integrative and instrumental, may be one reason for this controversy. In addition, these studies were numbers driven, used a positivistic approach and lacked the richness of more descriptive, interpretive research which considers learners' perspectives within a social context. (Maguire, 1987, 1996, 1999; Tarone & Swain, 1995; Thesen, 1997; Peirce, 1993, 1994, 1996; McKay & Wong, 1996; Fine, 1989). Furthermore, whether it can be assumed that all the variables that have a stake in language learning motivation have been exhausted, or indeed whether there might be other kinds of motivation, can not be overlooked.

Until the 1990s, however, Gardner and Lambert's theory dominated thinking in the area of motivation in SL learning. For many years, the concept of motivation received very little attention and was relegated to the subunits of second language texts (Brown, 1987; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991), or was the topic of intermittent journal discussions in academic articles among social psychologists. But during the 1990's scholars issued a call to reopen the research agenda on motivation (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dornyei 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). With this call came a distinct shift in research circles in how motivation was conceptualized and theorized. An attempt was made to move away from looking at motivation from an exclusively social-psychological perspective to looking at it from a broader range of perspectives. The former perspective is concerned with the

individual in the context of a group and tends to focus on integrative motivation as a reflection of individuals in groups. In this view, according to Gardner (1985) "the source of the motivating impetus is relatively unimportant, provided that motivation is aroused" (p.169). On the contrary, as a classroom teacher I am most concerned with what contextual forces play, and can play, a role in my students' desire to learn a second language and also what factors will help to sustain that learning in the future. The Gardner-like studies measured motivation in terms of grammar and lexicon acquisition. For example, motivated learners were identified partly from the results of scores on grammar based tests. The concern for a more expanded theoretical framework of motivation coincided with a shift in attention from product to process in which second language acquisition was no longer regarded in terms of the acquisition of grammar rules and lexicon but in terms of the strategies used in learning the language (McKay & Wong, 1996). The number of taxonomies of second-language learner strategies (Dornyei, 1995; Oxford 1990) that have resulted from this new direction has been helpful to researchers that have examined the role of individual differences in language learning. However, several resonating questions remain unanswered. Why in some contexts do learners, such as the Swiss professor, choose to participate in learning and in other contexts do not? What is there about some language learning contexts, for example the federal language classrooms as opposed to the provincial ones mentioned earlier, that resulted in a lack in learners investing in the second language? If we return to Vitalii, why did he each morning stand at my door eagerly awaiting my response for permission to come in and take part in learning and yet later sit sullenly in class and refuse to speak?

Part of the problem in trying to answer these questions with current research findings has been that SLA theorists chose to differentiate between the *individual* learner and the language learning *context*. On the one hand, Krashen (1981, 1982), for example, describes the *individual* as having various affective variables including motivation and that *comprehensible input* accompanied by a low affective filter is the major factor in Second Language Acquisition. Others, such as Wong Fillmore (1982), see aspects of personality – whether the learner is extroverted or introverted, for example, as mitigating factors in Second Language Acquisition. How would these researchers explain why Vitalii went from

aggressive to passive behavior and from being a passive learner to being an active learner when his learning situation changed?

Centered around an Acculturation Model of second language acquisition (Schumann, 1976) were theorists who targeted *social* rather than individual aspects as key factors in language learning where social meant the distance between the learner and the target language groups. If there is a great social distance between two groups then little acculturation (i.e., the process of becoming adapted to the target language culture) will take place, and the possibility of the learner becoming proficient in the target language becomes more remote. In the case of Vitalii, his Ukrainian-Russian culture suggests a substantial social distance between him and the language group with whom he hopes to interact – English Canadians. Acculturation theorists might predict a struggle in his attempt to do so. In fact, Vitalii was very successful in his second language learning.

I believe that in their attempts to tease apart the individual from the social in their studies of second language acquisition, theorists have run amok! First of all, finding ecologically valid measuring tools which can capture the subtle nuances of learners' behavior patterns (e.g., in studies of acculturation and its sub-components or in examining attitudinal factors) has been problematic. Added to this has been the confusion over which actual factors can fall under social and which can be classified as individual. For example, in a mixed ethnic group of second language learners, can we attribute individual differences to the individual per se or are these differences, in fact, characteristics of the greater cultural group to which the particular individual belongs?

Individuals have a multitude of characteristics and desires that can change over time. If we are to understand their interactions in a second language context, I believe that researchers will have to look more carefully at the nature of the individual in relation to the language learning contexts in order to see them ***not*** as separate entities but in light of a "social identity" perspective (Peirce, 1995) which integrates language learners ***in*** language learning contexts.

When Vitalii stood so often at my door asking for permission to come in to the learning context, in my opinion, it was not because he was a shy, introverted individual. In

fact, in other instances he showed himself to be the very opposite. I recall on one occasion how he burst into another classroom without knocking to ask a student for a lighter because I had asked him to help me light candles on a cake. However, in the context of entering my classroom, with the words "May I come in?" what he may have been expressing was where he saw himself, as a student and member of an economically-deprived subordinate group of non-native speakers, in relation to me as a teacher and member of the elite group of North American English native speakers.

With the fervour of early Christian missionaries, in the last two decades it seems international organizations from elite groups of English native speakers, working directly or through local governments, have stopped at nothing to promote English instruction to countries around the world. Teachers in these programs, who are frequently from more industrialized and developed countries, struggle with a clientele that does not fit the conception of learners they have acquired from the Westernized teacher education they have had. Nor do this clientele fit the programs that these teachers are required to adopt in their classrooms. The result in some instances is chaos, or at least questionable language learning. I recall a colleague who related to me the fact that his attempts to use the practices that he had learned at a North American university education program in a Japanese setting failed dismally and he eventually spent the entire period of the course "putting in time" (N. MacIntrye, personal communication, August 12, 2000). As a case in point, methods which emphasize a communicative approach and cooperative task-based learning may fail in contexts where cultural practices dictate, for example, self-determination, which values independent learning and respect for the privacy of an individual's emotions. The shortcomings of a communicative methodology in a context such as the Japanese example suggest that other more powerful factors are at play. And the important question is, are learners in these settings affected by various methodologies and/or by the persons who deliver them? I believe that teachers, along with their respective methodologies and programs, have a profound affect on learners and on their language learning. On one hand, there are teachers who, as members of the dominant class of English speakers, represent a financially privileged group, armed with the imperialistic tools for language teaching. On the other hand, there are learners who as non-English speakers are subordinated both

culturally and often materialistically in the learning setting. As Cornel West points out: "People who have access to a wide range of resources in a society will have access to power and privilege which will in turn influence how they understand their relationship to the world and their possibilities for the future" (West, as cited in Peirce, 1997, p. 110). I would add to West's words that those who do *not* have access to resources and interaction with those who do, in this case in the language learning context, are in a disadvantaged position and will be disempowered in this context. This disempowerment then, will likewise affect how they construct their identities and their language learning.

The dilemma, therefore, becomes: should English second language teachers see their role as cultural intruders (Cooke, 1988, as cited in Peirce, 1989, p.402) by introducing English, the language of the elite and dominant classes in the world, or as saviors by providing a means to materialistic advancement and potential for change in the societies within which they teach. The former is an act of submitting the other to one's ideology, the latter of empowering individuals. The concept of empowerment and its effect on a person's social identity is an extremely important one which can touch every facet of life. I believe it is crucial to understanding why language learners experience varying degrees of success in learning a second language. As a teacher, my concerns extend much more deeply than passing on the rules of my native language. Nor am I satisfied to simply deliver a program according to the dictates and political interests of those who make the curricular decisions. As a pedagogue and member of a group whose main motivation for teaching is to serve others, helping my students to attain their potential is my prime concern.

Although the issue has been raised by others from a moral and a political viewpoint (Cooke, 1986; Kachru, 1986, cited in Peirce, 1989, p.402; Judd, 1987; Walters, 1989), I think the real crux of the matter lies within the context of a second language classroom and in determining what represents submission and what ensures empowerment. To me the answers to this question suggest a different approach to teaching English where methodology takes a back seat to discovering more about the social-cultural political context in which learning takes place.

Some researchers in second language acquisition have only begun to examine the complexities involved in relating the individual to the social context and the power structure

that is inherent to that social context (McKay & Wong, 1996; Peirce, 1995; Weedon, 1987). But if we accept the notion that language learning results from engagement (Maguire, 1995) in communicative events then the degree to which learners participate in an event, if at all, is crucial to that learning. Furthermore, a better understanding of the dynamic factors involved in whether learners invest socially, personally and politically in learning, is key I believe, for us as educators to being meaningful players in that learning.

Theoretical Framework

I start from several assumptions. For example, humans are social, cultural beings who are sensitive to different contexts. In choosing to do a study that would look at the complexities of language learners in the multiple contexts of a second language immersion program in a military setting, I chose to do a qualitative inquiry using a micro ethnographic approach as a natural choice of methodologies. I say a natural choice for several reasons. In the past, classroom-centered research received less prominence in educational research, in part, I believe, because the complexities of the classroom setting defied early researchers' numbers-driven agendas. Their results, though attractive from a purely scientific perspective, failed to capture the richness that comes from a more descriptive methodology, that is characteristic of a qualitative approach (Denizen & Lincoln, 1994; Bogden & Bilken, 1991). Furthermore, there is a potential within the qualitative paradigm to capture more closely learners' perspectives through interviewing and observing that does not exist in the inferential use of the more arms-length materials, such as researcher-designed questionnaires, characteristic of quantitative research. The basis of my inquiry rests, therefore, in giving voice to the participants in the study. The powerful role that learners, as opposed to the researcher, play in qualitative research then lends support to the epistemological argument which is at the very basis of my inquiry - that the true purpose of education is to liberate (Freire, 1970).

My focus is on a small group of Ukrainian military officers in the context of their day-to-day social world rather than an abstract view of a large group of selected learners. In the qualitative paradigm, culture plays an integral part in the analysis of the data. It also plays an important role in my inquiry. Vitalii's communist upbringing and social history, as

well as the social cultures in which he moved both inside and outside the classroom, are key factors to his learning of English and must be closely examined. Also, gaining an insiders' view (referred to as an emic perspective by Denizen & Lincoln, 1994), an integral part of the qualitative paradigm, reveals the dynamic nature of individuals and their learning contexts: we are not unchangeable beings who display the same cognitive and affective traits regardless of the situation. Finally, the ownership of the findings rests with the learners in the study and not in response to an agenda set out by me as researcher. This gives ecological validity to my discussion of the theoretical and applied implications of my inquiry into the factors involved in the various contexts of an immersion program. Finding out what helps or hinders learners to participate in learning is something every educator should, but often neglects to do, or to ask (Oxford & Shearin, 1994, p.16).

I situate my study within a *poststructuralist* and *social transformative* perspective. Vygotsky's theories of language are rooted in the poststructuralist concept of language as an unstable system of referents which enables individuals in social settings to mediate and make sense of the world around them. A central theme in Vygotsky's development theory which is particularly relevant to my research is the concept of **self-regulation** and the central role language plays in the process. The construct is considered a state of higher psychological functioning in which learners are able to regulate independently perceptual, attention and memory processes. According to Vygotsky, learners develop these capacities within the social context of learners in interactions with more capable peers.

Another assumption on which I base my research questions is that in order for learners to improve in their second language, they must have opportunities to practice the target language. Spolsky (1989) argues that proficiency in the target language is directly related to the amount of exposure and practice learners have in the target language. However, power relations "play a crucial role in social interactions between language learners and target language speakers" in the concept of **social identity** proposed by Peirce (1995, p.12). Whether a second language learner will interact, that is, engage in dialogue with a target language speaker, is a key factor in the sense of self that the SL learner develops in a particular setting. Indeed, this sense of self which is negotiated in communication can change depending on the context and according to the historical

experiences of the second language learner. For example, McKay and Wong (1996), in a study of Chinese-immigrant students, found evidence of the importance of context to the interrelations of discourse and power in the learners' social environments. Most importantly they found evidence of multiple, dynamic and sometimes contradictory identities in their students. How these multiple identities relate to the positions they hold in a school in North America resonates for me, the multiple identities of Vitalii as a foreign student learning English in North America within the nested contexts (Maguire, 1994a, 1995), of a NATO sponsored military program.

Though Peirce's poststucturalist construct opens up the motivation issue once again and expands on it with the notion of **social investment**, what is interesting are the implications within the theory for formal SL learning settings. On a macro level, does the fact that a Ministry of Education, textbook writer, or any other organizational governing body representing the language of the elite and dominant classes in the world, chooses topics to be covered, determines which linguistics skills should be emphasized over others, and sets universal examinations, have repercussions on students' social identities? On a micro level, will a learner's decision to invest in SL learning be affected by the local requirements of a particular learning community in which the teacher decides the day-to-day curriculum, what and when assignments and homework are due, and indeed when a learner is allowed to communicate? When Vitalii stands at my door and asks permission to come in, is he just confirming the position of power we as educators have set up for ourselves?

The concepts of **social identity and investment** have important implications for classroom settings. However, Peirce focused her research on a natural setting and, in particular on immigrant women. My study acts as a follow-up to this research and examines the following questions in light of my work with a group of Ukrainian military officers studying English in an immersion program in North America.

Research Questions

1. Does the question of the position of power of the learner in a communicative event have validity inside the SL classroom?

2. What do learners, in particular a group of Ukrainian military officers, think affects their learning of a second language?
3. What factors in the classroom and in this immersion program lead them to or hinder them from making an investment in that learning?
4. What roles do they see themselves as playing in the learning process and how do these roles affect their learning?
5. Finally, what is the influence of power structures within the classroom and the program context on their use of the second language?

Definitions of Terms Used to Frame My Study

In view of the theoretical framework discussed in the previous section I use the following terms and definitions as part of that framework:

Second language Learners: learners for whom English is not the first language.

Control: a means of subjecting through dominance as well as a form of emancipation. According to Foucault (as cited in Langford, 2000) it can be a force that denies by saying "no" but can also have the potential to induce pleasure and to give a sense of agency (p. 119). According to Edwards (as cited in Langford, 2000) there are three kinds of institutional control (p. 77):

1. personal, such as teacher supervision of students
2. bureaucratic, such as through programs and curriculum design
3. technical, such as the physical aspects of the setting

Self-regulation: a developmental stage in learning characterized by higher psychological functions and by the learners' "capacity to plan, guide and monitor his or her behavior from within and flexibly, according to circumstances" (Diaz, Neal & Amaya-Williams, as cited in Moll,1991, p.1).

the potential level of development (in the zone of proximal development) in a learner as determined through problem solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 131).

Social Identity: a conception of language learners based on Weedon's (1987) poststructuralist definition of the individual as "diverse, contradictory, and dynamic: multiple rather than unitary, decentered rather than centered" (in Peirce , p. 15) and as a site of struggle structured by the relations of power within social contexts (Peirce, 1994; McKay & Wong, 1996).

Social Investment: based on Bourdieu's (1977) notion of "cultural capital", this concept conceptualizes learners as complex social beings with multiple desires who are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are in relation to the social world. According to this concept, by investing in the target language in a particular setting, learners invest also in their own social identity which changes across time and space. It signals "the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (Peirce, 1997, p. 411).

Nested Contexts: the various "shifting social, cultural, economic, and political boundaries that intersect, overlap and collide with each other in complex ways" (Maguire, 1996, p. 220, and 1994a; 1995) and represent the multiple layers of influence in learners' identities.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented observations from my own teaching that have lead me to challenge motivational theories that are based on conceptions of the individual as rigid and static in make-up. These theories have envisioned individuals as possessing a taxonomy of affective characteristics that can serve to label themselves as motivated or unmotivated, and therefore predictable, and able to be measured using stimulus-response, artificially contrived methodologies. Within this view of the individual, social contexts in the real world have no place. I have outlined, on the contrary, that examining second language learners in relation to language learning contexts is crucial to understanding the investment or the failure to invest that learners make in the target language. As in

Vygotsky's cognitive theory which suggests that *learning* is a prerequisite of *development*, many educators like myself have come to recognize through experience that indeed learners are complex and dynamic beings, and so are their learning contexts. Second language theorists have not yet *developed* a comprehensive theory to conceptualize this knowledge (Peirce,1995, p. 9). Vygotsky and Peirce are concerned with learners in social contexts. Based on their concepts of self-regulation, and social identity and investment, respectively, I will explain in the next chapter how they provide a useful framework for the interface between learners, the immersion program setting and the relations of power that play a role in language learning in my study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

> In Ukraine everyday I read many newspapers – morning, after dinner and in the evening. I read anything in the world interesting stories – U.S., China, France, Great Britain. But I don't like this notice [writing notices – a program requirement]. When I look at paper I see article. I read article. But when I see notice I turn page. This is not interesting information for me. I think maybe that is interesting information for businessman but for me not interesting. I read more notices with my teacher than I read in 25 years (Alexander commenting on program activities, September 8, 1999).

A few years ago my children coerced me into being a homeschooling parent. In the beginning, being a teacher, I attempted to conduct lessons as one would at school. Every day each child was required to do some writing, reading and mathematics from textbooks and workbooks that I received from the Ministry of Education. After a while, however, lessons became more pragmatic. How much wood will I need to build that rabbit pen? Where can I find the city I just read about in that story? Why does one toy car go farther than another after going down the ramp? What makes those muffins rise? As my children began to pursue their interests more independently than in my textbook stage of teaching, the reality of their individual differences became much more salient. At one point, one of the older children started to muse about these differences, and armed with terms like left-brained, right-brained, introverted, extroverted, intuitive, deductive etc. tried to slot the children into their respective categories. The more she tried, however, the more she realized the futility of this pursuit. How, for example, could she classify Tim as introverted because he shied away from visitors when they came to the house, when he would, on another occasion, have the audacity to phone up a university professor he didn't know to ask some questions that were perplexing him? How could she call Simon non-creative because he couldn't draw in a conventional way, while he could keep us entertained for hours with his stories? She finally gave up this pursuit in frustration. Theories on individual differences and identity are as inconclusive as the amateur mental wrangling of my daughter. And yet, understanding why Tim and Simon behaved one way in one situation and different in an other, or why Vitalii

would be so eager to participate in classroom activities sometimes, and at other times be passive, is crucially important to my inquiry and, I believe, in the understanding of second language learning.

In this chapter, I present a brief historical perspective of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). I trace how the shift in research emphasis from conceptualizing second language acquisition in terms as a product, that is learning rules and error correction, to one of process in which individual differences in learners and learners' strategies are examined, has led to an interest in the dynamic interface between learners and their learning contexts. In the next section, I discuss recent research in the area of *identity* and *investment* that has relevance to my research questions (Peirce, 1993, 1995; McKay and Wong, 1996). Finally, I examine research which adopts a critical approach to second language learning education (Cummins,1986; Pennycook, 1989). These studies helped me to understand how the social relations of power in the context of a second language immersion program affect language learning for a group of foreign military adult males, and to locate my study socially and historically.

An Overview of SLA Research

The field of SLA has burgeoned over the last thirty-five years. The enormous increase in SL research literature attests, I think, in part to the complexity of the subject, which like all natural phenomena, defies simplistic explanations. In the introduction of their book on Second Language Acquisition, Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991) call the field "a true conundrum" (p. 2). In the 1970's, when SLA was becoming a field in its own right, the research was dominated by research in rule formation. Much of this research concerned itself with the study of learner errors. In studying learners' errors the term "interlanguage" (Selinker, 1972) was used to represent the code of rules that learners use to guide them in speaking and approximating the target language. It was from these studies that an attention to *form* and to the role of *input* in language learning resulted in language learning classrooms.

Two major theories that had a particular bearing on classrooms and classroom-based research were Discourse Theory (Hatch, 1978,1983) and the Monitor Theory (Krashen, 1981, 1982). The former holds that learners learn by holding conversations and by participating in communicative events. In the latter case, learners' learn if the SL input is comprehensible and in combination with a low "affective filter" which translates to high levels of motivation, low anxiety and high self confidence. The work of Swain (1985), on the other hand, focused attention on *output* and challenged Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis (cited in Liming,1990). The Comprehensible Output Hypothesis maintains that learners' practice of the second language is essential to proficiency in language learning.

Besides the fact that the research into *input* and *output* and a *communicative* approach to language learning resulted in the demise of the audio-lingual methodologies and its reliance on repetition in SL classrooms, there was a recognition of a need to identify learners' roles in differentiating success in SLA. Larsen-Freeman & Long (1997) summarize the sometimes "inconclusive or contradictory results" (p. 206) of studies in individual differences (ID) into six categories of research: age, aptitude, social-psychological factors, personality, cognitive style and learning strategies. Studies on age show that younger second language learners have the advantage over the long haul than older learners, and that younger adults outperform older adults even in short-term studies (Seright, 1985). In studies on aptitude, the use of dubious measuring devices (Carroll & Sapon, 1959) and the ambiguity of what researchers were actually testing (Krashen, 1981) have provided little in the way of definite insights into language learners for practitioners.

With reference to studies of socio-psychological factors, the work of Gardner & Lambert (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985, 1989) in motivational issues in SLA dominated this area for over a decade. They provided a convenient and simplistic explanation of the dichotomy between integrative motivation and instrumental motivation, claiming that learners with the former want to participate in the culture of the target language while those learners who have the latter simply need the language for jobs, or for some financial gain etc. However, confusion over the definition of integrative and instrumental motivations and the reliability of the measurement instrument were problematic (Lukmani, 1972; Oller et al., 1978; Strong, 1984). Questions about motivation

are probably the ones I have heard most discussed in the academic circles I frequent. That might explain why recent studies continue to probe in this area (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Further research into motivation has sought theories from other fields of inquiry, such as how general, educational and cognitive developmental psychology can be applied to the SL field (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Tremblay & Gardner (1995), expanded the framework by introducing new measures of motivation, such as persistence, attention, goal specificity and causal attributions to success in learning a second language. Likewise, Dornyei's (1998) extended framework provides a new taxonomy of motivation components and suggestions for related teacher strategies. Despite the complexity that has arisen in understanding the relevance of these new theories and constructs, they have brought a social dimension to motivation studies. It has been generally accepted that positive attitudes to the target language community, the target language, the learning situation and the learners will lead to successful second language learning.

With regards to personality of learners, connections between second language learning and traits such as extroverted or introverted (Wong Fillmore, 1982), anxiety prone and less anxiety prone (Madsen, 1982), and field dependent or field independent (Oxford, 1990; Hansen & Stanfield, 1981) have not been demonstrated conclusively. Classroom setting seemed to be more favourable to field dependent learners and the natural setting to field independent learners (Brown, 1977, cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991, p.194).

Studies into "cognitive style" (the way in which a learner processes information) have the same aims as those of personality traits – that is, to determine the relation between cognitive styles and instructional practices. This reflects a recent growth in general psychology of motivational studies which incorporate a social dimension to teaching and learning (Green, 1993; Weiner, 1994). Analytic and holistic cognitive styles are the two most prominent styles studied. Although there is evidence that learners do best when the instructional style matches their cognitive style (Abraham, 1985), Schmeck (cited in Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 211) has shown that learners can change cognitive styles in response to the context. Recent debates over the meaning and relevance of SLA theory in the field of Applied Linguistics and Second language Education challenge formalist and mentalist theories.

With regard to learning strategies, which Rubin (1975) describes as "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge," there is a similar emphasis on process-centered research. Interesting to my inquiry are studies that examine whether learners can benefit from explicit language coaching in learning new strategies (O'Malley, 1987). More recently from this research have come taxonomies of learning strategies (Dornyei, 1995, 1998; Oxford, 1990) that have been shown to be employed by learners at different times.

In the literature overview of SLA as described here there is a confirmation of the fact that learners need exposure to the SL in order to become proficient in the language. However, as Larsen-Freeman (1991) point out: "Progress in understanding SLA will not be made simply by identifying more and more variables that are thought to influence language learners" (p.214). Part of the problem has been that theorists have distinguished between the language learner as separate from the language learning context and have assumed the learner and context as static, unrelated entities that remain unchanged over time and space. But this narrow and linear view does not respond to, for example, the reality of the group of foreign military officers and their learning contexts. I observed that they are sometimes motivated but sometimes not, sometimes anxiety prone and sometimes not. Their attitudes towards the target language are sometimes positive and sometimes not. They sometimes practice producing "comprehensible output" and sometimes not. They sometimes use productive learning strategies and sometimes not, and are sometimes introverted and sometimes not.

These observations challenge experimental positivistic research that seeks to find categories which are universal to all learners (for example Skehan, 1991) and who ignore the fact that learners as human beings are context-sensitive by their very nature. Add to that the fact that, if language is a person's culture, than learning a second language (or third or fourth) introduces a whole new set of contexts and potential for changes in identity.

Language and Identity

In the first section I provided a brief overview of the field of SLA from an historical perspective in order to show that research is needed that conceptualizes language learning as a complex socio-cultural phenomenon and includes the interface between learners and learning contexts. In this section, I focus on language and identity – a key issue in my inquiry and in the growing body of research that seeks to understand the relationship between language learners and their socio-cultural worlds. First of all, I draw on the Soviet developmental psychologist, Lev Vygotsky's (1978) view of language learning. I then focus on language and identity - a key issue in my inquiry and among an increasing number of researchers who aim to understand the relationship between language learners and their socio-cultural world.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural View of Language and Thought

Interest in identity in second language education research, coincides with – and I believe is related in part to, the translation and publication of the writings of Leontive Vygotsky and his colleagues. Vygotsky's interest in the development of language and thought in children offers much insight for all levels of learners of first or second language learning and particularly in formal learning environments (although he did spend part of his education homeschooling). However, it is in his belief that the individual and social are inextricably interwoven wherein lie the seeds of interest in identity. Vygotsky (1962, 1978) considered the individual as inseparable from the social. His work was instrumental in providing a base for further research into the relationship between social and individual processes. In his activity theory, he proposes social interaction as the crucial factor in understanding human behavior. This interaction not only governs the way a person acts within the interaction per se, but structures the intra-personal act, that is, the internalized acts of thinking and feeling within the individual consciousness. This in turn leads to higher order functions of thinking. Language plays an important role and serves a mediating function in this process. According to Wertsch (1991), a neo-Vygotskian theorist, the internalizing process implies a transformation whereby children (or second language learners) take control of social speech patterns and appropriate them for their own use.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's theory of ***self regulation*** assumes that the control of children's speech and psychological behavior comes about through the *active* engagement of children with adults, or in the case of other learners, with more capable peers. In either case, with an adult or with more capable peers, learners move from being other-regulated to being self-regulated, from dependent to independent. This movement, or transition, takes place in the zone of proximal development, which Vygotsky defines as the "gap between the child's level of actual development, determined by independent problem solving and the child's level of potential development determined by problem solving supported by an adult or through collaboration with more capable peers" (Wertsch, 1991,p. 86).

There are a number of reasons why I choose Vygotsky's socio-cultural theories to form the theoretical base of my inquiry. First of all, the importance of social interaction in the development of children's higher order thinking in Vygotsky opens up the tremendous role that history and culture play in shaping the identities of second language learners and helps explain the tension between second language learners and teachers whose histories and cultures may be different from each other. Second, it points to the dynamic nature of learners' ways of thinking and feeling, that is, their identities, which are mediated by the language they use in the social interactions in which they engage. Third, his theory indicates how crucial it is for learners to be active agents in the development of higher order skills (thought and language) and the implications that this notion of agency has for the identities of second language learners in the classroom. Finally, the empowering possibilities of such learning enables learners to move from being "other-regulated" to "self-regulated."

Although recent interest in *language* and *identity* in the field of language learning is encouraging (Fairclough, 1992; Peirce, 1993, 1995; Hall, 1995 in Peirce, 1997; Pennycook, 1996; McKay & Wong, 1996; Schecter & Bayley, 1997; Leung et al., 1997), very few studies address adults in formal language settings (Morgan, 1997; Thesen, 1997). Peirce (subsequently called Norton, 1997) holds that "the relationship between language and identity is an intriguing one because debates on theories of language are as inconclusive and indeterminate as debates on theories of identity"(p. 409). Her definition of "*identity*," based on her reading in social theory, refers to "how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space and how people

understand their possibilities for the future" (p. 410). Drawing on a poststructuralist perspective, she uses Weedon's (1987) definition of language as: "the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed" (cited in Peirce, p. 21).

Peirce's Study of Immigrant Women in Ontario

Peirce's (1993) influential longitudinal study of immigrant women focused on how women, as new immigrants to Canada, were marginalized by the social interactions that occurred in their daily living with target language speakers. The aim of her study was to determine what opportunities immigrant women have to interact in the target language and what is the nature of those interactions. Peirce had been a part-time teacher of the participants in the study for a period of six months. After the course, she invited the learners to participate in her study which involved meeting with them over another six-month period. She used diary studies to focus on the natural language learning experiences of the women at home, at work and in their community. Peirce based her findings on the assumption (Spolsky, 1989) that practice in the target language is a necessary condition of second language learning. She found that, in fact, the immigrant women did not choose whether to interact with target language speakers, but that the opportunities to speak were dependent on their Anglophone social networks. However, she illustrates that because of their lack of linguistic skills in English, they were denied access to these networks. Furthermore, because they were forced to do work beneath their academic capabilities due to the economic conditions of the time and to their linguistic difficulties, they felt uneducated and "less worthy" than Canadians. Their identities as immigrants were constructed in their social situations.

All the participants were motivated to learn English. Yet, they did not always create or respond to opportunities to speak, especially with those in whom they had a symbolic or material investment. In other words, they considered the value of speaking to the ramifications to their social identities, or to their material status. Often the feelings of anxiety that the women experienced were connected to unspoken relations of power that existed in their interactions and which left them concluding that they had no right to speak. Pierce concurs with the French sociologist, Bourdieu (1977) that speakers expect to be

listened to and if they do not feel assured of this attention from the listener, they become anxious and begin to question their own self-worth. He states: "... speech always owes a major part of its value to the value of the person who utters it" (p. 652).

Peirce's study is very valuable to my inquiry because it supports my findings that for some foreign students living in Canada, opportunities to interact in English are often denied to them because of the inaccessibility of Anglophone social networks. This lack of access has a direct bearing on their feelings of low self-worth despite the fact that they are well-educated. Like the participants in Peirce's study, my participants felt that their education and military rank, and by extension they themselves, held little value in this country. They, too, were very motivated to learn as shown by the long hours that they spent at self-study. Yet, at the same time, like the women in Peirce`s study, they missed or chose not to create or respond to opportunities to speak English because of the symbolic or material investment that it entailed. For my participants that meant appearing like a "stupid student,"as Andreii, one of my students called it, or ungrateful to the Canadian government, or for many it compromised their reason for coming to Canada – that is, to amass savings for their families or future life in their country. These missed opportunities had an impact on their social identities, both inside and outside the classroom. As with Peirce's learners, at the root of their feelings of inadequacy were the relations of power that existed in many of their social interactions.

Peirce's study has made a tremendous contribution in terms of our understanding of language learning as a complex social practice that "engages the identities of language learners in multiple and often contradictory ways" (p.228). It is **not** simply the acquisition of linguistic rule formations or linguistic systems. From this perspective, the numerically driven research and assumptions about learners' motivation can not capture the complexities of what is going on for my participants and their complex socio-cultural political contexts.

However, the results of Peirce's study contrast with my study in several ways. The participants in her study were immigrant women, whereas my participants are males (with one exception). In her view, the opportunities to practice English were structured by gender. In my study, it is my participants' social identities as members of a group of low economic status and historical and socio-political factors that structure their opportunities.

Peirce was a part-time teacher (one day a week) for the learners in her study whereas I have spent considerably more time with my participants – five days a week, all day for five months. I have met with them on many weekends. I have spent occasions with them outside the classroom in a variety of settings. I have visited their homes in their "home"country and met with their families. All of this supports my view, along with that of Peirce that language learning is a complex social practice and for this reason requires diverse means and methodologies by which to begin to understand it.

Also, a major source of data for Peirce were the diary studies that the participants wrote. She argues that through writing diaries the women in her study were given a "voice" which is often denied women and which provided "a form of resistance and a form of submission" (1994, p.23). However, my participants shied away from writing and, like Peirce's participants, from audiotaped interviews. I would agree with Peirce when she argues that males, in general, prefer not to write and that this opinion is supported by much feminist research (Van Daele, as cited in Peirce, 1994, p. 23). For my participants, however, their male characteristic of not wanting to express their ideas in writing was compounded by the fear of repercussions from military superiors that the written word might cause. The military hierarchy represented just one of the many complex layers of power relations and constraints that characterized their daily lived experiences in their social worlds. As Morgan (1997) explains: "many (students) ... come from societies in which classroom research methods can inadvertently parallel forms of political surveillance" (p. 438). Furthermore, I question whether the claim that the group approach to writing as suggested by Peirce as highly successful in Canadian social contexts is applicable to contexts of all foreign learners, especially those whose academic background favours a more oral approach of expression and communicative style. For my participants, writing diaries would have resulted in a very stilted and shallow source of data instead of some of the rich accounts of thoughts and feelings they shared orally.

Also, the fact that my learners were in Canada temporarily whereas Peirce's were immigrants raises new issues and provides another set of contexts in which to test her theory of *social identity* and *investment*. Finally, and most importantly, Peirce chose to conduct her study within a natural setting claiming that there is a dearth of research in this area of SLA. I

argue that if there is more interest in classroom-centered research in recent years, it is **not enough**. This is especially the case in the area of adult second language education. There is even less research in the area of English as a Second Language Immersion programs for foreign students. That this situation exists is puzzling considering the fact that there is a phenomenal growth in exchange programs for foreign students in this country and in North America in general. Some of these students come for short periods of time, and others include language training as part of an undergraduate, or postgraduate degree and return to their countries after the educational training is complete. It is important, I believe to understand the implications of social identities and investment to classroom teaching and language programs of adults in different contexts, especially in light of increasing globilization.

McKay and Wong's Study of Immigrant Adolescents in California Schools

For two years, in the early 1990's, McKay and Wong (1996) conducted a study of English learning experiences for a group of four Chinese seventh and eighth grade students. The aim of the study was to identify some of the multiple discourses in which their focal students participated, and how these students negotiated dynamic, multiple and sometimes contradictory identities within these discourses. They focused on the issue of power that comes into play in the pedagogical practices of school-based second language learning and how it affected the identities of their participants. In an affluent school district in California where the ESL programs have a good reputation, they found that many of the teaching practices were rule-based. As an aside, in talking recently with students from two highly regarded private schools in Ontario (S. Gowdy and E. Warnick, personal communication, July 6, 2000), I have found similar accounts of rule-based programs. In the setting described by McKay and Wong, immigrant students were not active agents in their own learning. Furthermore, and through discourse, the students were positioned by teachers and other students and parents in relations of power that lead to conflict and frustration. Of crucial importance to my study is McKay and Wong's finding that there are multiple ways in the organization of a language learning program that learners' needs and desires, that is, their identities, are negotiated. They argue for the importance of these identities:

> The learners' historically specific needs, desires, and negotiations are not simply distractions from the proper task of language learning or accidental deviations from a "pure" or "ideal" language learning situation. Rather, they must be regarded as constituting the very fabric of students' lives and as determining their investment in learning the target language (p. 603).

Like Peirce, McKay and Wong stress the subject position of the learners, based on Weedon, as "multiple, fluid and often contradictory" (McKay & Wong, 1996, p. 579) and positioned by relations of power. They add that learners sometimes display resistance to this positioning and may find ways to counter the positioning that these relations place on them.

McKay and Wong's study helps me to conceptualize the identity struggles of second language learners and their investment **in** second language classroom settings. However, they fall short, as they acknowledge, of enhancing our understanding of second language learning programs as "contestatory discursive sites" (p. 604). My study examines in more depth the innumerable ways that an immersion program causes identity struggles for my participants and affects their decision to invest in language learning or not. Also, by imposing categories on the discourses of the participants in the study, and then positioning people within these categories, as my daughter tried to do with her siblings, are these researchers not making assumptions about minority groups as being a coherent group which may or may not necessarily be true? It is what Michelle Fine (1994) calls "engaging in othering." My inquiry has conflicting evidence. Also, this method of fitting voices into groups results in a deterministic view of identity in which the researchers imposes the categories (Thesen, 1997, p. 488), whereas identity by its very nature is dynamic and subject to change and eludes fixed categories. Furthermore, the fact that the participants in their study were grade seven and eight students presupposes less life experiences and perhaps a more limited set of roles which they live by, as compared to the adults in my study. Furthermore, findings in studies of adults can have important implications for children in formal SLA settings, and add important insights into our understanding of language learning in a variety of contexts.

Foreign Adults, SLA, in a Canadian Formal Learning Context

My study is embedded within the specific context of a situation for a particular group of foreign military male learners in an immersion program. As mentioned earlier, although there have been a great deal of studies in SLA in formal language learning settings, the majority seem to be conducted with children. Studies in formal learning settings that do focus on adults tend to be English as a Second Language studies for immigrants, or English as a Foreign Language courses in non-English speaking countries. Teachers who are involved in teaching English to foreign adults in Canada and who are interested in the related research often read EFL studies and draw inferences for their own practices.

The proliferation of language programs offered to foreign adults in Canada is indicative of the enormous need for English language training that is felt worldwide as a result of a move towards a global economy. Without disputing the legitimacy of this move, universities, government agencies and private language schools are rushing to 'cash in on' the increasing demand for language instruction and teacher training. Each year, thousands of people from other countries who are convinced of the advantages of spending time learning English in the target language environment, enroll in these programs with the expectation that they will come away from the experience with greatly improved linguistic skills and new cultural experiences. They arrive highly motivated and ready to make a superhuman effort to achieve their goals. Some do. Unfortunately, others leave Canada disappointed and disenchanted with their experience and their proficiency in the new language. One of my informants, a Ukrainian EFL teacher argues that those who come away from the teacher training courses, armed with texts and audio visual materials, find themselves with tools that do not have relevance for their students in their own classrooms (Ukrainian EFL teacher, personal communication, July, 23, 1999). Maybe, the disappointment and lack of success is due to the fact that, as Peirce (1983) explains:

> "... learning of a second language is not simply a skill that is acquired with hard work and dedication, like driving a car or operating a machine. It is a complex social practice that engages the social identities of language learners in ways that have received little attention in the field of Second Language Acquisition" (p.200).

Peirce and McKay & Wong are interested in the interface between social identity and the potential for investment in learning or the lack of it for their particular groups of immigrant learners. Peirce has studied a natural setting and McKay and Wong a formal setting. Both the formal learning setting of the classroom and the natural setting of life outside the classroom for my students is very much determined by the fact that the program is a military program and sponsored by NATO.

It is in my readings of Freire (1970), Foucault (1980, 1994), Bourdieu (1998), West (1993a,b), Fairclough (1989), Cummins (1986, 1996), Hooks (1994), Pennycook (1989), Maguire (1996), and Auerbach (1993) that I see the issue of power relations, especially in the formal and informal language setting in which my learners lived, existing on a much broader scale and affecting the many aspects of an immersion program on many levels. As Fairclough (1989) states:

> Institutional practices which people draw upon without thinking often embody assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimize existing power relations. Practices can often be shown to originate in the dominant class or the dominant bloc, and to have become naturalized (p. 33).

Or as Auerbach (1993) explains:

> ...practices which are unconsciously accepted as the natural way of doing things may in fact be inherently political, serving to maintain the relative position of participants with respect to each other – they help to perpetuate existing power relations (p.11).

All of these writers, in one way or another are concerned with power and control. From various perspectives, they seek answers to questions of domination and the agendas of the dominant classes. In the area of English Language Education (ELT), Phillipson (as cited in Pennycook,1989, p. 594) claims that the role of language teaching in propagating the standardization of international thought has received little attention in the Western world. "ELT is largely perceived ... as being a technical business which is unconnected with cultural imperialism, linguicism, or the global power structure, which maintains the Periphery in a state of dependence on the Centre" (p. 348). While I would argue that recent research **has** begun to look at the issue of ideological control exercised through language policy on global policy (Tollefson, 1991; Skutnabb-Kangas; Phillipson, 1992; Cummins,

1996), on the level of day-to-day running of a language program there has been less attention. For my particular group of learners, who are studying in Canada for a specific period of time, in a military setting and whose formal and informal learning is very much controlled by these settings, ideological control of global policy through language policy is indeed an important socio-cultural and political issue.

Two recent studies of identity in adult education, one in South Africa (Thesen, 1997) and the other in Canada (Morgan, 1997) address this issue and support the findings of my inquiry.

Thesen's Study of University Students in South Africa

In 1993, Thesen (1997) studied first-year black students over a five month period at the University of Capetown. She based her study on the concept of transition for two reasons: the first, as it refers to the social changes that are taking place in the post-apartheid period of political transition, and the second, as it refers to the transition that the learners in her study experience as they enter an historically white, elite English university. Thesen focused on the dynamics of identity construction as these learners go from state schools where the language medium is Afrikaans and deliberately non-academic, to the English-medium university that requires a high level of cognitive academic language proficiency and whose academics and administrators are predominantly white, middle-class and male. The data consisted of biographical interviews, the subject matter for which was controlled by the students in an effort by Thesen to balance the power relations in the interview. The labels that administrators attribute to the learners – *disadvantaged, second language* and *underprepared,* conflicted with their previous *elite* status in their rural community schools. These labels concur with the findings about my own students and explain some of the tensions that existed within the program after initial language pretests were done. Important to my inquiry is Thesen's finding that when the identities that the dominant group had placed on the students at the University (*disadvantaged, second language, unprepared*) were not congruent with their own beliefs, the students were able to act as agents in changing those identities. Some even created new identities that were more comprehensive than the traditional ones of class, race, gender and language. This lends support to my

argument for giving more voice to students' interpretations of their own identities which I see can be empowering for students and can play a transformative role in second language programs.

Like Thesen's participants, my students found themselves very much in a state of transition. First of all, socio-politically the changes that have ensued after the collapse of the Soviet Union has affected almost every sector of their lives. Secondly their arrival in Canada and the enormous adaptation that this move required was a major influencing factor. Also, Thesen confronts the issue of plagiarism as an example of how the expectations of the institution conflicted with those of the students' identities. My findings suggest a similar issue with cheating on tests for my participants. For Thesen's participants the struggle to meet the expectations of the university with regard to plagiarism conflicted with the learners' identities; so too with my students – failing to help a fellow student in a test conflicts with their identities as helper and loyal comrade-one of the gravest of selfish acts (Crawford-Ades, 2000). Whereas Thesen limited her inquiry to discourse practices which involved academic essay writing, my study looks at a broad range of examples in the day-to-day running of a language program such as testing, program activities, physical aspects of the classroom and the military rank of the members of the group. Finally, Thesen plays down the relations of power as "relatively mild" (p. 507) in the institutional setting comparing it to the ethnicity issues in South African mines where ethnicity can be life threatening. Could it be that there is a failure to see the true picture that is clouded by her vantage point as a white academic?

Morgan's Identity and Intonation Study in a Canadian SL Classroom for Adults

Morgan's (1997) study took place during two classes in pronunciation in a community centre in Toronto in the mid-nineties. The fifteen adult students were primarily Chinese; eleven were women, twelve were over the age of fifty. My study included men almost exclusively, except for one woman. The focus of his study was the dynamic aspects of intonation. The aim of his study was to examine how a lesson in intonation patterns in English helped to uncover social identities in a group of adult students and how the study of these patterns brought to the forefront issues of social power.

As a teacher-researcher, Morgan makes a convincing argument for legitimizing, indeed giving special status to, the less intrusive observations of teacher researchers. He challenges the belief that only empirical data is essential for theory formation. Some of my data, like Morgan's, consists of writing participant observations, notes from memory and notes jotted down from classroom comments and observations.

One of the most remarkable things about Morgan's study is that in a single lesson on intonation a teacher can unveil for second language students the potential power of language. Power can be negative or positive. It can marginalize, or it can equip second language speakers with the ability to recognize or challenge threats to their identities. In my inquiry, I attempt to uncover issues of identity and power that exist in a second language program for adults. Morgan's findings supports my findings that the issues are hidden in sometimes very subtle corners of our teaching programs.

He points to the shortcomings of "grand formulaic theories" and top down curricula, which concurs with my belief that it is within such curricula that relations of power lay the seeds for students choosing not to invest in learning.

Summary

Drawing the connection between language and identity has eluded much of the previous research in second language acquisition partly because it has focused on the individual as being in a dichotomous position with respect to the language learning context. Furthermore, the characteristics of the individual as well as the context have been described in terms of a taxonomy of rigid and unchanging terms rather than recognizing individuals as complex beings, historically and culturally influenced and subject to change as is the language learning context. In so doing, this research has failed to capture the power relations that are inherent to any social situation and which have a vital part to play in whether learners resist or invest in participating in learning. In this chapter, I have given an overview of this early research and have shown how it has not accurately explained why learners choose to learn in one situation and not another. Vygotsky's theory of language and Peirce's theory of social identity and investment have laid the basis for my findings that, in a formal

learning setting, examining the power relations that are present within a program and the various social interactions inside and outside the classroom have important consequences for teachers and learners. In the next chapter, I introduce the language learning context and the participant group in my study and give some of the historical and political factors relevant to understanding the Ukrainian military officers in the English Language school setting.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

> Any given attempt to analyze a form of learning ... must involve analysis of the political and social organization of that form, its historical development and the effects of both of these on sustained possibilities for learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 64).
>
> There is no activity that is not situated. It implies emphasis on comprehensive understanding involving the whole person rather than receiving a body of factual knowledge about the world; on activity in and with the world and the view that agent, activity and the world mutually constitute each other (ibid, p.33).

While a call for expanding theoretical frameworks in motivational issues (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dornyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994) has led to more research in this area, very little of it has been done within adult classroom contexts and especially the second language learning environments of adults. As Hadley (1994) points out:

> ... it is clear that most ethnographic work has been conducted with young students. There is a great need for more ethnographically oriented studies of older students. We need ethnographic studies of schooling in diverse countries, of life in language institutes, of culturally diverse language classrooms (p.12).

The paucity of such ethnographic studies is surprising in light of the proliferation of ethnographic and qualitative research generally in a growing number of academic disciplines, and in view of the overwhelming demand for English instruction worldwide. In this chapter, I present the various contexts that, taken together, interconnect and are part of the make-up of the particular learning situation of the adult participants in my inquiry. In each section I engage in reflexivity - that is, I take note of the new questions that came to my mind when considering the contextual aspects of my methodology. I explain the three phases of my data collection procedures and introduce those who participated in the study.

Maguire (1994a) maintains that as researchers doing ethnographic educational research we need to broaden our vision of context to include not only the physical setting and the people acting within that setting, but also the historical and socio-cultural influences that impact on their actions and experiences from their perspectives. Indeed, it is only by

examining these influences more closely that we, as second language educators, can begin to understand under what conditions learners participate in learning and why that participation changes over time and context. Peirce (1994), supported by McKay and Wong (1996), connect this participation to issues of identity construction, that is, learners are viewed as working out who they are and how they relate to the world around them, and are viewed in terms of their position of power in these settings.

Over the last year and a half, I have been teaching groups of Eastern European military officers who have come to a small central North American city, to "America" as they like to say, to learn English. The program is jointly-sponsored by NATO and the Canadian Government as a means of preparing military personnel from Central and Eastern Europe with second language skills and as well as providing exposure to a society in which democratic principles prevail. At the onset of my participation in teaching in the program, I expressed an interest in having "the beginners"– those with little or no knowledge of English. Officers from Ukraine it seems, generally have the least background in English and consequently the three beginner classes I have taught during the eighteen-month period of my study have been made up of officers from Ukraine (with two exceptions). The reason for the zero, or low levels of English are twofold. Prior to 1991, with military, political, and economic ties exclusively with Russia, Ukrainians put much of their second language efforts into preserving their own language in light of the pressures from the Russian culture. Second, since 1991 and the collapse of the former USSR, Ukraine has lacked the economic funds to provide language training to a broad base of its military personnel. The lack of economic funds is a theme that plays out as a leitmotif throughout the numerous levels of interconnected contexts within which these Ukrainians in my inquiry find themselves in coming to America to learn English. In separating these contexts in the following sections it is important to note that I do so not to cave into the academic need to compartmentalize. I do it in an effort to illustrate and tease out the multitude of factors that play a part in learners' identities and how these complexities affect their participation in learning.

Context

The Ukraine-World Context

In an article in the New York Review titled "The Nowhere Nation," Jack F. Matlock, Jr. (2000) describes a recent trip to Kiev where he along with other American members of the US National Security Council were giving a presentation on *the way they do it* in America. At the end of the presentation, a Ukrainian who was chairing the meeting, thanked the American speakers but reminded them that whereas in the United States national security meant defense and foreign policy, in the Ukraine he explained, "... national security is not about foreign policy, or even about defense. Our problem is how to create a nation when most people in some regions don't feel themselves a part of it." The differences in attitudes are rooted in the history of Ukraine, the make-up of the fifty million people who live within its borders and their ever-changing, regionally characterized attitudes toward Russia as well as the economic differences of these regions.

Ukraine's history is predominantly one of being ruled by others, that is, mostly by Poland and Russia. Only for a short period during the mid 17th century and again prior to the 1917 Stalin-led Soviet takeover, did it enjoy independent status in Eastern Europe. Kiev, the capital city, suffered severely during World War II because of the Nazi occupation and much of its architectural and art treasures were lost. Many Ukrainians left the Ukraine after the war. Some left because they feared the Soviet rule. Others, who had collaborated with the Germans (Dean, as cited in Matlock, 2000) hoping it would lead to eventual independence and an escape from Soviet rule, fled to escape the repercussions of their collaboration (R. Serbyn, professor of History, personal communication, April 13, 2000). A great number settled in Canada especially in the West but many also settled in communities in Montreal and Toronto. During the Soviet era, Ukraine played a major role in providing other Soviet states, especially Russia, with grain products and weaponry essential to maintaining a visible and strong front during the period of the Cold War. Ukraine benefited from one of the strongest and most balanced economies of the Soviet states. As such its citizens were well cared for with employment, food and housing. Many Ukrainian citizens lived better than those in Russia. Although Ukraine was an important contributing member

to the Soviet Union, industrially and agriculturally, political decisions, of both a national and international nature, were made in Moscow and enforced throughout Ukraine.

The students talked about a passport system that enabled the central government to control the movement of rural people to the city and to ensure the production of agricultural products whose values were determined again by the central government. In the following extract from a letter I received from Sergei he explains the nature and political reasoning behind this controlling practice.

> In the past of Ukraine we have had a lot of "white marks" of history. One of them is the life in the villiges because the villiges were and are most important for Ukrainian economics. But you should know that the work in villige is very hard and some times boring. So people had wanted to have the leisures. It has been possible in city. Also in city there are more institutes and interesting jobs. But to take it you must have the passport and the passport should have a mark that you live in the city. ... So when you don't have the passport it's very difficult to live in city or to find job (personal communication, August 9, 2000).

We see in this extract an example of the enormous power that the central government wielded over the citizens who lived in the country to the point where the government controlled even the movement of its people within the boundaries of its own country. The economic and intellectual constraints that were a result of this government policy served to disadvantage those living outside the cities and subjected them to the wishes of the state.

The disadvantaged position left the rural sector of the population completely dependent on the State for its livelihood and prevented many from pursuing further opportunities only found in the city. In the city, where the majority of industry was located, the economy was set up under Soviet rule and prevented any one state from becoming self sufficient. This meant that various parts of a product were produced in different states so as not to allow any one state, like Ukraine, to have a bargaining tool in political decisions. This interdependence saw its demise after the explosion in 1986 of the nuclear power plant in Chernobyl spewed radioactive waste over much of the country. The Chernobyl accident also was instrumental in hastening the breakup of the relations between Ukraine and the Soviet government in Moscow (Matlock, 2000).

In 1991, when Ukraine claimed its independence the rest of the world watched to see what would ensue. Unfortunately, the picture at this point looks bleak. A government and government officials who have put their own interests in front of nation building, have resulted in rampant corruption and a disastrous economy (Sacha, a Ukrainian student, personal communication, November 10, 1999). One of my students, Oleksandre, reported to me: "Many years is the only way to change Ukraine. I don't want to spend my time to change Ukraine. It is like energy to the wind." With such a dismal forecast for the future alluded here by Oleksandre, businesses from developing countries are hard pressed to invest in such an economy. On a more basic level, it means staggering unemployment, inflation, starvation, poor health, alcoholism, and family break-up. Those who are employed are often paid with the goods they produce and must spend their days off peddling those goods for cash or other commodities they need to subsist. Evidence of all of this I have heard reported in my class by my students, or seen for myself during my 1999 visit to Ukraine. In an excerpt from my field notes from Ukraine I write:

> **Field notes, July 27, 1999**
> Today I visited the factory where Olexander's mother and brother work. It takes his mother one and a half hours to get to work by bus. She works six days a week until 9:00 p.m. She is not paid but is given some of the crystal glasses she has made. She takes them home and must sell them at the bazaar or to neighbours for the money she needs to feed herself and her husband who is retired (July 27, 1999).

In reflecting on my field notes, several questions emerge:

- *How does this situation affect Ukrainian learners as they approach North Americans or other Europeans to communicate in English?*
- *Do they feel the economic inequalities that exist between their nations in their interactions?*
- *Does their history of being dominated by others influence their social interactions?*

Ukrainian Military-NATO Context

In early Soviet times, to be a military officer meant honour and distinction. Only young men from prestigious backgrounds were offered officer positions. As one Ukrainian put it: "If you were an officer then and you walked into a room you could have any woman you wanted. You wore the finest of uniforms and your living quarters were among the best"

(Sergei, Ukrainian student, personal communication, April 9, 2000). Nowadays, as in former Soviet times, military service is obligatory. After basic training, soldiers can choose to stay and receive further education, or serve for the obligatory period and leave. Because of the bleak employment opportunities, many choose to stay, or are strongly encouraged to stay by parents, but do so somewhat reluctantly. They then attend military college which is roughly equivalent to a technical college education and become military officers. This means that theoretically they are provided with a monthly salary, work duties, further training, and in some cases living quarters. I use the term loosely in the case of salary because, as many of my students report, they can sometimes go months without the salary ($70 Canadian approximately), at which point, they must rely on the generosity of relatives who live in the country in order to feed their families. Mikael pointed out to me when I inquired what they do when they do not receive a salary 'If you are lucky like my family you can go to the country and your relatives will give you food from their gardens' (Mikael, personal communication, February, 21, 1999). Another student related how many officers have a "kitchen garden": 'I hate this garden! Every day when I come home and I am very tired I must work in my garden or there will be nothing to eat.' (Slava, personal communication, October 17, 1999).

This situation is different for those who have working spouses and for those who seek other employment on the side. The latter is frowned upon but, from what I can gather, is tolerated. I had one student who was so successful at his other job that he paid someone to perform his military duties. This moonlighting leads to a class system amongst officers. Living quarters can range anywhere from an unlit, unfurnished, room in a military hotel to a three room apartment in a civilian apartment block. One senior officer I taught revealed that he had spent seven years in one room living with his wife and two children. It appears that promotion to higher ranks is automatic with number of years served and further training received. This amounts to a great deal of pressure on students who come for language training, as successful test results usually mean they will be promoted. Rank is very much an issue amongst the officers where junior officers are obliged in most cases to obey whatever a senior officer requests. I recall that one of the most proficient English speakers in one of the Ukrainian groups, a lieutenant who was a translator, was required to spend much of his

free time in the evening working with the delegation head, a colonel. One second lieutenant had to carry books for a captain. When I would inquire about this odd behavior, they would laugh and respond that he (the junior officer) had no choice.

Despite an initial lukewarm relation with the West over nuclear disarmament treaties soon after Independence, the end of the Cold War has brought changes to the Ukrainian military. A NATO-Ukraine charter signed in 1997 marked Ukraine as a member of the Partnership for Peace whose main role is "expanding and intensifying political and military cooperation throughout Europe, increasing stability, diminishing threats to peace building, strengthening security relationships by promoting the spirit of practical cooperation and commitment to democratic principles which underpin the Alliance" (NATO brochure, 1999, p. 5). What this means for Ukrainian military officers is a chance to take part in military exercises in and outside of the Ukrainian borders and to come on training courses, such as language training in Western Europe and North America where regular salaries at triple their normal military salaries are paid. This, in turn means important financial gains for these officers many of whom, with some exceptions, save desperately for such things as their own apartment, medical operations for family members and future financial security. The fragility of the military relationship between NATO countries and Ukraine was shown when Russian students in the program were recalled home to Russia during the recent NATO bombing of Yugoslavia Ukrainians feared that there was enormous pressure on their government to recall its personnel as well.

As I write this thesis, I read in The Globe and Mail (June 19, 1999) that a Russian researcher, working in Canada, has been detained and imprisoned for his part in a cross-cultural university research initiative studying the militaries of former Soviet countries. A number of complex political and diplomatic questions emerge that are relevant to my inquiry:

- *Does being a guest of the Canadian government and as such obligated to the military organizations that carry out that mission, affect Ukrainian students in their interactions with members of the Canadian military?*
- *What are the power structures involved and how do they influence learners?*
- *What role does identity construction play in that relationship?*

- *Does rank have any bearing on student participation in the classroom setting?*

Linguistic Context – Russian, Ukrainian and English

The seventy years of communism (forty years in western Ukraine) has contributed to a common experience felt more amongst some former Soviet States than others. In Ukraine the ethnic-linguistic issue is somewhat complex. Ukraine is divided into three language areas: (1) north and east, Russian, (2) west, Ukrainian, and (3) south, Russian. Recent studies show that the majority of Ukrainians prefer to speak Russian (Graham Smith et al., 1998). These linguistic preferences are due in part to Ukraine's long history of being controlled by other nations. First of all, in the north and east, the more industrialized areas of Ukraine, Russian is the language of commerce. Language use in this area was affected by the movement of Russians who came to work in the industries and who settled there, and also by the long period of control by a central Russian government. Secondly, western Ukraine was formerly occupied alternately by Lithuania, Poland, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Poland and then independent Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania. It looks towards the west in its political ideology and remains more connected to its Ukrainian linguistic roots. Thirdly, prior to World War II, the southern part of present day Ukraine was Russian territory. Thus, most who live in this area have no desire to speak anything but Russian.

Many Ukrainian families whose fathers served in the military spent some of their careers posted in various parts of Russia and other Soviet states where Russian was the common language. Of course, under Soviet rule all official government documents, scientific and technical subjects, the day-to-day operations of military life and education were in Russian. Since 1989, Ukrainian was legally designated the sole official language and rigorous policies were put in place to Ukrainianize the country. In some areas, such as the south, these efforts have been largely ignored; in the west the policies for promoting the use of Ukrainian have been strictly adhered to, and in other parts, language choice is determined on a one-to one basis according to individual contexts. The Ukrainian students in the NATO program come from all parts of Ukraine.

The Russian and Ukrainian languages are similar (for example, *stol*, in Russian means chair, whereas, *stil* in Ukrainian means chair), in the sense that Spanish is somewhat similar to Portuguese. Spanish and Portuguese speak different languages but can mutually understand one another. Ukrainian and Russian share the same alphabet, which is quite different from the Roman alphabet, and the syntax and morphological patterns are quite similar. Whereas under Soviet rule knowledge of Russian was essential for professional advancement, English has become, as in other parts of the world, a highly desirable skill. This is particularly true for Ukrainian military, who recognize the financial gains to be had if one has reached *acceptable* levels of English. So important is English seen to the future success of Ukrainians that many military go to extraordinary means to ensure that their children will learn the language. During a visit to Ukraine in July, 1999, I recall how one family asked me to take their four year old back to my country for however long it would take for the child to become bilingual. In Ukrainian schools, English is taught generally one period a day. In outlying areas, however, where basic necessities like paper and books are scarce, less attention is paid to the teaching of English (Ukrainian ESL teacher, personal communication, July 23, 1999). In considering the political and economic situation in Ukraine my research questions focus on two issues:

- *Do ethnic and linguistic differences amongst learners factor into learners' investment in the learning process?*
- *How does the need to reach acceptable levels of English affect their sense of identity?*

Community Context- Ukrainian and North American

Perhaps, as a result of years of communist collectivism, or the hardships that they have suffered in the past and continue to deal with in the present, Ukrainians have close community ties. As automobiles are a commodity of the rich, many relationships other than family ones can begin in the streets where leisure activity is cheap, and yet social. Friendship is highly valued and mutual self-sacrifice is one of the characteristics of their social relationships. Disloyalty is a treacherous act. Celebration is an important part of their community life and because many have small living quarters, a lot of their celebrations take place in public places, such as in the many parks and green spaces that are a part of many

cities. While in Ukraine, in almost every home I went to, pictures (in one case a video) of my somber students with their equally somber looking wives as brides and husbands as grooms were brought to me. Accompanying these pictures were vivid descriptions of the many traditions that took place over the three-day, and sometimes longer, wedding event. Part of the celebration would be for the wedding party to go to a local monument to drink champagne and be seen by others.

In Canada, community life on the Base is centered around three major areas – the bar, the fitness centre and the Officers Mess (dining hall). The bar has a pool table and TV room and regularly holds dances and receptions for special events as well as morning coffee breaks for students and employees. (The morning is an important time for some students to socialize with their teacher and other class members.) The fitness centre is fully equipped with a pool, sauna, exercise rooms and gyms, and offers a large variety of sports equipment to rent. The centre is well used by local military as a means of keeping in shape and socializing. The dining area offers three meals a day and is socially organized with tables for groups of four, six and eight. Besides these designated common areas, there are secondary sites for interacting: the library, the stores, banks, movie theatre, photo shop, laundry rooms and the various administrative offices. Students are housed in "family units," a term that was coined originally to help recruits feel more home-like while on training at the Base. Indeed, a colleague and wife of a military officer related to me that fostering a responsibility for one's fellow officer in new cadets is an important policy in every military group (R. Lucas, personal communication, August 13, 2000). The family units consist of five individual rooms and a family room and washroom.

The larger community is a small bedroom community of forty-five thousand people outside a major city in Canada. The majority of the population works in the nearby major city, so daily commuting is a way of life. For many in this community, French is their first language and English, if they speak it, is their second language. Although there is bus service to the city, transportation is problematic without a vehicle.

- *How can physical setting be engaging?*
- *What incentives or disincentives for investment can physical setting offer to learners?*

School Context – Ukrainian and North American

Education is very important for Ukraine and Ukrainians. The country has a 98% literacy rate compared to 97.3% in Canada, which is surprising given the financial constraints under which the Ministry of Education must operate. The school system is roughly equivalent to the North American system in the number of years a person spends to finish high school. Public education is free for all including university. The proliferation of technical colleges is due to the high demand for advanced study in fields such as engineering, aeronautics, and communication technology. Many of the military students who take part in the ESL program are from these fields. School curricula are Ministry controlled. As a result, despite efforts by teachers and school administrators to adopt new approaches to learning, much of the curriculum is based on former Soviet methodologies. Even if they do alter their methodologies the students are still graded using dated, non-compatible modes of testing (Ukrainian ESL teacher, personal communication, July 23, 1999).

Ukrainian teachers talked to me about the frustrations of being trained in new communicative methods of teaching English, and yet having to test their students on grammar and translation-focused tests set by the Ministry of Education. When they attempt to appeal to these officials they, at times, succeed, but inevitably the official is transferred to another department (a group of Ukrainian ESL teachers, personal communication, July 23, 1999). The system is extremely formal, rigorous and demanding. The teachers are seen as a symbol of authority on the one hand and as a comrade against the monolithic institutional structure on the other. It is their duty and responsibility to aid their students to achieve acceptable results even if that means providing pre-prepared answers to the tests. Tests are often done orally. Students prepare long presentations on a given subject, memorize and then deliver them in front of a class, or group of examiners. A universal marking system based on a five point scale is used, and, by their own admission, teachers claim it to be entirely subjective (a group of Ukrainian ESL teachers, personal communication, July 23, 1999). One of these teachers explained to me: "What one student does for me I think it is worth a five but for another teacher it is only worth a three" (personal communication, July,

23, 1999). This inconsistency leads me to question the students' attitudes towards teachers and administrators in my inquiry:

- *How do students' views of teachers' power at testing time affect the relationship of teacher to student?*

English as a Second Language Teaching – Ukraine and Canada

In the initial phase of my research inquiry, I traveled to Ukraine in July, 1999 to speak with teachers and officials in the English as a Second Language (ESL) field. I talked with a group of Ukrainian teachers and one British teacher who were teaching ESL at various levels, to children and adults. ESL teaching is generally still based on the grammar-translation method. However, recent attempts to adopt new ESL methodologies, for the most part led by the British Council, are beginning to become evident in school based curriculums. When I asked a senior administrator with The British Council if the Ukrainian Ministry of Education was open to adopting new teaching methodologies he admitted: "They have to. Their methods are not working" (I. Pearson, personal communication, July 22, 1999). A great deal of the resource material available at this stage is British or American. The mandate of the British initiative as stated in their brochure (The British Council, 1999) is "to strengthen the UK's role as a leading provider of educational opportunity" (p. 1). Beneath these aims are the less altruistic ones of "providing information about British education and training to Ukrainian consumers and helping British providers to promote their products and services in Ukraine"(p. 1).

The school in North America where my study was conducted is located in a military base where a variety of training programs are offered to military-commissioned and non-commissioned military officers. A non-commissioned officer has a rank lower than lieutenant and a commissioned officer has any rank higher than lieutenant. Certain common areas, such as the Officers' Mess, are off-limits for non-commissioned officers. The school has three major sections – one teaching ESL, another French as a Second Language (FSL), as well as a recruit school. The English language school, which occupies its own section, has two separate clienteles – francophone Canadians and Eastern European MTAP students (Military Training and Assistance Program). There have been some Canadian students who

study in classes with Europeans but generally the two groups of students do not mix. There are two senior teachers who together are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school. This involves, among other things, setting timetables for testing, meeting periodically with teachers, writing individual reports of students, and visiting and evaluating teachers. They, in turn, answer to the commandant of the Base, a military officer, and to the Faculty, which is the title given to the administrative body made up of civilians and military officers who oversee the language schools. This Faculty, based in Ottawa, administers the two language teaching sites – one in Ontario and the other in Quebec. Again a number of complex issues emerge:

- *Do power structures inherent in language learning contexts play a role in what goes on in these classrooms?*
- *Are administrators who are not in the classrooms and yet who make decisions that affect learners, aware of the social identities of their learners and teachers?*
- *Do these decisions affect learners' willingness to socially invest in language learning?*

There are eleven teachers and one social director in the program. All but two are naturalized Canadians. Two of the eight teachers are male. One has worked in Eastern Europe, although not in Ukraine. The majority are term teachers and as such lack employment stability both in the lack of benefits offered to them and in the uncertainty of being rehired for each new group of students. This causes considerable stress for some of the teachers. This stress has been compounded by the request from management to go through repeated interview processes between contracts.

I am the only teacher who has been to Ukraine. Eight of the teachers have their own group with whom they spend the day. Two teachers, who are classified as writing teachers, rotate so that they see four groups each day, which allows the eight teachers to have a preparation period. The eight teachers remain with their groups for the entire length of the program. Some of the teachers meet after class hours with their students for sports, or invite them to their homes. Besides the regular class hours (six a day), social programs are offered on weekends and in the evenings. These outings are optional both for teachers and students. Students and teachers must pay to participate. There are several compulsory excursions

which are funded by the military and are held during class hours. In these contexts, a number of questions might be entertained:

- *What effect do interactions with teachers in natural settings, outside of the classroom have on learners' willingness to participate?*
- *What effect do these social outings have on identity construction (or destruction)? How does freedom to choose or not to in an activity affect participation?*

All books and supplies are made available free of charge to the students. There is a library available for student use with a certain amount of English materials. There are non-fiction and fiction books as well as periodicals, military videos, music and CD roms. The majority of the materials are in French. ESL resource materials, that is listening, reading, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary materials are only available to teachers, although teachers can sign them out for students. Student access to the Internet is controlled and periodic checks of sites by the Military Police has led to privileges being rescinded. It is rumoured by library and permanent teachers who have been working on the Base for several years that e-mail messages are subject to monitoring as well. One of my Ukrainian students who has returned to Ukraine reported that he believes strongly that information that he sent back to Ukraine by e-mail was monitored.

- *Does fear of censorship prevent ESL learners from seeking opportunities to use English?*

There is a computer room for the use of the students. My experience is that only some Ukrainians know how to use them, or at least are familiar with the newer programs.

- *How can access to materials resources promote or prevent their investment?*

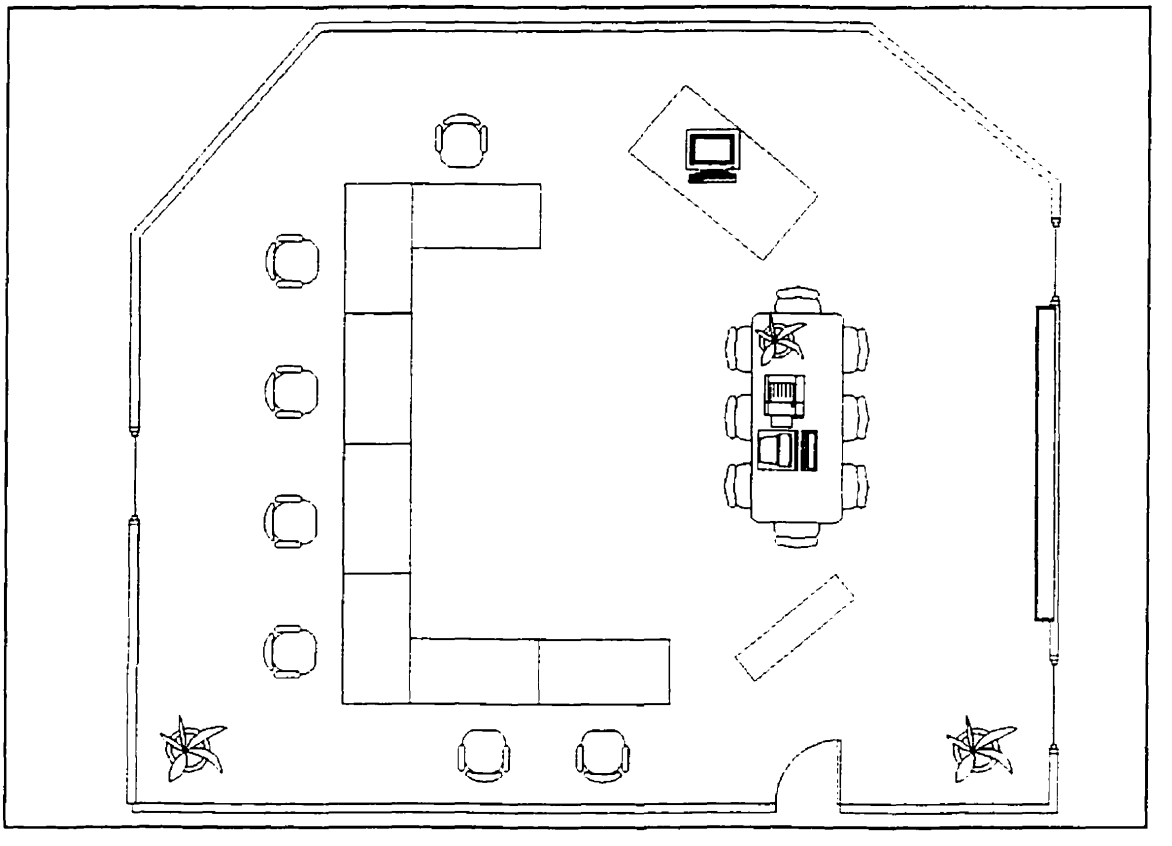
Classroom Context

The classrooms are small but adequate for the six to eight students. They are brightly lit and each has a window, although no window in the section can be opened. There are frequent complaints from teachers and staff about the air quality. One teacher has set up a tropical-like atmosphere in his classroom to increase the amount of oxygen in his room. Desks are arranged for the most part in a semi circle with a larger teacher's desk at the front in the middle or off to the side. The television, radio and tape recorder are in a large locked

cabinet to which the teacher controls the key. Overhead projectors and screens are available in each classroom. Figure 1 provides a visual layout of a typical classroom.

- *What aspects of the physical setting suggest to learners that the teacher is expert, in command, and there to deliver information to those who are less expert, without authority and lacking in knowledge?*

Figure 1: Classroom Layout



Teachers are requested to follow the curriculum program but encouraged to add their own materials "as long as they adhere to the sequence of functions that is laid out in the program." At the lower level, the program was prepared by teachers of Canadian Francophone military students for their Canadian students as a revision to an earlier Canadian Military language program. At the intermediate level an ongoing preparation of a program by an on-site curriculum department has just been completed. However, the fact that there are discrepancies in programs used by the two ESL language schools (Ontario and Quebec) has been deemed problematic. A new program is being prepared by teachers in Ontario with some assistance from the Quebec base.

- *Can a program **ever** reflect and respond to the complex interactions among students and their teachers?*
- *Does controlling the introduction of information, or waiting for when it is appropriate for the program, or the teacher, constitute a disregard for learners' identities?*

Although the groups for the first two programs I taught were Ukrainians, the last group I taught also included two Hungarians. The other groups taught by the other teachers consisted of a cross-section of Eastern Europeans. The countries included in the English section during the period of my study are: The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Ukraine. However, as mentioned earlier, for the most part there were very few Ukrainians at the more advanced levels.

- *What does the knowledge that Ukrainians are, for the most part, ranked at a lower level in language proficiency do to their social identity as a group and personal construction of identity in the context of a second language program?*

Testing is done at regular intervals. The performance checks, as they are called, are scheduled for when the teacher thinks the students are "ready." The assumption is that students are ready when they have acquired sufficient skills and knowledge of the functions in the program to pass the tests. However, teachers have no knowledge of what is actually on the test, only what can be garnered from students after the tests are completed. This information can then be used for subsequent groups. At one point after a request was made by teachers for more information about test content, a document (see Appendix A) was provided giving statistical information concerning such details as how many questions have military content. There are two tests for level one – a twenty minute oral interview with a member of the staff from the testing department who is unknown to the student, and a written test consisting of a series of approximately eight tasks. As I previously mentioned, no teacher is privy to these tests but from informal feedback from students I have learned that they include tasks such as writing a notice (e.g., about an upcoming sports event), an advertisement (e.g., for an article you wish to sell or a description of a lost article), a cheque made out to a specific company etc. At level two, there are four tests – the interview, a written test, a multiple choice listening test and a combined multiple choice and short answer reading test. The multiple choice listening test, based on TOEFL listening tests but

presumably including certain military content (see Appendix I), consists of a series of conversations and students must choose an appropriate answer to an oral question following the conversation. The reading test is a series of eight or ten excerpts from documents, some military, which the students read and then answer questions based on their understanding of the text. A recent policy was put in place by the Faculty in Ottawa that calls for in-class testing, called enabling checks, after every two units of the program in order to maintain uniformity at the different levels and to ensure that all the enabling objectives of the program are being covered by the teachers and understood by the students.

- *What are tests testing: students or teachers?*
- *What is the nature of the power structure that is assumed with this kind of testing?*
- *Does testing encourage an investment in learning a language or an investment in testing techniques?*
- *Are tests able to re-create language learning in a natural setting?*
- *What assumptions do testers make about cultural identity?*
- *What is the effect of testing on these learners' identities?*

Individual Contexts / Participants

The participants in the study were a group of male Ukrainian military officers ranging in age from twenty-three to forty-five. There was one exception to this in that in one of the groups there was a female Ukrainian civilian. The academic backgrounds of the students were wide-ranging and their jobs included a doctor, a pilot, a nuclear weapons expert, an economist, communication technicians, military teachers, several mechanical engineers and technicians. Because of their varied backgrounds questions of nationality and ethnicity were quite complex. Linguistically, I observed that they seemed to flow between Russian and Ukrainian except in interactions with the local Ukrainian community members to whom they always spoke in Ukrainian.

Privacy was an important issue with the subjects in my study especially amongst the older officers. Their serious faces on the first day of class was not only an indication, I believe, of their nervousness but also of the importance to them of the task at hand. Many of the students came to me requesting supplementary work providing added confirmation of

their seriousness with regards to their learning. Sergei, one of my students, explained that even laughing is frowned upon in their culture. I saw evidence of this in the solemn faces of my students and their spouses in the wedding videos and pictures they showed to me during my trip to Ukraine. Furthermore, Sergei explained to me that laughing in front of others is considered very rude by Ukrainians, in general. He voiced the difficulty for himself and his colleagues in adjusting to the smiley-faced demeanor and casual behavior of North Americans – which to them seemed insincere, shallow and uncaring. On the other hand, celebration plays an integral part in their lives. During their stay, besides celebrating all of their national holidays with get-togethers and innumerable toasts, they also insisted on observing other traditions such as drinking and toasting a friend or a colleague's new purchase. It is interesting to note that there appeared to be a decided difference in values between my younger Ukrainian students who have lived in very different times than those who spent most of their lives under the Soviet regime. I should point out that my decision not to provide personal details about individuals in my study, which I recognize would have allowed the reader to develop a better understanding of the participants, was done in an ethical effort to provide anonymity for them. This fulfilled a request that some of the older officers made to me during the process of obtaining their informed consent for participation in the study and which I wanted to respect, as a means of protecting their wishes for discretion. Thus, I have purposely been non-specific about their occupations. Furthermore, at times in this thesis I quote students by fictitious names and other times I refer to an individual more vaguely as 'one student.' The questions that presented themselves as I pondered some of the cultural differences I saw in my students are:

- *In what ways do listener and speaker convey different cultural norms to each other?*
- *Do these differences in cultural norms affect learners willingness to invest in social interaction?*

Data Collection Procedure

In a study of adults in a community-based ESL classroom, Brian Morgan (1997) raises important questions about the status of teacher-research. He argues convincingly, I believe, that the established research methodologies that rely heavily on tape recordings,

interviews, and formal classroom observations can be overly intrusive. He cites Day in contending that some teacher educators would argue that research should be "a benign and politically neutral activity" and that "the failure to achieve the desired level of personal detachment and objectivity was one of application rather than premise" (Morgan, 1997, p. 437). I concur with Morgan in his view, and I come to this concurrence through my own set of experiences as I will be explain later, that for a group of immigrants and in the case of my study, of military officers from a former communist regime, the more traditional means of collecting data could be equated to political surveillance. Although the participants in my study joked about my classroom being tapped, on one occasion a classroom remark was reported by one of my students to the delegation head as a breech of security. Besides, the refusal on the part of some students to be taped, the guarded and diplomatic comments made by other students when I did attempt to audiotape interviews, confirmed for me a fear my students had of making a politically incorrect statement that might jeopardize their stay in the program, or indeed the future of other Ukrainian officers in the program. I cannot make the claim that my observations and experiences with my particular participants are generalizable; however, I would argue with Morgan that in research work dealing with identity and power relations, the potential for transformative practice rests in part with the "ethical and ideological conditions" involved in the methodological choices that are made. I therefore sought to provide for the participants in my study the freedom from invasive data collection procedures, and chose instead modes of inquiry that were fundamentally interpretative and speculative in hopes of contributing positively to an understanding of their identity and language learning (Morgan, p. 438).

I collected data over a period of a year, from April 1999 to April 2000. There were three major sources of data: (1) seven informal group interviews with students from a variety of classes, (2) informal discussions with individual students, and (3) my own classroom interactions and observations. Besides these major sources, I also met with a local Ukrainian historian, talked with fellow teachers and administrators at the school, met for several hours with ESL teachers in Ukraine, and discussed issues with an assistant director of The British Council in Ukraine. A local film maker who was doing research on Ukrainians and who asked to talk with a group of my students collaborated with me in

sharing some of our findings about the historical based aspects of their culture, about political views some had voiced, and about the struggles which others talked of in adapting to changes in their own country and in a new one.

Most of the data consists of notes taken during the group interviews and individual discussions. My field notes from classroom observations and from my trip to Ukraine, and data from student classroom journals and from correspondence with some students after they returned to Ukraine also proved helpful in my inquiry. Originally, as mentioned above, I considered audiotaping our regular group discussions but I reconsidered this after several attempts to tape private interviews were refused or proved to result in only exchanges of niceties. They would often joke about the classroom being "bugged" anyway. With my experience over the year and a half that I have been working with Ukrainians, I have come to accept their need for me to be extremely discreet in my research behavior. Perhaps this is a carry-over from the communist system. It is all the more important in military life. For example, at one point because of some information that was mentioned to the Ukrainian delegation head (who took part in the group discussions and was always fairly open) the group sessions ended and participants were told not to share any more information with me. One student made light of this order in class one day and this information was passed on to the delegation head and the student was reprimanded. Eventually, the matter was cleared up. However, despite the fact that I was not considered at fault, the incident led to a certain strain in the relationship between me and the officers and a particular distance that had not existed earlier. All of this gave me better insight into the cultural identities of my participants and into the complexities of the power structures from which they were coming and in which they were living. The group discussions, individual interviews and classroom observations, as well as my trip to Ukraine to meet and talk with former students, and the text analysis provided a triangulation of the data sets. They add weight to my interpretation of the findings and, I believe, will be beneficial in considering some of the pedagogical concerns we as second language educators face in our classrooms with regard to the socio-cultural and political investment certain groups of students make in their second language learning.

Group Discussions

In conducting the group discussions, my aim was to make them as informal as possible. I first met with the entire delegation, that is the thirteen Ukrainian students who were studying English at the Base Language School, explained the nature of my thesis and asked them to take part in the study. We decided weekly get-togethers at the end of the day were most convenient for them. From this group of approximately thirteen students, five students came on a regular basis. I wanted the discussions to be open-ended and as unstructured as possible in order for them to decide what was important and to get closer to their perspectives of their learning experiences in ways that I feel a researcher's questions sometimes fail to do or capture. Besides, by structuring the discussions with prepared questions I felt that I would be setting up a teacher-student scenario that would eschew the data. For example, if I chose to ask questions about their feelings about Canadians' treatment of them at the Mess I might be suggesting an issue which was a non-issue for them. However, given the fact that I mentioned it, they might feel that they needed to comment which would give weight to an issue which I held important, but they did not. Taylor and Bogdan (cited in Merriam, 1990, p.95) explain, "...the more controlled the research, the farther it departs from natural interaction, the greater the likelihood that one will end up studying the effects of research procedures." In the end, I asked only general questions like: "How did it go this week? Did you have a chance to use English? When and where? Did anything make it difficult for you or was anything helpful?"

In the beginning, the students who had more background experience in English did most of the talking but as we met more often the others began to speak more. One, in particular, would stay after class or the group discussions to express his views on what was said, or to comment on another issue. His contributions to my research were very important. During the discussions, I jotted down bits of speech and immediately after the get-togethers I would write field notes about our discussions. These discussions sometimes carried over into the classroom – discussions, for example, about turn-taking and whether it makes classroom conversation more school-like than natural conversation. This gives credence to the view that Schon (as cited in Greene, 1994) makes that teachers, as "insiders" (Villenas, 1996) are privy to the concrete which has eluded positivist research for quite some time.

Phase One: Background Information gathering in Ukraine – July 20, 1999 to August 4, 1999.

After having taught a group of Ukrainians for five months I decided that a first step into an inquiry into social identity was to gain a better idea of the culture of the participants I was about to study. By going to Ukraine in July, 1999, I felt I would gain a better understanding of some of the complex issues that were emerging in the classroom. As well, it would provide me with some follow-up information about my students' long term proficiency in English. I wanted, for example, to find out about the lifestyles that the students had and how these lifestyles affected their status amongst the other delegations in the Language School as well as amongst Canadians. Furthermore, I felt that by getting an insight into their culture and individual lifestyles, I would have a better understanding of the ways in which the program that was being used in my classroom may be culturally inappropriate. There was also the issue of cheating. I wanted to understand why it was so very pervasive especially at testing time, amongst many of the Ukrainians, even after warnings from the Senior Teacher in the School and reminders from invigilators during the tests. Another issue was the difficulty in listening comprehension that many of the Eastern Europeans displayed, and in particular the Ukrainians, compared with the French Canadians learning English at the School. I thought that by observing my students in their natural living circumstances and in their own language interactions I could begin to understand whether the general weaknesses I and many of my colleagues observed in their second language was cultural, individual, or a factor of the testing procedures, or indeed to any other factors that were being used in the language program. Writing was also problematic for many of my students. I wanted to meet with educators in Ukraine who had more language skills in English than my beginner level students and who could give me some insight into the pedagogical histories of the Ukrainian students which might have a bearing on their writing skills.

During the trip, I kept a journal. I met with each of my seven students and most of their families. For the entire stay, I was privileged to be provided with accommodation by my students. This in itself was very rewarding as it gave me a closer insider look at the

Ukrainian culture from a broad range of situations and social settings. Prior to my trip, I was in contact with the British Council in Kiev, the capital city of Ukraine. The British Council is involved in a program in co-ordination with the Ministry of Education in Ukraine to update educational practices, especially those involved in teaching English as a Second Language. One of the highlights of the trip was a meeting that was set up for me by an official in The British Council with English Second Language teachers. Not only were they able to express ideas more easily than my students because of their proficiency in English but also they gave me a wealth of insight into the history of language teaching in Ukraine, the challenges they face, and a view of their feelings about themselves and their country in the world context. They were able to describe for me, for example, the situation in rural schools where many students have no texts or writing materials. This lack might help to explain why some of my students' writing skills are weak. They spoke of the difficulties of an educational system, one which I understood from my own experiences in Canada, and which Cornel West, 1992, describes as a gap between principle and practice. These teachers speak disparagingly of their superiors who support change in principle but in reality insist on universal proofs, i.e. testing and program selection, which control what they can do in the classroom. Some teachers expressed the feelings of waking up in 1991 to a world that has left them behind, and how seventy years of subjugation has pervaded their mentalities and invaded their abilities to be creative in their own classrooms. As one teacher summarized at the end of our three hour discussion: "We just need to get our confidence back in Ukraine..." The experience was an incredible one and helped me tremendously in building relationships with my next groups of students and allowed a much greater flow of opinions from them that would have otherwise not been possible.

Phase Two: Gaining Access – August 25 to August 31, 1999

As a teacher at the base for the six months prior to the beginning of the study and as a known entity, my request to have permission to conduct research was well received by my superior and by the military administration "as long as the project does not interfere with our program" (E. Tanguay, personal communication, August 31, 1999). I also informed other teachers of my intentions and explained the nature of my research to them. In seeking

permission to conduct my study, I wrote a memo to my immediate supervisor who then passed it on to the commandant of the Base and to the administration officer responsible for overseeing the program. I received permission to begin on August 31, 1999.

Phase Three - Data Collection August 30, 1999 to April 24, 2000

The data I collected over this period was done in two ways. This period related to two programs. During the first program, I explained to my students the nature of my research and asked their permission to note anything that happened or was said in the class that would be useful to my inquiry. They were all in favour of this, and as some of them had done research in the past they were very encouraging and would even offer suggestions and background information, unsolicited, that they felt would be useful for me to know. For example, one student met with me to talk about the history of Ukraine and how he spent his early life as a son of a military officer. Another wanted to share with me the information about the education system in Ukraine. Another gave me photographs and documentation on the disaster at Chernobyl in 1989 and explained the immediate and long term repercussions of this event to his life and the lives of others he knew. They seemed generally proud that someone from North America was taking an interest in them. During the session, I met with some of the Ukrainians periodically and had informal discussions with them to gather general insight into their feelings about the course and their lived experiences in Canada. At the end of this group's program, in mid-December, 1999, I conducted four audiotaped interviews but I was somewhat disappointed with the results. The general questions I asked resulted in vague answers, which were very non-committal such as: 'I loved everything about the language course. Everything was great. There was nothing I would change.'

In January, 2000, at the beginning of the next program, after meeting my own group of students and spending a few days introducing myself individually to Ukrainians from other groups I set up a meeting with all the delegation – all the Ukrainian students at various levels that were in the Language School learning English. At that point, I explained verbally and in writing the nature of my research and asked for their participation. I gave them a week to think about it before they needed to respond. I explained that besides helping me, I

saw it as an opportunity for them to use English in an informal way and that if they wrote for me I would be happy to offer suggestions to help them with their writing skills. The following week seven students came to the first discussion group and after that it diminished to five. Those five remained until the last session. During this program, I continued to observe classroom interactions and to take notes. The fact that there were two Hungarians in this group added a new dimension and substantiated some of the comments about intercultural issues that previous students had made to me. For example, students in previous groups had mentioned a feeling of being ostracized by other delegations. I noticed this in the professional but somewhat distant attitudes of the Hungarians at the beginning of the course. I made many attempts to try to improve classroom cohesiveness with activities which focused on getting to know each other as human individuals with families and experiences. I also invited the group to my home, held a birthday party for one of my students on another occasion and encouraged them in group work. I noticed after several weeks that one of the Hungarians began shaking hands with the Ukrainians each morning which to me suggested an acceptance of some sort. On the other hand when we talked of a reunion in Europe, it was mentioned that the Ukrainians would need to come to Hungary and not vice versa. One of the Hungarians commented quite seriously: "It's closer for the Ukrainians to come to Hungary than for us to go to Ukraine" (T. Homoki, personal communication, April 14, 2000). The dangers involved in a trip to Ukraine in the mind of this Hungarian officer, were, I believe, at the root of this comment. In fact, he might be inferring I accept you, but not yet your countrymen.

All through this program, the students in my own class wrote daily journals which, in some cases, were very enlightening. At the end of the session in April each of them wrote comments about their learning experiences. For example the following excerpts are taken from these comment sheets:

> When I went to test I felt confident. But after when news for me I didn't pass. This killed my confidence (Course Critique, May, 2000).

> Waiting for other people to speak was difficult for me. Some people were inhibited and embarrassed because I make a joke and people don't understand and the atmosphere followed the behavior. I think this was because of personality and age and life experience. If somebody before has a difficult life it's now difficult to change their view in the world. Canadian life is difficult for some students to understand exactly, exactly understand and not just skin deep.....They had a lot of experience in life that they couldn't change (Course Critique, May, 2000).

Teacher as Researcher - Engaging in Reflexivity

In some respects I found it very difficult to write this thesis from a philosophical and moral viewpoint. By aligning myself with the educational community of teachers and teacher-researchers and by participating in the same discourse, I grappled with the question, do I align myself also in the power structure of the North American community, the "haves," to talk about the East European community, the "have-nots"? Sometimes when I am with a teacher and we are talking about my students, I feel the sting of some remarks, subtle and not so subtle about a Ukrainian student's outdated glasses: "Looks like he's a member of the KGB". Villenas (1996), as a Chicana graduate student working in a Latino community had to come to terms with how, by affiliating with the white English-speaking organizers of the project, she was legitimizing their discourse of "Latinos as a problem" (p.715). Am I, by entering into the discourse of a North American educated teacher-researcher choosing to study Ukrainians as the "exotic poor who need our help" (p. 720)? Villenas "challenges dominant-culture education ethnographers to move beyond the researcher-as-colonizer position and to call upon their own histories of complicity and marginalization in order to move toward new identities and discourses." So where do I place myself in this issue?

As a North American amongst a group of Ukrainians in Canada I am a member of the dominant group. But I am also one of ten children, born into a Francophone family in an English speaking milieu when to be so was considered second class. As a child I felt the pain of not having basic needs met compared to those around me. In school, I watched sadly as I saw my sister and a friend were treated with disdain and condescension and sometimes simply ignored because they were not fitting the mold of a "good student" – getting good grades. (I have seen the same treatment of students more recently while volunteering to help

out in my daughter's elementary school class). As a fifty year old graduate student, as a teacher on contract, as a financially-struggling mother of five, as a woman, I feel what it is to be at a disadvantage, to be in the position of non-privilege. So yes, I am in some contexts a part of the dominant group, but at the same time I am a member of a marginalized group. In the beginning of conducting my research I was an "outsider" but in the nature of identity, ever-changing and being negotiated, I became an "insider." As an "insider" I speak *with* not *about* my Ukrainian students in trying to contextualize what social identity and investment mean to them in learning English as a Ukrainian in North America. Perhaps, it is because traditionally we have chosen to write *about* SL learners as "the Others," as Fine (1994) calls those who are subjugated. It is only "on working the hyphen" between ourselves and others that we will reveal more about ourselves and about the structures that we use to support Othering (Fine, 1994, p.72).

Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the various levels of influences that have played a role in language learning for the groups of Ukrainian military students in my study. I have explained and provided the rationale for the data collection procedures I have used to give voice to the participants in my study. I have also described the three phases of my study: a trip to Ukraine, gaining access to the site of my inquiry, and particulars of the data collection period. In the next chapter, I examine and discuss the results of this data collection. I also comment on the significance of these findings in defense of my support for the importance of the concepts of social identity and investment to our understanding of language learning. For this particular group of Ukrainian military students, the power relations that were involved in their interactions both inside and outside the classroom context, I believe, had profound effects on their social identities and their decision to invest in using English.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS

> ... belonging to NATO gives Canada access to strategic information, exercises with allied forces and an equal voice in high-level decisions affecting European security and stability.... As well, NATO is important to Canada because the organization provides a security umbrella in the midst of sweeping change in Eastern Europe. Furthermore through the Partnership for Peace program that NATO members and other European nations have established, it encourages the development of democratic governments in Eastern Europe and in the former republics of the Soviet Union (Department of National Defense, 1999).

> ... Canada is taking a key role in NATO's strategy ... Canada helped create a NATO liaison office in Kiev. And Canadians are visible as senior staff members at the liaison office and at a separate NATO information office where the military alliance is distributing brochures, books and flag decals (York, Jun. 2000).

> ... We've found ourselves overwhelmed with the Russian language. We are more inundated with Russian culture and language today than even in Soviet times. The Russian mentality is dominating our media. They all give the Russian viewpoint (Drach, as cited in York, 2000).

> Mr. Kuchma ... is an unpopular and distrusted leader. [In the recent election he] has enjoyed some huge advantages in the election. The opposition candidates were virtually excluded from any positive publicity on Ukraine's biggest television channels, which are largely controlled by the government and its business allies. ... The Council of Europe, which monitors democracy and human rights in Europe, said it was troubled by the Ukrainian media's failure to give equal access to the election candidates. It noted that some media outlets were shut down for alleged fire-safety and tax violations, apparently in an attempt to pressure them into supporting Kuchma (York, 1999).

It seems everyone these days has self-serving interests in vying for the "Ukrainian voice" – be they democratic nations, Russians, or a "distrusted and unpopular" politician. Like other people in other nations (or indeed students in institutions), the response to one's own voice being silenced is sometimes anger. For example, a report from Ukraine reported that "thousands of nationalist protesters marched through the city of Lyviv and trashed a café following the death of a Ukrainain folksinger" (York, Jul. 2000). Others flee. In an article in *La Gazette des Femmes*, it is written that "400,000 Ukrainiennes depuis dix ans

ont quitté le pays, parfois de gré, la plupart du temps de force et sont ainsi piégées ... dans des bordels de Tel-Aviv ou de Montreal" (Boulet, 2000). Some become apathetic. In an opinion poll in Ukraine in November 1999 "half of the respondents said they accepted corruption as a fact of life" (Boulet, as cited in York,1999). Accepting that anger, flight (whether it be physical or psychological), and apathy are signs of a loss of voice, then as language educators who are concerned with enabling students to aspire to their potential, when we see these signs in students can we justify ignoring them? In this chapter, I explore to what extent the voices of the Ukrainian students in my study have been listened to in a military language immersion program in Canada. I will present data that shows that with respect to the military officers in my study, from their perspectives, having, or being denied a voice affected their social and cultural identities inside and outside the classroom and intersected with their language learning experiences.

An important theme that emerged from my analysis of the officers comments and from my observations is the need for the learners in my study to speak in order to improve their language proficiency. However, they are in the paradoxical position of being unable to speak for a number of reasons. First of all, although they are encouraged to practice English as much as possible outside the classroom, their access to interactions with Anglophones outside the classroom context is controlled and limited. If they do not interact and practice, they do not improve their language skills. Second, some pedagogical practices in use inside the classroom affect their social identity, and this in turn, makes it difficult for them to participate in natural conversations outside the classroom. I use the term *identity* from Peirce (1997) to refer to "how people understand who they are in relation to the world around them, how this relationship is constructed across time and space and how they understand their possibilities for the future" (p. 410). Perdue (1984) argues that "[the learner] is frequently in a situation in which it is the other interactant who holds the major right to speak, and so the possibilities of communication with the other may be severely curtailed" (p.70). I would agree and add that, by extension, if the other interactant, for example, teachers, programs or institutions, hold the major right to what, when, and how speaking takes place, the possibility of communication is even more limited.

In this chapter I have chosen to analyze the data under two major headings – the younger officers and the more senior officers. From the three groups that I taught, there were ten younger and ten senior officers who participated. I do this, despite my reluctance to generalize or categorize, because of the distinct differences I observed generally in the Ukrainian students who were from these two groups. One could argue that these differences are purely, presumably, a question of age. However, as Vitalii and other young learners repeated to me on several occasions in referring to the older group: "*They are old men. They are old communists*" (personal communication, January 21, 1999). This comment suggests, in the minds of my students at least, that the change in Ukraine from a Soviet system to a free market economy, and all that that entails, did and continues to have a profound effect on their identities.

For many of the participants, certain classroom practices as well as the curriculum were structured in such a way as to deny the importance of their symbolic resources – such as their knowledge, their experiences – work-related, life-related and culture-related, that made up their identities. For some, the individual store of knowledge and experience that they arrived with, was given little value in the context of the language program. This fact made the transition from a Ukrainian context to a Canadian context very complex and investment in learning English more problematic. In other words, the multi-layered contexts within which these men lived in Ukraine and which, in many cases, denied them a voice, were compounded in the Canadian context. With respect to the younger students, in the next section I discuss how the power relations embedded in military ranks within the classroom played a very important role in these students' opportunities to engage in learning. Nevertheless, after a few weeks some of the younger students began to develop new identities outside the classroom and for these officers, this meant opportunities for and access to new social networks. One became an expert pool player and was challenged regularly to games by Canadian players. Another met a female officer and became involved with her friends and family, while another befriended members of my family and went on bike trips. Participating in these social networks resulted in more practice in English and a change in identity for some of these younger officers. In the next section, I show how this change in identity gave them a sense of empowerment. This empowerment was shown in

their challenging of rank and discipline in the military context and a greater agency in their own learning, both here in Canada and when they returned to Ukraine.

The Younger Students – Inside the Classroom

All but one of the eight younger students in my classes saw their trip to Canada as an enormous opportunity to improve their economic situation. All but one had a strong desire to learn English. The chance to experience 'the American culture' as they had seen on television and in the movies was an added bonus and something that many had dreamed about since their teenage years. Vlad recounted to me that one of his fondest early memories, albeit a stereotyped image, was dressing up like a native Canadian-Indian and chasing his friends around the trees outside his apartment block (personal communication, February 17, 1999). Prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union, they knew little about the West except through children's books that talked about the Indians and cowboys that roamed the countryside. A few had traveled outside of Ukraine before their trip to Canada but only to neighbouring Soviet states, and mostly to Russia. They arrived excited but nervous about what lay ahead. They showed their nervousness by failing to show up to meet me individually on the afternoon that was put aside for informal get-togethers. As they explained later, they were "*frightened*" that if I talked to them they would not be able to understand or to answer. From their perspective, I was the "*chief*" and for that reason I held the power to judge their competency and efforts and to report to "the military" about their progress. In the following vignette I describe our first meeting.

> "**May I come in?**"
> It is the first day of class and I am waiting in my classroom for my students to arrive. Though it is rather early, with still twenty minutes before class starts, there are several military officers milling about the student lounge outside my door. There are five classrooms encircling the lounge, so I am unsure of whose students are whose. Besides, they hadn't shown up the day before so I have no idea what they even look like. The air seems tense out there. I can feel it through the open door of my classroom. There is no audible talking just the odd whisper and shuffling of feet. Everyone is standing rather than relaxing on the sofas that line the lounge. When I exit the classroom for a few minutes, the students I meet either look away or nod in a formal way. Finally, after what seems like a very long time, one by one the officers come to my door and stand at the threshold and ask, "*May I come in?*" I smile and say "*Good Morning*" but the first student remains at the door. After a long somewhat

> embarrassing pause I realize he is waiting for more. I chuckle, ill at ease, as I give my approval. In a low voice, I answer. "*Yes. Come in.*" This is repeated seven times. Once in the room everyone waits while the officer with the biggest stars on his lapels, a colonel, sits down in the middle of the line of desks directly facing my desk at the front. On one side of him sits a major, on the other, a captain. One other captain sits down and then the rest quietly find their places in the wings of the desk formation. No one speaks. The silence is deafening. I stand in front and for the first time that I can remember, there is no need to ask for attention. There is only silence.

The greeting that I received that morning was indicative of the five months I was about to spend with these Ukrainian officers. It reveals the submissive role that these students felt compelled to take on as they entered the context of a North American, NATO, English speaking learning environment. As well, they brought to this context their own cultural identities which explains their silence in allowing the most powerful among them, the highest ranking officers, to choose the advantageous positions in the classroom.

In fact, I observed that rank is one of the initial silencers in the class. There was my rank as 'chief' of the class which was visible by the physical layout of the classroom, the stack of books that sat on my desk as opposed to the bareness of the students' desks and the fact that I held the keys to the cabinet, all paper and school supplies, and it was I who decided the test dates and who could enter and exit the room. Then, there were the military ranks indicated on their lapels, as proof of some hierarchy within the Ukrainian military. The fact that rank has a bearing on learning was shown in many ways by the younger officers. I recall an incident when I was explaining how to give commands. I asked Olexander, a lieutenant, to tell Sacha, a colonel, to sit on the floor. There was much hesitation and nervous laughter on Olexander's part. As he explained at the break after that class, he felt he could not perform the task because of the line of respect that it would cross. Furthermore, classroom observations confirm that the younger, lower ranked students in the group did substantially less talking in class. The senior officers established their authority over the younger officers in various ways. For example in the area of dress, I recall one senior officer chastising a junior officer for wearing a particular sweater loaned to him by the Canadian military for cold weather and which was not part of the Ukrainian uniform. He embarrassed the younger officer with his comments, "*It is very bad, very bad!*" Alex, the younger officer said very little but remained quiet for most of the day and seemed disinterested in participating. Another way to establish authority was to demand certain

services of a junior officer. For example a senior officer had a junior officer carry his books to and from class. In another example a junior officer, who in fact was a translator in Ukraine and was in an advanced class, was required to spend most evenings helping a senior officer in my class rather than socialize in the gym or at the Mess. The junior officer had his own work to do as well and his teacher commented to me on how tired and overwhelmed he was by the demands of the senior officers (R. Armstrong, personal communication, March 12,1999). At the same time, he was penalized for what could have been a more powerful position as better speaker of English.

At one point when I invited all Ukrainian officers to a party in a Canadian family home, this same junior officer was not informed by the others. It appeared that to be a junior officer and to have skills that outperformed one's senior's was an asset for the senior officer but a liability for the junior officer. In the classroom, I also observed that it was usually the senior officers who had priority when there was a presentation to give or in leading a discussion. One senior officer consistently invited me to coffee and if other, more junior officers, sat with us the senior officer would dominate the conversation. On excursions on a bus, I was often politely led to a seat with the senior officers who would sit alone in a seat whereas the junior officers would sit together. It appeared to me that by virtue of their rank the senior officers had priority over their subordinates for my attention in their efforts to learn English.

In the beginning, most younger officers acquiesced to this unspoken power relation and never spoke unless spoken to. Some took it in their stride while others had more difficulty with being silenced. During the data collection period I observed that when one foreign military student from another delegation committed suicide soon after he arrived for the MTAP (Military Assistance Training Program) program, teachers became aware and more proactive about students who seemed depressed. I recall that one day in the first few weeks of a program Sergei, one of the younger officers, had his head lowered for a couple of days, seemed distant and uninterested in what was going on in class. When I approached him, he implored me to help him: "*I am very lonely.*" He said. When I tried to explain to him that it was natural for him to miss his family he clarified: "*It is not my family. I want to speak. I need to speak. In my country all the time I speak but here I cannot speak.*" Others

withdrew into apathy. Anatoli, the youngest and most junior of the officers, perpetually came late, incessantly folded papers, read newspapers, or clicked his pen against the table. He understood that if he could not speak at least his "voice" or presence could be "heard" in other ways. Vitalii became angry. He would blurt out comments regardless of what was going on in the class, would quite rudely challenge other students and me and impatiently get up and leave if the period finished despite the fact that we were still involved in some activity. Vitalii was refusing to be silenced. He eventually left the class and his subsequent teacher reported that she saw no signs of anger or rudeness. Since there was only another junior Ukrainian officer in that group, rank was not an issue. Vlad, realizing he could not fully participate, would take out little sheets of paper with vocabulary written in English on one side, Ukrainian on the other, and would escape into his own methodology for learning. I noted that Anatoli, another junior officer would escape into thoughts and other concerns. One day, I asked him what he was thinking about. As indicated by the following excerpt from my field notes, he was worrying about his family whom he had spoken to that day.

> **Field notes, March 16, 2000**
> Vitalii is being out-of-it today, can't focus and seems distracted. I ask him about it between classes. He says he's worried about his parents. His father is disabled and only has a small pension. His mother is talking of moving to Spain because they are so short of money and life is so difficult these days. His father's pension is $17 a month and his mother is unable to find work as a nurse. He repeats the amount "$17 not $70" to be sure I understand.

Concerns about home seemed to be a constant factor in the lives of these students during their time spent in Canada. The list of worries was telling of their lives in Ukraine and was confirmed by my visit to their country. There, they are constant victims of the state-power outages, fuel shortages, inaccessible clean water, crowded schools for their children, ill health etc. But for these officers in Canada their prime concern is always their employment and for that reason their military commanders in Ukraine hold considerable power over their lives. They had to prove to their higher ranked commanders on their return that their time in Canada was well-spent. Sergei explained to me:

> When we go back to Ukraine first of all they will have a test and then maybe a talk with their commander. When he asks "What did you do in Canada?" If you say I went to Montreal to a bar or disco this isn't good (Sergei, personal communication, March 27, 2000).

The power that these absent commanders held over the officers was particularly evident at testing time. At that time the power relations due to rank within the group, became superseded by a greater fear, the fear of "*my chief in Ukraine.*" Days before the test, I observed how tensions in the classroom began to rise – one would verbally snap at the other; another time one frustrated officer hit his colleague quite forcefully in the stomach. The fear seemed more visible amongst the older students, as I will explain later. However the pressure of "being successful" was seen in the younger students through their attempts to cheat whenever they had a test. My initial thought was that this was due to the fact, as stated earlier, that for many Ukrainians, from self reports, corruption is a way of life. Vadim explained it this way: "*Ukrainians help each other. We don't afraid to help each other*" (personal communication, March 13, 2000). Furthermore, many of the officers claimed that they were generally tested orally in Ukraine and written testing was quite foreign to them. This fact was corroborated by the teachers I met in Ukraine. According to an administrator in the British Council in Ukraine the reason for this was explained in part to be due to a shortage of writing materials, especially in rural areas (I. Pearson, personal communication, July 20, 1999). Our eurocentric methods of testing language, it appears, disadvantaged these young officers. Also, bribing was seen as another option for one younger student (the one for whom the financial gains in coming to Canada was not a concern). Alex offered to give me "*what you want, you tell me and I give you. I must pass test.*" Thus, testing served to control these young officers and made them see learning a second language as an academic hoop that they needed to jump through, or risk consequences. Vitalii appeared desperate and became very insistent that I give him the questions and answers that would be on the test (part of a teacher's mandate in Ukraine) and when I explained to him that I had never seen the tests, that they were prepared by others in a different department, and nor did I know, initially at least, what the test consisted of, he went to another teacher who had been in the program longer and was able to procure sample questions. This teacher had taught for many years in the program. Although there were no specific tests available to him, he had prepared a list of likely questions from discussions with previous students after they had written previous tests.

The attempts at cheating and bribing mentioned here were an ongoing problem, and, from my perspective, suggest the enormously complex relations of power bound up in the testing process. This was compounded by the lack of control and ownership that these young officers had for even receiving or responding to the results of their tests. These results were given numerically by the senior teacher to me. Neither I nor my students were able to view the work they did on their tests and **only** if a student "failed" was a verbal explanation given to the student by an intermediary to the tester. After one series of tests, Olexander, who received a five out of eight on a writing test became very depressed and retreated more into silence. For several days, he refused to participate in class and did not even work at his little vocabulary sheets. When I approached him about this behavior he answered: "*In the beginning when I arrived here, I thought I can learn English, but now I know it is impossible for me*"(personal communication, March 13, 1999). Olexander, as in class, chose to give up hope of learning English. He saw his results as proof that despite his hard work and efforts at acquiring English, which he equates to passing the test, composed by those in authority, is beyond his capability and control.

Anatolii, blamed himself for failing a test, and at the same time he also worried about the repercussions to his identity as a "*good*" officer when he returned to Ukraine. The control that these power relations had on him were so profound that, as he explained, he was even unable to get involved during the testing activity. In the following extract he described how badly he felt during a listening test:

> During my listening test I didn't think about the test. I only thought about sorry or excuse for everybody who wait me at home, the senior teacher, you, and who phone me. I'm a bad man. Everybody thinks their life more important. I'm always depressed. People like me always bad. Sometimes I don't tell the truth. If I told truth not all people like the truth. If my colleagues think about me bad, it's very bad for me. I'm unhappy (personal communication May 15, 2000).

His concern is for how he will apologize to his commander, his family, the senior teacher and to me for letting us down. In his eyes, the results of the tests are indicative of his personal worth as a human being, a son, and a military officer. The fact that he had failed labels him as bad in all these roles. So valuable are people's opinions of him that in the end, he suggested the possibility of lying to protect his dignity. Sergei, as well, reported that he

felt marginalized by the writing test. The sometimes obvious and sometimes subtle ethnocentric nature of the tests frustrated him. Despite the fact that he was making very good progress in the language, this progress was not reflected in positive feelings as he did the writing test. He laughed in disbelief at the utter incongruous nature of some of the questions on the test. One question asked that he write a cheque to pay a bill. He explained, and others in the group corroborated his story, that in Ukraine the banks are not to be trusted and that any money a person has, is kept in the apartment – "*under the bed.*" Vitalii concluded the obvious: "*I think this test for Canadian military who study English*" (personal communication, November 22, 1999).

Also, this test like others in the program, measures only one kind of literacy which happens to be less important to Sergei's identity as a communications officer and a Ukrainian. The test, instead of a being a measure of his knowledge, was another source of silencing for him. "*When I speak I have long sentence. When I write I spend only piece of my think.*" He explains in this quote that he can express his thoughts much better verbally than in writing even in his own language and that writing is a poor measure of his ability to communicate: "*In real life I have time to write and think, use a dictionary. It is bad test.*" As was the case with so many students, dictates "from above" rather than from within himself, required Sergeii to be tested in a skill (in this case, writing) for which he held little value. He was able to see the disadvantaged position he would be in by trying the test and for that reason deduced that it was a bad idea. In the end, Sergei refused to write the final writing test.

Younger Officers – Outside the Classroom

These younger students, perhaps because they realized that they were being denied opportunities to speak in the classroom because of rank and also the ethnocentric nature of the program, eventually sought opportunities to have a voice outside the classroom. They became involved in sports like pool, swimming, working out in the gym or playing basketball. For the most part, I observed that they interacted only with fellow Ukrainians. This tendency to stick together could have been due in part to their realization that their place was at the bottom of the hierarchy of other countries represented in the population of

the school. This position in the school may stem from their socio-economic and political status in Europe. Ukraine is considered as one of the poorest nations, and along with Russia very unstable politically. The close affiliation of Ukraine to Russia culturally and politically for over seventy years has led many Europeans to equate the two countries. For those countries, like, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, who struggled under Soviet rule, their negative feelings toward Ukrainians and Russians (who are studying French at the same Base) is reflected in this history.

Whereas other delegations mixed together somewhat in the Mess or in the gym, I observed no intermingling with Ukrainians. They were marginalized by others in the school and indeed referred to by some teachers as "*the poor Ukrainians.*" Students from other delegations seemed to mistrust them. As a Polish naval officer explained to me when I talked of the possibility of going to visit my students in Ukraine: "*Don't go there. It is a very dangerous country*" (personal communication, April 10, 1999). A similar comment was made to another teacher by students from Poland and the Czech Republic when she suggested she would like to go to Ukraine (personal communication, November 18, 1999). I observed that when there was a mixing of the delegations, my younger students sometimes looked uncomfortable and their outward demeanor became reserved and quiet. In the beginning, this social stigmatizing had an important influence on the younger officers' investment in English. The three following vignettes, taken from my observations during the data collection period, are vivid examples of the difficulties these younger officers had in taking advantage of opportunities to speak in English because of this marginalization.

Sing-along? No Thanks

It's Friday afternoon. Earlier in the week the students were given the option of staying in class on Friday, or attending a series of short films being put on by the social director of the school. They all enthusiastically chose the films and kept reminding me of the upcoming event for the rest of the week.

Right after lunch, they arrive back at the class early, in order to walk together to the auditorium where the films will be shown. Unfortunately, I am held up and so our departure to the auditorium is delayed and we arrive a few minutes late to the film room. The students chatter in a relaxed fashion all the way. When we arrive I notice that we are the last to come in. As we enter to sit down many of the others turn to see who is arriving. When they see that it is the Ukrainians snickers and laughter are heard throughout the room. The Ukrainians slink embarrassingly into their seats. For

the rest of the program they are low-key, unlike the other officers who whisper and comment to themselves about the films. When it comes time to sing along to a Canadian folk song whose words are provided on a big screen, my students, who have sung with me on other occasions before and seem to love music, remain silent and disinterested. When the lights come on they scurry out of the room. Back in the class I ask them how they enjoyed the outing. They hesitate briefly and then respond with negative comments- "*Better to study in the class*" or "*This program was for children.*"

In this vignette, the Ukrainian officers show that they were enthusiastic about using their English skills in a new context. However, the imposing of a power relation on that context by the laughter from the other delegations silenced them. In this way, their feeling of subjugation proved stronger than their desire to improve their English and the opportunity to use the target language in a natural setting was lost.

In the Library – Sssh! Don't Speak

Today is library tour day. One of the librarians has agreed to show the students in my class around the library and to explain the various locations of the different sections and the resource material available to the students. The students are nervous. It is only the second week of classes and they are not understanding very much of what I say to them and are worried about understanding the librarian. I have encouraged them to ask questions as best they can and explain that the librarian is familiar with giving such tours and will be happy to answer their questions. After we enter the library and I introduce the students we walk between the stacks and the librarian begins her commentary. Sacha is a particularly keen student anxious to speak English whenever he can. He, unlike the others, is asking a lot of questions both to me and to the librarian, and making comments. At one point we come out into an open area where there are a couple of officers from another delegation sitting in chairs reading. Sacha, in mid-sentence, glances at these officers and immediately stops talking. It seemed so strange to me that later when we are back at class I ask him what happened. "*Sacha, why did you suddenly stop talking in the library?*" "*Oh,*" he explained, "*I am shy to speak when the other officers listen.*"

In this second vignette, we see that the introduction to the library and the potential for a tremendous resource for further learning for the Ukrainians is thwarted by the presence of a few officers from another delegation. The power that these other officers have, even by their presence, on the desire for a very keen student to communicate in English suggests the ability of power relations to silence the students. This power relation denies them the opportunity to practice and thereby to improve. It is not surprising that in questioning the students during the length of the program that I found many of the Ukrainians never took advantage of using the library.

Niagara Falls – Maybe ... Maybe Not.

The Ukrainians are not in my class a long time before they mention their desire to go to Niagara Falls. "*It is my dream*," many of them mention even in the beginning when their speaking skills are limited. It is with interest that I hear one day in the staff room that a trip to Niagara Falls has been planned by one of the delegations. A bus has been rented with seventy places for those interested in going. The cost is very cheap because the students will be able to spend the nights at a military base at a rate of ten dollars a night. Quite excitedly I speak with my students and encourage them to consider going. I explain the difference in cost between going on this trip as opposed to taking a train. I wonder why the students don't know about it. They seem evasive when I ask why they haven't heard. One of the younger officers, Sacha, says that he would love to go. "*It is my dream*," he repeats. When I ask another teacher she says that she doesn't know why, but that the Ukrainians are never invited and surmises that maybe it is assumed they don't have the money. I find out that there is only one seat available and that the organizers are having trouble finding someone to fill the seat. I go to the organizing officer and ask if the seat is still available and he says yes. I tell him that I have a student who is interested. I agree to bring him around at the next break which I do. When the organizing officer sees that it is a Ukrainian there is a long hesitation and finally the organizing officer says that he will get back to us. The day of the trip Sacha is informed that he can go. He is thrilled. I go to say goodbye to him outside at the bus. While others mingle together, no one welcomes him or acknowledges his presence.

The trip to Niagara Falls had the potential to be an important opportunity for Sacha to practice and improve his English. It meant being with other officers, more capable peers, whose English skills were more advanced than his own. Also the group was going to a completely English environment as opposed to the mainly French environment where the base is located. And, most importantly, the fact that the trip was a life-long dream for Sacha, one could assume that his enthusiasm would lead to a great deal of questioning and information seeking – that is, wanting-to-know, which are excellent prerequisites for learning. So strong was his enthusiasm that he was willing to spend, in his terms, a considerable amount to go along. This vignette clearly indicates the less visible power relations that were at play in the program and that influenced the opportunities that these Ukrainians had to broaden their English outside of the classroom. Fortunately, Sacha, whom I observed to be generally shy in character was able to be strong in his conviction to seize this opportunity and to go on the trip. The trip gave him a lot of confidence, which I saw in his broad smiles on his return instead of his usual serious look and in the enthusiasm he showed in wanting to meet and talk all about this "*very interesting and very wonderful trip.*" When he came back, he decided that the silencing that was a part of being a younger officer

in my class was denying him the opportunity to speak. He explained that he wanted to move to a higher level, choosing a class where there would be a mixture of delegations and where rank among the Ukrainian officers would be less of an issue. Interestingly, the new teacher reported that he found Sacha "*too keen*" and had to ask him "*to relax.*" Sacha and I talked about his exuberance. He was very polite and inferred from this remark that he was "*a problem*" to the teacher. He indicated to me that he took less interest in his class work because of this remark. However, he eventually met an English female officer and was accepted into her social network of family and friends. She also took him on another trip to Niagara Falls.

In fact, a majority of the younger officers in my group eventually managed to gain entrance to Anglophone social networks. Although I encouraged them often to do so, I believe their initiative could also be attributed to their need to gain a voice outside the classroom where rank, testing and other classroom practices silenced them. Anatoli developed a friendship with a Francophone who was learning English, also with another girl he met at a bar and as well looked up a distant relative. He then spent his savings, a difficult decision for him, to go to Toronto to see the family. As he wrote in his journal: "*The weekend was for me the best in my short life*" (April 20, 2000). Vitalii developed a relationship with an Anglophone female. Alex became quite friendly with one of the senior teachers and would join him for cigarettes at break time in the Mess. He, unlike most of the other officers, seemed to have sufficient money to do and buy what he wanted. His material resources as opposed to the others in the Ukrainian group allowed him to spend more time in the bar in the evenings, drinking and socializing with other military officers.

Nevertheless, the entrance to social networks outside the Ukrainian delegation did not always come easily or instantly. First of all, the material investment in going somewhere where one had to pay, for example the cost of the bus fare, tickets to a performance, paying for a meal that was missed at the Base, played a significant part in their decision to take advantage of opportunities organized by the social director for evenings and weekends. Given the value of their Canadian salaries (about $300 a month) while they were here and what that money could provide for their families in Ukraine (where most earned $70 a month, if paid at all), I observed a tremendous pressure on them to decline these

opportunities in order to be able to return with a significant savings. Thus, the lack of material resources denied them access to the privilege of sharing in the opportunities for learning that others in the program enjoyed.

There were other factors as well as financial ones that made taking part in opportunities to interact in English problematic. Sergei, in particular, was able to express some of these factors as he described for me at various times during the program, the struggles he had to try and enter into social relationships. Part of the problem for him was his fear of Canadian women. Fear of women was certainly not a feeling that Sergei experienced in Ukraine. On the contrary, I gathered from the stories that he related to me and from his relaxed, open nature in general, as well as my observation of him interacting with others in a variety of settings that he was very comfortable with people. However, having heard the same expression of feelings from former students and whom I observed when I eventually visited them in Ukraine with their wives, co-workers and friends, it was my perception that fear of women is certainly not an obvious factor from the male perspective in Ukraine. This fear of women was a frequent topic of discussion in the classroom. The issue stemmed from a video shown to Sergei as well as all foreign officers on arrival.

The video is a Canadian military video and is used in response to strong criticism of the military from women who have served in the military and from pressure from government with regard to the treatment of women in the Canadian military. The video discusses the subject of sexual harassment in very serious terms and, I gather from the comments of the participants in my study, left a strong message. One day Sergei confided to me that he wanted to go to a bar but that he was held back from meeting Anglophone women because of fear.

S. *I want to meet people but I need a guide.*

P. *Why do you need a guide?*

S. *Because I am foreign.*

P. *Why is that a problem?*

S. *I am afraid of Canadian women. I don't know what to do. I don't want to go to jail* (March 26, 2000).

In this short extract we see that Sergei was anxious to go beyond the security of the Base and being with fellow Ukrainians in order to make contacts with Anglophone speakers and to practice his English. On many occasions he explained how he wanted to experience the American culture in as many ways as possible. Indeed, he made a supreme effort during his stay to do that even at one point staying up all night to be able to be out of the Base but to avoid the cost of a hotel. However, in this situation, going to a bar, required not only a financial sacrifice on his part. It also meant overcoming the fear of perhaps gravely offending a Canadian female with behavior that for him was culturally appropriate.

Besides the obstacle of fearing that his behavior was not culturally appropriate, he attributed the difficulty of entering social networks on the Base partly to the day-to-day aloofness of native speakers, and partly because his English is difficult for others to understand.

> I didn't feel comfortable in the beginning because I didn't knew English – just a few words. That's it. If you want to learn English, if you want to speak to somebody, you have to go against yourself. Somebody are very busy. They don't want to spend time with you. You should try again to another man. I can't believe that everybody don't understand me. ... Don't make the wall in front of you. You must understand that this is a temporary situation (May 23, 2000).

In this extract Sergei explains that being able to practice English involves overcoming the feelings of being in the disadvantaged position of not being understood or of disturbing an Anglophone speaker. While he acknowledges that these feelings are a fact of life for himself and his colleagues, with the optimism of his youth, perhaps, he suggests that he must change his identity as a member of a disadvantaged group - "*to go against yourself*." To avoid being silenced – "*the wall in front of you*," he suggests that one must persevere in this new role and that being disadvantaged will only be temporary.

Rank became a factor outside the classroom as well. Sergei explains how he met an Anglophone officer in the Mess on several occasions. The Canadian was initially friendly and seemed to value Sergei's symbolic resources such as the fact that he was European, an officer, and presumably well trained in some field as most are.

> Two months ago I met a Canadian officer – a major. He was very friendly. I was in my civilian clothes. We talked a lot. Every time he saw me he was very friendly. Then one time he saw me in my uniform and saw that I was second-lieutenant. After that I saw him he never spoke to me and walked by me (May 8, 2000).

The opportunities to practice English were not just structured by social relations of power based on language and rank but also on ethnocentrism. In the next extract Sergei compares how a foreigner is valued in Ukraine whereas in Canada, the opposite is the case. He vividly expresses how his symbolic resources are not valued and how this affects his social identity. He realizes his identity must change and adapt in the power relation that is inherent to interactions with Canadians. Only with children can he claim his own voice.

> We thought before [we arrived] we are interesting people – foreign people, that some people really want to learn something from us but big difference between our country and Canada. In Canada there are a lot of foreign people. They don't really want to know us – for first time. In Ukraine if I meet someone from America it is very interesting for me and I try to speak first. In Canada – no, opposite, because Canada is immigration country. We continue thinking we are important people in Canada but it is false. They don't ask me about Ukraine. They ask me about America, NATO, Canada. My words [advice]: to converse with Canadians you have to be interested in sports, movies, politics, separation of Quebec. Solution: talk with children. They speak very quickly. They are very interested in my language. They speak a lot (May, 23, 2000).

In this extract taken from a conversation with Sergei at the end of the program, he seems resigned to accepting the fact that, from a Canadian perspective, as a foreigner he has a very low status in Canada. He realizes that Canadians hold no interest or value in what he or other foreigners have as symbolic resources – their histories, their training in different fields, their talents, their personal and socio-cultural practices. He blames this lack of interest and value on the part of Canadians, on the large numbers of foreigners in Canada who occupy the same low status. On the other hand, he verbalizes his place in the power relation between himself and Canadians by indicating the elite status that North Americans enjoy both here and in his own country. In his view the only way to be accepted into this elite group is to change his interests and desires – that is, one's identity, to correspond to those of North America.

Sergei eventually made changes to his identity and invested heavily in learning English. These changes in identity led to a more active role as a language learner and to a

more powerful position in the power relations that were a part of his stay in Canada. First of all, he held a relatively low military rank. Also, he was a member of a disadvantaged group of Ukrainian officers from the perspective of the other officers in the European population as well as by some staff and military administration. Finally, in the Canadian context as a foreigner he held low status and his cultural identity had little value. He refused to be silenced and instead chose to attempt to change the status quo. He challenged some practices that I used in the classroom. Although I had made an attempt to put into practice concepts learned in the classroom by going to various stores and businesses at the Base and letting the students make inquiries about services, he felt that he was spending too much time in the classroom. "*We must go to real stores in the city and take turns to go in and ask for information while the other students in the class watch*" (May 27, 2000). If an activity after lunch was too passive, he commented: "*I am too sleepy for this. I need to move*" (April 13, 2000). He found the air in the classroom "*very bad*" and pointed out how it made it difficult to study. The tour of the library, in his opinion was made too early without considering that the students had too little English to gain much information. "*Waiting for other people to speak*," or turn-taking in the classroom, he commented, was not like real conversation. After a bike trip in the mountains one day where he met, a group of "*hippies*" who were very friendly to him, he wrote in his journal "*Next time* [on his next language training trip to Canada] *I would like to go to live with the hippies where there is no problem with homework, sexual harassment, and tests*" (March 24, 2000). In this way Sergei, I think, was expressing his exasperation with the formality of classroom learning and his frustration with aspects of the program. From his perspective, testing and homework are artificial ways of learning a language as opposed to the relaxed and more pleasant way of talking with others in natural conversation. He commented how much he learned that day: "*I learned a lot.*"

Sergei was outspoken about aspects of the course that were culturally ethnocentric – for example, he singled out in particular the activities around buying a house – "*I have a one-room apartment,*" and owning a car (he had a bicycle and had never owned a car), banking (not to be trusted in Ukraine), and a heavy emphasis on consumerism (making purchases and complaints). "I am not like other officers," he confided to me one day "I did

not come to Canada to do shopping" (personal communication, March 13, 2000). Activities such as reading and writing advertisements and notices, organizing sports events, volunteering held little relevance to the reality of his life in Ukraine. He works six days a week and has a second job to help make ends meet and thus found it difficult to relate to the free time that was indicative of these activities. These examples and other aspects of the program that he related to me, centered on Canadian military life and had little to do with his own circumstances in his life in the military in Ukraine or, for that matter, the future possibility of working on a NATO peacekeeping mission. I observed that another result of the ethnocentric nature of the program for him and others were their feelings of being disadvantaged. I see these feelings as part of the social identity that he had while in the program, that is the ones he mentioned above that he must fight when he says "*to speak to somebody you have to go against yourself.*"

Peirce's(1993) conception of identity as "multiple, a site of struggle, and subject to change" certainly has validity in the case of Sergei. From the individual who, at the outset, declared his utter desperation at not being able to speak he had become a self-determined learner which was evident in his outspoken criticism of the program. He also challenged the issue of rank within his delegation. He sometimes chose not to report his every step to his delegation head. He became discouraged with a particular order from his superiors to be more discreet about life in Ukraine and joked about this in class. Someone in the class reported his comment back to the delegation head. There were repercussions for this struggle on Sergei's part for his voice in the power relation that existed in his military life. Subsequently, a special training session was provided by NATO to the Ukrainians at another base in Canada which would extend their stay and provide more language training – a real bonus for the Ukrainians. No reason was given but Sergei was one of two not chosen to take part. He also worried that his behavior, which to me seemed a simple matter of speaking one's mind, would have further repercussions after he arrived home. He commented: "*Now I understand that every military system around the world -American, Canadian, Ukrainian is the same – very tough. Only for people who like to say everyday. "Yes sir!*" This suggests the enormous control that military life had on Sergei, and most likely all the officers, and the feelings he had of being in a very disempowered position as a young military officer.

Another young officer's reaction to the inequitable relations of power and silencing was much more extreme and angry. From the information I received from his friends, this officer was a peaceful, calm individual. Apparently under the influence of alcohol and prescription drugs he went on a rampage one evening and did property damage and verbally and physically assaulted several Canadian female and male officers in an attempt to demand money. As teachers who have developed quite close relationships with our students we were surprised not to be privy to any but vague information as to the nature of the event, from the military administration. This officer was sent home and was to be dishonorably discharged. Some teachers, though not condoning the actions, saw the Ukrainian's behaviour as somewhat understandable: for financial reasons, most of the Ukrainians spend a majority of their time at the Base and can go for days with not even venturing outside. On long weekends, their isolation from the outside world is probably felt even stronger as the Base is relatively empty. Many officers from the other delegations take advantage of the break from classes to travel. Some even go to the United States – to Boston, New York etc. – places that most Ukrainians expressed to me that they would love to go to. Many of the participants in my study related how long the weekends were "*in the prison.*" While some teachers expressed sympathy for the Ukrainian officer, other teachers questioned if the punishment would have been as severe if the officer had been Canadian, or indeed from one of the other countries. An extract from my field notes attests to the mood surrounding the incident and the feelings of all involved, directly or indirectly.

> **Field notes, April 28, 2000**
>
> A bad day for Ukrainians. After three days of scurrying around, talks being held between the Canadian and Ukrainian militaries, interruptions to my class, the word is out. The Ukrainian has been sent home by the Canadian military. The rest of the Ukrainians seem ashamed. They are quiet as they wander the halls, heads lowered as if to avoid other peoples eyes. ... Little is being said in the classroom. The teachers are talking. Comments show biases. "*Most of them are fine.*" "*Poor Paula has to deal with them. I don't envy her.*" "*This isn't the first time they did something. One of them got sent home from Borden.*" The senior teacher is checking with teachers about the mood in their classes. Nothing is said to me. I would think I would be the first to be asked. One teacher wonders why no teacher has come to the student's defense. Some agree that the punishment far outweighs the offense. It is explained by another teacher by the fact that it is a national disgrace. One teacher wonders if the Canadians were taunting him. "*You know what some Canadians think of them.*"

The extract strongly supports my findings that the Ukrainians in the program were treated differently than other European officers by the Canadian military administration, by Canadian military and by some of the teachers. This *differential* treatment, whether intentional or unintentional, served to marginalize these officers. Although some Ukrainians, through struggle and hard work, succeeded in earning respect from the elite groups, this unfortunate event near the end of the program had a very negative affect on their self-worth. I observed in the weeks after the event that the Ukrainians in my group and those who took part in my study were not able to regain the feelings of self-respect and empowerment that some had begun to feel. Because they left the program early to go on training, they were even denied the chance to attend the graduation dinner with the other delegations.

Comment

With regard to SLA theory, it is clear from the data that opportunities to practice and learn English for some of the younger officers are linked to the context and to the social relations of power that are involved in this contextualized setting, whether it be the formal setting of a classroom, or in the natural, informal setting outside the classroom. Although Sergei, Anatoli, Vitali, Olexander, Vlad and Sacha had access to opportunities to use English both in the class and in other parts of the Base, they were restricted and silenced by their rank, their socio-economic status and their cultural identities. With regard to cultural identities, many aspects of the program – for example, the ethnocentric themes and testing, presupposed that these officers had the same interests, history and day-to-day lives as Canadians. Instead of using their culture and interests (what they knew, what made up their identities) as a springboard to their learning English, by its absence, the assumption was made by those who designed the program or those who delivered it, that their culture, training, history etc. was of no importance to their learning. The shyness, lack of confidence, apathy and angry temperaments that some displayed were not characteristics that were necessarily static and inherent to their personalities but were socially constructed in inequitable relations of power in this particular context. With determination and struggle, some of these younger officers were eventually able to gain access to Anglophone social

networks. However, as Sergei put it, this was only accomplished by "*changing yourself.*" In fact, I began to notice this change in identities in visible ways in these younger officers. Besides a more participatory and critical approach to language learning in the classroom, I observed that they began to chew gum, became more informal in the way they put their hands in their pockets, and would laugh and joke loudly amongst themselves – behaviors which are very much frowned upon in their culture.

Identity and Change

When I went to Ukraine and visited with the first group of students, this theme of change was repeated again and again. "*Just buy the airplane ticket and we will take care of you*" the students in my first of three groups promised. I had always shown a great deal of interest in their stories about Ukraine and they appeared to be indebted to me for my interest in them. They certainly did "take care" of me.

The first entry of my field notes sets the tone for many of the themes that surfaced during my stay in Ukraine.

> **Field notes, Tuesday July 20, 1999**
> As the plane descended into Kiev, I looked through the window to see the fields that looked already cut for harvesting even though it was only early summer. It appeared that the harvest couldn't wait. When we hit the tarmac at the airport signs of a struggling nation were evident everywhere – broken and old worn pavement on the runway, dilapidated buildings and machinery, trucks and equipment. The trucks appeared to be army surplus. When we stopped near the front of the airport building a bus took us to the entrance and those who were in first class rode in a van. There was a long wait for passports to be checked. In my vicinity I noticed many in the lines were from religious groups, this particular group were American Baptists which I discerned from their common T-shirts. The religious groups included both young and older people who appeared to be on a humanitarian mission which I learned from a conversation some of them were having with other travelers in the line. The family in front of me appeared to be Ukrainian. They were dressed in American clothing and seemed quite prosperous compared to my students. I gathered this from the quantity of jewelry the man and woman wore and that the child was dressed in full Disney regalia. Though they chatted together in a somewhat normal way I sensed a nervousness among the parents. When they arrived in front of the passport agent there was a long discussion and then the family was led off by security to an unknown destination. Once past the passport official, the customs agent who was responsible for examining my luggage tried to extract money from me but I pretended not to understand and then asked people behind me for assistance. Immediately, the customs man backed off and waved me on in an impatient fashion. Roman, one of my

students, was there to meet me. As we drove off he talked about the problems he was having with his work since he returned. The business he started a few years ago was sold by his partner when he was in Canada and now he is looking for other companies to get involved with. He still continues to be a military officer but this part of his day seems to be insignificant. He seems very wound up and tense. On the drive to his home down a long avenue reminiscent of the Champs-Elysées but with very little in the way of traffic, we had to pull over into a forest to fill up with gas. He explained that there is a gas shortage and that he and his father lined up for two hours the previous night to get a container full of gas at three times it was the week before. He added that if he were to just pull over on the side of the road that there was a very serious possibility that someone would stop and take his full container of gas before he even had a chance to put the gas in his tank.

His home is in an area of high rise apartments in the suburbs of Kiev, the capital city. The building is one amongst many surrounded by flat scrub land. No attempt has been made to landscape. In fact, most of the area around and between apartments is clay with bits of weeds here and there. We pass a central pump where people are lined up to fill containers of all sorts with drinking water. Roman explains that the water in the apartments is not drinkable. In the distance there is a small lake. Roman is very proud of this view and said it was one of the things he missed most when he was in Canada. We enter into a small dark passageway lined in chipped and unpainted walls which is "guarded" by a teenager and another man who live in a small room by the door equipped with a cot. We take the elevator up to the seventh floor and after opening two bolt locks enter another small passageway with two doors. One of the doors is to Roman's apartment which is also entered once another bolt lock is opened. His wife Elena and his daughter are there to greet me. Roman shows me proudly around his apartment. It has three rooms, a bathroom and a small kitchen. He shows me his computer, a very old model that he has set up in a tiny closet whose walls are lined with fruit preserves. Off the kitchen there is a balcony that overlooks the twelve or so parking spaces at the front of the building – an indication of how few of the tenants own cars. From this balcony Roman can look down on his parents' apartment in an adjacent building and often has conversations with them about arrangements for the day etc. His sister also lives in the building. A friend arrives. He has gone to the kindergarten to fetch Roman's son and some bread. He joins us for the supper that Elena has prepared. We sit and eat – a soup, rolled meat, potatoes and stuffed tomatoes, and chocolates. They open a bottle of Moldavian wine and we drink to my arrival and to Canada and to Ukraine. Nicholas, the visitor, is a military officer, and a student who is finishing up a graduate degree in engineering, and hopes to get a job as a teacher. It seems to depend on his connections. He has very little English but is able to explain that he has no family other than a mother. His father left when he was young and he has no recollection of him. His face is very lined for a man his age (in his late twenties).

After supper I distribute the gifts I have brought for the family. Elena seems disappointed with the French soap. They explain that right now they do not have hot water in the building. Apparently this is a regular occurrence brought on by failure of tenants to pay bills. Nicholas leaves and we decide to take the subway down to the middle of the city. Elena dresses the children up and she herself gets very dressy for a trip downtown to stroll around. We take the subway down and Roman points out again as he did in Canada how much grander the stations are in comparison to those he saw in Canada. There are grand marble walls and huge brass chandeliers which

> shed a dim light on the interior. Everywhere there are people selling their wares from upside orange crates – melons, nuts, flowers etc. The Ukrainians call this the bazaar, and in essence it is where all shopping is done. It is only the very rich that shop in the few American style shops that are scattered around the downtown area. Gypsy children are everywhere, as well, begging for money. When I put a few coins in the hands of one child she argues that because I am a "rich American" I should give her more. She wants the bracelet I am wearing. Roman explains that these children are forced to beg by their parents and that it is a very organized group. The profits go to a few individuals in the group, never the children.
>
> Police are everywhere and Roman reminds, me that it is important to carry my passport at all times because I may be stopped by them to check (for what I don't know). We tour the historical section of the city with its many monuments that remind passers-by of the history of the city and of Ukraine. We pass by Mosque style churches, that were apparently closed for many years under Soviet rule, and structures that indicate the close relationship the country has to the East. A museum once named after Stalin is now the Museum of Natural History. Roman explains how many people in Ukraine want to erase the memory of the communist era but he himself does not. "*It is a part of our history.*" In the main square lined with buildings constructed in the fifties after World War II, there is a huge television screen set up that was used to broadcast messages from Moscow but now has music videos. The people who fill the square are mostly young. They watch the big screen as in a trance and comment to one another. There are a few large hotels that can be seen from the square. They are very big, but shabby looking and run-down. At the most prestigious, off in the distance, I see only a few lights on in individual rooms – not a very busy place it appears. We decide to head back to the apartment. In the subway I notice the tired and drawn looks on the majority of peoples' faces.

On that first day in Ukraine I began to feel the weight of some of the pressures that the military officers brought to my classroom. They include the control by authorities, the police and various other officials, the corruption that is embedded in the Ukrainian system and which affects the availability and opportunities for employment and thus their financial state, the hazards to health brought on by the undependablity of essential services like clean drinking water and healthy air, and the historical factors that have conquered and divided the population. These pressures by their nature made day-to-day living in their country more difficult. However, when these officers found themselves in a North American setting, where they became aware of how much peoples' lives were so much easier than their own, this realization left them with a sense of being marginalized. For example, they seemed overwhelmed by the sheer number and quality of the cars on North American roads, not to mention the reliability of basic services like water and electricity. Then to compound this feeling of being marginalized, there were practices within the program that affirmed their deprived status. For example, one day the Ukrainian military were singled out and asked to

remain behind on the bus so that they could be given cash. The assumption was that they would have no money to spend whereas military in the other delegations did have. Unfortunately, the way that the Canadian military chose to distribute the money that day was a further confirmation of their status.

My trip to Ukraine included visits to all of the students who were in the first group I taught. In each home I was given a very warm welcome. I discovered that life for Roman, despite its difficulties was easier than other Ukrainian students' lives. Those who lived in a military community outside Lyviv were far worse off. Not only did these students cope with economic pressures (I recall the wife of one student debating over buying two or three carrots at the bazaar), but also physical hardships of long hours of work and training in the bush with little contact with family. Imagining the feelings of some of these students at being exploited in comparison with North Americans was not difficult. In fact, I noticed that in Canada, some became much more sensitive to their lot. One complained to me that promises by the Canadian Military to have their uniforms cleaned were never kept and how he felt embarassed by the condition of his clothes. This would have been a minor concern for students with more money, but for these particular students it was demeaning to wear dirty uniforms and to have their requests ignored. Although in Ukraine, this would have been a non-issue, in Canada complaints such as these, I believe, signaled a more proactive stance on their part and certainly a change in identity. In fact, this sensitivity I realized was an indication that they were beginning to change in other ways.

Each officer or their family mentioned to me that they had changed. When I pursued the issue, each of them had their personal explanation. Vlad's wife mentioned that her husband was more expressive about his feelings to his commander when he felt overworked and denied time with his family. Despite pressure from the military and his parents, one officer left the military soon after to pursue a business venture which, he explained, would give him a chance at some of the material resources Canadians have. Another wrote to me: "*My friends told me that I'm different a little bit then before Canada.*" When I visited with him in Ukraine he explained he spent much less time drinking (his escape) and more time studying to develop new skills, and that he refused to be intimidated by his boss. Another talked with new hope for his future and less fear of problems which used to control his life.

It is my belief that the struggles for a voice in their second language in Canada gave these officers the courage to demand their voice in their own country where historically that voice had been denied. Finally, the change in their social identities for some led to a greater investment in learning English not only in Canada but also a year after returning to Ukraine despite the continued financial pressures and demands of military life that many of these officers experience. The following extract from a recent letter from one of these students, Slava, strongly exemplifies this.

> Since I arrived from Canada I have continued my military service in Ukrainian-Poland battalion in Yaroviv of Lviv region. It is only 600km from the place my mothers live. Last summer I took part in the military training "peace shield-99" near Yavoriv and last autumn I took part in "Cossak steppe" in Poland. There were very important for me because I spoke a lot in English with the foreign military...In my military unit (base) I have try to get an English lessons several times a week, but it not everything I need, because the thinking in English – very difficult for me. I have regress in English and worry about it.... Now everybody from my battalion get prepare to the peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. We are going there in july. I really want to go to improve my English and make some money for build my own family. Now it is impossible with my funny salary equal approximately 100 Canadian dollars when the prices in shops are not very different with the prices in Canada. Do not thinking I am crazy. I am OK but we have difficult economical situation in Ukraine and President of Ukraine with the government have tryed to change something during 5 years and many hope – normal life will be as soon as possible (Olexander, personal communication, April 9, 2000).

In this letter, Slava verbalizes the change he has undergone from seeing himself as a victim to an individual who is self-determined and empowered to direct his future. Whereas prior to his trip to Canada he would spend his time escaping his lot by drinking, he now seems determined to accept those circumstances that he can not change, and at the same time change what he can. For him, this depends on his creating opportunities for learning English. With progress in English he will be sent on more training exercises which will mean more opportunities for learning the language. More training opportunities will lead to an improved financial status and security. This security will allow him to start a family, an essential element in a truly happy life for Slava.

The Senior Officers – Inside the Classroom

> Is it easy to change life? Maybe when you are very young. But when you have a lot of experiences on your back ... no (Sergei, May 17, 2000).
>
> If you're a commander all your life it's difficult to be a student (Sergei, May 20, 2000).

Having shown how the younger officers' opportunities to engage in language learning through practice in speaking are influenced by a number of factors such as rank, socio-economic and cultural status, and that these factors are framed by relations of power both inside and outside the classroom in informal settings, I now discuss the senior officers who participated in my study.

There are certainly some similarities between the younger and senior officers. Both groups arrived with the same enthusiasm to learn the second language and were prepared to work hard to achieve that goal. They were eager to get working, as shown in the first few weeks upon arrival by asking for homework and by the late hours they kept studying. They wrote down voraciously anything that I put on the board and looked to me as the authority figure and "*chief*" of the classroom in seeking permission to open the blinds, turn on the radio, or in questions about classroom routine. They spoke proudly of their country and the specific cities they were from. Most were eager to help one another with any difficulties in the classroom. All have known economic hardship. One talked about his early childhood: "*My father died when I was ten and my mother had to find work to support my brother and me. Life was not easy. Many times there was no food and no money for clothes. We lived in a small village, so after school I had to work on other farms to help my mother.*" Another explained the hardship of living with his wife and two children in one room for seven years: "*The military only gave me one room for my wife and two boys. We lived in that room for seven years. Even though my wife worked as a nurse, there was very little money. Many months I was not paid by the military. They would just say there was no money. It is still like this now, but now I have a two-bedroom apartment and when there is no food I can go to my relatives in the country and ask for food for my family.*" Another mentioned one day that he had spent a long time in Siberia. When I asked him to tell me about it, he looked off in

the distance and said: "*It is not a good story.*" His avoidance of the subject on other occasions attested to the grimness of his life there.

But there are differences from the junior officers as well. The senior officers in my groups had more education than the younger officers. Two were doctors. One did diplomatic work; another was a nuclear arms specialist involved in international negotiations; another held an important position in the ministry responsible for disaster relief and was a key figure in the response to the Chernobyl explosion; one had fought in wars and had killed; another did scientific research. All were married and all, except for one, had children. Most had lived outside of Ukraine during their own service in the Soviet army or when they were growing up because their fathers were in the military. Two had already been to North America. They were quiet and reserved about their backgrounds whereas the younger officers were open and anxious to share information about their families and their lives in Ukraine.

Of course, in their position as senior officers, they were not subject to silencing because of rank in the classroom as were the junior officers. For the senior officers the historical relations of power in their lives in the past and those that existed for them in the classroom, though in a different way than for the younger officers, were far more subtle, but just as silencing. The result of this silencing was not so much apathy or anger, rather it added to the seriousness of their demeanor. As Sergei points out "*After seventy years of communist rule we are all very serious. You know, you see it in our faces*" (personal communication, March 27, 2000). Although Sergei expressed the feelings of his superiors in the class in terms of seriousness, I saw fear.

In the beginning, Vadim, a senior officer, worked hard to do everything right. He copied from the board, he tried to memorize long lists of vocabulary, he repeated words aloud over and over in his room at night. In his journal he wrote the same details of his routine – a what time he got up, what he ate for breakfast, what time he finished his lessons. Every day he wrote the same details hoping to write without errors. "*When I write homework I am all the time thinking about mistakes. It is very hard work*" (May 15, 2000). In the following excerpt from his journal we see an example of Vadim's preoccupation with writing without error:

I read Black Beauty until noon.

It was heard work for me.

I had dinner at twelve o'clock.

I had a bowl of soup, a little good piece of fried turkey, a few potatoes.

I had a normal evening: swimming, running, walking.

I went slept late.

This was around the thirtieth time Vadim had written in his journal *I read the book Black Beauty, I had a bowl of soup*, and *I had a normal evening*. In this repetition, I observed that he felt secure, that he was making progress as long as he wrote something even if it was exactly what he had written the day before.

Evidently, this was a long process and he explained to me "*When I write in my notebook I look at every word in dictionary because I afraid made mistakes*" (February 24, 2000). In class he took a very long time to answer and explained that he "*must think a lot before I speak. If I say something wrong another students laugh*" (May 9, 2000). Many times he refused to speak because as he reported in frustration one day he would study words in his room but the next day he would forget all the words (May 9, 2000). He would become embarrassed and would turn red at these times. Other times he would be silent and, as he explained to me self-affacingly, not wanting to "*disturb another*" with his poor English.

Andrei, too, wanted perfection. He bought an electronic translator so that in class when he didn't know a word he could find it quickly. He became embarrassed when others became impatient with his searching for words. He asked me to photocopy long lists of translations of verbs. Slava, like many of the others would not take part in extracurricular activities because he felt that he had to review and study. He clipped out the weather report every day from the paper and tried to give a perfect report verbally to the class, every day using similar expressions. He seemed sullen if he was not asked the question about the weather and instead the question was directed at someone else. He tried to memorize how to ask questions about purchasing a new car even though he had never owned a car; he only rode a bicycle in Ukraine. On the other hand, he became frustrated when he had to learn

how to ask for a few extra days of holidays. In the Ukrainian army, from his perspective, such a request would be ludicrous: "*If you ask for an extra day off of leave you should leave the military and be a civilian*" (November 15, 1999). When he was asked to participate in a group activity to plan a vacation he had difficulty participating. "*How can I think to plan a vacation when my wife* [in Ukraine] *has no electricity since 7 days*" (November 30, 2000). When I invited French Canadian students learning English to the classroom for an exchange, the senior officers were hesitant and shy. They didn't like the artificiality of the occasion. They were afraid to make mistakes. Vadim comments: "*I dislike the mixing with French students – formal not beautiful. Something was wrong. Teacher standing there listening*" (March 20, 2000). At one point I tried to arrange an exchange with English Canadians learning French at the Base. This time my students were quite enthusiastic. The teacher agreed to bring her officer students to my class for one period. But at the last minute, her students decided that they were not willing to come because it would have taken too much of their time. It seemed ironic to me that these Canadian officers would no doubt be involved in peacekeeping operations abroad, in the next few years and yet they did not see the value of taking advantage of the opportunity to build peaceful ties with these former Soviet officers. As for the Ukrainian students, I saw the disappointment and silence in their faces when I made the announcement although they said nothing to me. On another occasion they, along with other delegations, spent several weeks to prepare presentations on their respective countries. Only a handful of Canadian military showed up to view their presentations. Here again the message given to these officers was that they were not worthy of interest even though it would have provided the students with an excellent opportunity to speak in English about a subject that they were very familiar and which would have given voice to their symbolic resource – their culture.

The senior officers accepted their place in the power relation with regard to the other Central and Eastern European military delegations seemingly without question. Artum mentioned how students from other delegations in his class complained about "*our strong Russian accent disturb their learning English*" (March 20, 2000). He felt embarrassed and hurt. He chose not to discuss the comment with his classmates because of the potential for

more problems. He accepted their criticism without dispute as he demonstrates in the following extract:

> If you [the other students] don't speak English fluently is it a reason to look for someone who is guilty? They don't take part in conversation.... I avoid the question – What is the problem? I serve in Military Attaché Department and I prefer to avoid political argument (March 20, 2000).

The senior officers seemed to accept without question their marginalized status in the classroom and amongst others outside the classroom for whom their symbolic resources such as their vast experience in their field of training or their knowledge in areas of their interests held little value. However, at testing time when the nature of the testing served to compound their feelings of being marginalized the reaction in this case was fear. The power of tests to cause fear amongst these senior officers which was evident before, during and after the tests drove them to extreme and uncharacteristic behavior. The change in these senior officers' identities in the context of testing indicates the disempowering nature of the tests and the testing process. The following vignette highlights some of the behavior that I observed around testing time:

> **Test Time**
> With one week to go before testing time the tension is beginning to mount in the classroom. It started a week before. I observed other teachers photocopying endless pages of practice multiple choice tests. The senior officers started to snap at one another in class. They become demanding of me. "*Why we can't do TOEFL listening exercises like the other classes?*" Andreii and Vadim ask for practice test tapes to use in their rooms. Even though they do not understand the majority of what they hear, they work out a complicated scheme for guessing the answers. Slava complains that there is not enough grammar. He points to my plan for the day written on the flipchart and, in disgust, says there is no time to review to talk. I see my organization, my teacher ways, as a silencer too. Andreii wonders why I don't give them more individual conversation with me as opposed to in the group. They are frightened and silenced. The days of the testing [three or four] they don't want to continue with activities. Olex sits in class, not wanting to speak, waiting for the next test.

In my field notes I note the mood of two senior officers:

> **Field notes, March 14, 2000**
> Nikola and Andreii are silent. They sit at their desks with blank stares looking moody and depressed. They refuse to ask questions of the young officer who wants to practice answering questions.

When they come out of the tests many complain about the time element. "*Time was too short.*" Vadim reports in this next extract the power that time holds over him to affect his success in writing the test:

> I had a panic when I realized how little time, 1 second = 1 word. It was like a machine gun to my head. What is the reason to test me like a robot. This is not listening but testing our physical abilities (March 13, 2000).

In this powerful extract, Vadim vividly compares the constraints of time in the test to a machine gun to his head. The test reduces him to feeling like a robot who must perform on cue to the listening stimulus that he hears on the tape.

Nikola, who had attempted to memorize all the words used in the program wondered why there were new words on the test. He sees himself as a victim of the testing process.

> ... because I don't understand the question I forgot the words (February, 22, 2000).
>
> Can you tell me ... every test has new words and new words are there to confuse me (March 30, 2000).
>
> Sometimes I think there is a joker who wrote the test and is joking me (April 12, 2000).

In these three extracts we see the complete lack of control that Nikola felt during the testing process to the point that he imagined some "joker" had planned the test as a way to reduce him to helplessness.

After the tests, the complete discouragement on the parts of some of the senior officers suggested the effects of their lack of control in their ability to succeed. Nikola commented after one such test: "*I have sore heart. I always think about my results*" (March 14, 2000), and at another time "*My brain has brain of eight or nine (year old) children*" (March 24, 2000). Many times he would make remarks with regard to himself "*stupid student.*" He worried whether there would be repercussions for me if he did not do well. This anxiety occurred early on in the program. As the end of the course neared, the destruction to his confidence in the aftermath of the testing was even more pronounced. I note in my field notes.

Field notes, May 11, 2000

Nikola received the results of his reading test today. He didn't pass for the second time. He is sad, refuses to look at me and doesn't participate. When I ask him to give his presentation he shakes his head in a negative response.

Nikola is not speaking in English at all, only Ukrainian. He appears to have given up. "*My head is bursting with knowledges. There is no more place.*" He says he can't learn anymore. His mood is affecting the rest of the class. There is no more laughter or jokes. One student makes a funny remark. No one laughs (May 16, 2000).

Nikola writes in the course critique about the control that testing has on him.

When I went to test I felt confident. But after when news for me I didn't pass. This event killed me, killed my confidence (May 17, 2000).

Indeed this lack of confidence, or what I would call lack of empowerment, led to five days of silence on his part and a complete lack of willingness to invest in the target language.

Even Vadim who was trying to pass at a much higher level and who worked extremely hard inside and outside the classroom realized that he was powerless against the testing system. He left the program sad and discouraged. One of his final comments to me reflected his feelings of discouragement and helplessness.

V. *One tester said to me at the interview. "You can't get level 4." He joked, "Maybe you will be posted to Siberia." Nobody wanted to give me level 4.*

P. *Did you respond to him?*

V. (shrugging) *Why*? (May 17, 2000).

This recalled an earlier comment he made to me when I asked if he had made some suggestions at a program evaluation meeting with school and military administration: "*What will change if I have an opinion – nothing absolutely*" (April 3, 2000).

In his comment I see a lack of ownership in his learning and his feeling that he is powerless with regard to his progress which he sees is determined by the testing process. In Vadim's eyes, he believes that his success is in the hands of a tester who, out of principle, will not give him the rating he so desperately wants. Whether his skills are in fact at level four, the level he was hoping to get is irrelevant, I believe. What is much more significant, I believe, is how the off-handed comment by the tester left Vadim feeling at the mercy of a system which would deny him a language level for ulterior reasons whatever they may have

been. In this scenario, Vadim saw himself as a victim of the elite members in the power relation of the Language School.

Senior Officers – Outside the Classroom

> If somebody before has difficult life it's now difficult to change their view in the world. Canadian life is difficult for some students to understand, exactly understand, not just skin deep (Course critique, May 17, 2000).

Some of the younger officers in my study reacted to silencing in the classroom by adapting their identities, and thereby struggled with some success to enter Anglophone social networks outside the classroom. For the senior officers, the strain of working within a program which disempowered them in many ways, whose focus was on passing a test, and which gave no value to their symbolic and cultural resources, in fact, impeded their investment in learning outside the classroom. When they eventually made efforts to get out of the Base where, as one described, "*life in the Base is life in prison*" often it was for pragmatic reasons – to make necessary purchases, a few gifts to take home, or to meet with members of the local Ukrainian community to take part in special events. They sought refuge and security in these events as some did in listening to Russian music at break time.

In most cases, I observed that they avoided social interactions in English. They asked me to act as an intermediary if they needed a favour or information from another teacher or administrator. I recall on a trip to Ottawa, that they chose to stay in their rooms whereas students from other delegations went to a local hotel to dance or have a beer amongst Anglophone Canadians. Although money may have been a factor in this decision, even those for whom this was less an issue, preferred the security of their rooms and their fellow Ukrainians. In all of these cases, these senior officers chose not to take advantage of opportunities to speak and practice their English, to invest socially in learning. Vadim, speaking for the others at one of our meetings pointed out the difficulty in approaching Canadians. He hinted at how the complex layers of historical contexts in his life affected his social investment in speaking.

> In Ukraine, in Russia, in the former Soviet Union problems are the life – how to get food, how to find a job, how to send your daughter to the nearest school because schools are full. Canadian people don't like problems. We are a problem for Canadians. People prefer to avoid you if you don't speak English. The first and second time they speak but after that they don't speak. Just hello, how are you, but that's it (March 20, 2000).

Here Vadim shows his view of how members of the elite group of English speakers see him – as a problem. He recognizes that life for Canadians has been so easy in comparison to his own that they choose to avoid him because interaction requires effort. This extract points to the fact that the target speakers hold the right to allow Vadim to speak and to be listened to.

Many of the initial conversations in English that the senior officers took part in occurred outside the classroom on school trips. As an indication perhaps of how programs fall short of preparing students for natural settings, Nikola recounted how frustrated he became on a cold wintry day when he didn't have the words to get the bus driver inside the bus to open the door so that he could enter. Whereas a Canadian might bang on the door, Nikola, having failed to communicate, waited in the cold.

> I told the driver I was cold. But he didn't understand me. After a third time he still don't understand me. Why don't he understand me? When I speak with my teacher she understood me and not with others (May 9, 2000).

It appears from this extract that Nikola felt unprepared by his classroom context to handle even a most basic of tasks, that is to communicate to someone to open a door. Although I observed generally that Nikola was very shy in making requests, the fact that in this case he took on a more demanding identity and yet was not successful had repercussions in later opportunities. Often he would let a colleague ask for something that he needed and sat back while the same colleague would answer for him. He felt discouraged about his ability to communicate.

In fact, in the security of a conversation on a bus trip with a teacher who was interested and who wanted to engage him in conversation, Nikola proved that indeed he had the capacity to speak English quite well and be understood. It appears that when the balance of power in an interaction was more in the student's favour, in this case Nikola's, the

investment in learning was positive. The teacher recounted how Nikola carried on a conversation for two hours with her, was very clear and understandable, used proper verb tenses, and talked about many subjects (personal communication April 10, 2000). Nikola related to me proudly: "*I had beautiful conversation-whole time machines, engines*" (May 9, 2000).

In many ways the balance of power was not in their favour with regard to the Canadian military. The decision to segregate the Ukrainians together in "family units" instead of mixed with other nationalities was seen by the senior officers as a negative one. "*We should have one of each nationality. To speak in English is very difficult in family unit because we can't speak English well*" (Artoum, May 9, 2000). The military decision to restrict the Europeans (who pay compulsory fees equal to Canadians) at coffee break time to the dark, less comfortable side of the Mess and deny them access to the well-lit carpeted (and with sofas) side, reserved only for Canadians, was also seen by the officers as a negative one as well. Not only did these decisions, which are acts of control, serve to marginalize the Ukrainians but it also denied them the opportunity for social interaction in English beyond the confines of the formal classroom context. The senior officers said nothing but just complied. Some chose not to go for break.

Similarly, later in the program when the Ukrainian younger officer was sent home, Artoum seemed to passively accept the Canadian military decision. Furthermore, when the relations of power that were present in the interrogation denied his colleague a voice, Artoum again accepted the decision without question. Perhaps after months of being in a disempowered position with regard to members of the Canadian Military, he felt that it was useless to get involved in discussion. Instead he felt fearful for repercussions to his own career (A. Garneau, the Senior Teacher, personal communication, August 2000) and was embarrassed for his fellow officers and for his country.

> Today we are the bad men in the course.... I think many teachers now have mixed opinion about our delegation. I must apologize to Canadian officers. It will be difficult. They must know that we see this is very wrong (May 9, 2000).

Vadim described the three-hour interrogation with two Canadian military police "*whose intonation was difficult to understand*" as only a formality. "*The main reason – to*

close the case and to give him (the young Ukrainian officer) a chance to leave...But he didn't understand what was happening to him. He will only understand when he is in Ukraine" (May 9, 2000). It appears that the Ukrainian officer who was sent home had little input into the process which determined the extent and consequence of his misdemeanor. Nor does it appear that the circumstances surrounding the incident were a factor in the decision to send him home – the frustration of being from a disadvantaged and marginalized group, under stress from the disempowered status of not being able to communicate in the target language and lacking the financial resources to at least seek some reprieve from the confines of the Base. As the Senior Teacher commented after the fact when I asked whether the expulsion of this officer was meant as a warning for other Europeans whose behavior was not exemplary: "*It could be*" was all he replied (personal communication, August, 2000).

Comment

Some of the younger officers were eventually able to confront verbally and through their actions the relations of power that existed both inside and outside the classroom. They underwent significant changes to their social identities for the duration of their language program. For the senior officers, however this was much more problematic. The tension that was created between their cultural, historically-based identities and certain practices within the program that failed to recognize these identities, resulted in a loss of agency on the part of some of the senior officers for their own learning. With reference to SLA, there is evidence in the data that an emphasis on product-based learning – that is rules and error correction, which was particularly evident at testing time, added to this loss of agency in the classroom and in more informal settings. Furthermore, it is clear in the data that this loss of agency and lack of power had a detrimental effect on their social investment in learning which was shown by their lack of confidence in confronting those responsible for situations in which they felt that they were marginalized and in their unwillingness to interact with native speakers. In the case of Nikola, in particular, the data indicates that his social identity changed over time and space and was certainly influenced by the locus of control in the context in which he participated. For example, when he felt empowered by the interactant

and worthy of being listened to, as in the case of the conversation with the teacher on the bus trip, his learning was enhanced. Otherwise, communication broke down and he was silenced. The bus incident with the driver was a prime example of this. It is important, I believe, to note that many of the senior officers, though not all, left the program generally disappointed with their progress in learning English.

Summary

In this chapter, I have described and explained why the participants in the study reacted differently to being marginalized and disempowered by groups or individuals in the program: members of the target language – the Canadian Military and civilian population, members of other European delegations and by members of their own delegation. This, coupled with aspects of the program- practices inside the classroom, especially testing and the eurocentric nature of some of the activities, housing delegations together instead of mixing nationalities, and segregating the Mess at break time, conspired to reduce their opportunities to use English inside and outside the classroom. Nevertheless, the younger officers were able to get beyond their disadvantaged status and through effort had other aspects of their social identities recognized. This led to changes in their identities and to a greater agency in their own language learning by increased interaction with native speakers. On the other hand, many of the senior officers accepted their lowly status in the power structures that were a part of their daily lives on the Base, and as a result missed opportunities to engage in practicing the second language. This had a profound affect on their self-esteem and their willingness to invest in language learning.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

> A large part of social suffering stems from the poverty of people's relationship to the educational system, which not only shapes social destinies but also the image they have of their destiny (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 43).

In chapter 2, I provided an overview of Second Language Acquisition research. I have challenged the wisdom of positivistic research that seeks to find categories universal to all learners and taxonomies of teaching strategies which address these categories. I have argued that further research is needed to conceptualize language learning as a complex socio-cultural phenomenon and which includes the relationship between learners and their learning contexts. Paramount to understanding this relationship is the need to recognize the power relations that lie within them. In Chapters 3 and 4, I demonstrated that for the learners in my study, opportunities to practice English both inside and outside the classroom were structured by social practices based on military rank, ethnic and economic-class lines and by their changing social identities. In this chapter, I consider the implications of my findings to the second language literature and for language programs. I end the chapter with some reflections on what have been and what could be with regard to the possibilities of social practices in second language learning contexts.

Second Language Literature Revisited

With regard to SLA, first of all, the findings in my study do not support the body of research that suggest that learning a language is simply a matter of rule formation. I observed in the group of learners who took part in my study that many had, in fact, spent several years in school learning English. Yet, they had little or no proficiency to speak the language or did not feel they could. Furthermore, being aware of the rules sometimes even acted as a deterrent to using English and reflected a feeling of powerlessness for these learners. Vadim expressed this feeling when he said: "*When I write in my notebook I look at*

every word in dictionary because I afraid made mistakes." It was only when he felt he could break free from the concern about rules that he could communicate at ease with native speakers as he confided to me: "*Last month I wanted to speak correct and I was afraid to make mistake but now I am not afraid...I don't afraid mistake. I don't afraid other opinion. Me don't interested in other opinion me. I think I speak very well.*" Relative to most of the other students in his group, Vadim had a good foundation in English grammar rules when he arrived in Canada. However, of all the students he seemed to struggle the most with communicating inside and outside the classroom. The confidence that he showed when he was able to forget rule formation proved to be very empowering for him.

Second, research that is based on input and output theories of second language learning (Krashin, Swain) and which emphasizes the communicative approach to language learning falls short of explaining the reality of the communicative events and the needs of the learners themselves in their social cultural contexts. This research fails account for the findings of my research namely that these events, whether they were inside or outside the classroom, were often structured by relations of power that served to alienate the learners in my study. Indeed, the younger officers did not feel free to use English or to provide "comprehensible output," in the classroom out of deference to the more senior officers. Similarly, in the outside world, the senior officers in particular quickly realized their place within the social and military hierarchy and deemed themselves "unworthy" to communicate whether it was in joining in on a sing-along (after they were scoffed at by the other delegations) or confronting the Canadian military administration when they saw injustices in the system. Artoum's cynical retort, so unlike the way he was in our group discussions, reflected his powerlessness and his unwillingness to communicate with the administration: "*What will it change if I have an opinion - nothing absolutely*!"

Third, the findings in my study defy the categorizing characteristic of positive research into individual differences. These studies define learners' different characteristics as fixed, measurable, and not related to particular context. On the contrary, virtually all of the participants in my study displayed identities that were "multiple, a site of struggle and subject to change" (Peirce, 1995, p. 9) over time and space. For example, Vitalii was respectful as he stood at the door of my classroom asking to come in, yet on other occasions

he was rude and demanding of me when he was frustrated with certain activities. Sacha was inquisitive and outspoken in my classroom, but was shy and lacking in confidence in the library when he noticed an officer from another delegation present. the argument that "a true appreciation of individuality pushes one towards not away from a reckoning with social context"(Connell ey al., cited in Peirce, 1993, p. 182) is certainly supported by the findings of my study.

Fourth, motivational issues of SLA, which for so long have been used to explain various acquisition results, do not correspond to what I observed and noted amongst the learners in my study. All of the officers were highly motivated to learn English. This fact was supported by the long hours they spent studying in their rooms, their diligence in completing assignments and the efforts they went to to use English inside and outside the classroom. The construct of motivation in the literature is conceived as a static characteristic of certain learners who learn for material gains or status. However, my findings suggest that it is much more complicated than that. For these officers it meant different things at different times and was a factor of their social identity in a particular context. The opportunities they created in order to participate in speaking and learning were a factor of what Peirce (1993, 1995,1997) calls "investment." For all of the officers, learning English represented for them a means of economic improvement to the precarious financial situation in which most of them lived. For the younger officers, learning English allowed them to take on new identities which gave them confidence to throw off conventions they had lived by within the military ranks. Sergei's more relaxed style of dress, his refusal to report all of his comings and goings to his superior, and his willingness to talk about his learning from a critical viewpoint were outward signs of his changing identity from a marginalized foreigner and a junior officer subject to the orders of his superiors to an individual who was beginning to feel accepted in this new culture and able to take charge of his life. With this change, he developed the confidence to participate in social interactions outside the classroom and to ignore the power relations that were often present in these interactions. For the senior officers, Vadim and Slava, on the other hand, English represented a threat to their pride as a teacher and a scientist, respectively, in Ukraine, both highly regarded positions in their country. If they were not "successful", i.e. attain their desired level on the test they would

suffer consequences at home. During the beginning of their stay in Canada they struggled to overcome their fears; and there was a brief period for each of them when they felt good about their language learning. However, when it came to testing time, the fact that their symbolic resources were not valued in this context led to them becoming reluctant about participating and also resulted in a lack of self confidence. After these periods of testing they withdrew from social interactions and resisted opportunities to learn English; they often appeared sullen and they refused to speak both inside and outside the classroom. In other words, their fear or anger at the disempowering aspects of the testing process and of looking unintelligent proved stronger than their desire to learn English.

Fifth, debates over the role of personality traits such as anxiety and self-confidence in language learning suggest that these traits have an important role to play in language learning. For example, Krashen (1981, 1994) in his affective filter hypothesis argues that anxiety, and poor self-confidence along with low motivation are the characteristics most associated with poor language learners. My findings did suggest that anxiety and self-confidence were factors in the learning of English for the officers. However, these findings also suggest that anxiety and confidence were **not** personality traits but rather responses to a lack of control, and/or a feeling of being disempowered, in interactions both inside and outside the classroom. For example, Sergei's anxiety during the testing period which he recognizes is evidenced when he says, "*Don't forget this is an exam. Maybe I know this information but I am nervous and I lose this and that.*" He realized that he had no control over the testing process. Thus, the anxiety he felt caused him to forget what he did know and led him eventually to refuse to be tested again. Apparently. He was resisting putting himself in a compromising and vulnerable position. Furthermore, anxiety and low self confidence were also brought on by situations that were a part of the day-to-day living conditions of the officers. Slava exclaimed one day that he could not take part in a classroom activity because he was thinking about the situation at home, "*How can I think to plan a vacation when my wife has no electricity since 7 days.*" His anxiety over not being able to take control of the situation at home in Ukraine leads him to not invest in the learning activity. Vadim was a senior officer and was confident in his relations with the other officers in the group. However, when he spoke to someone who did not understand him he displayed a lack of

confidence: "*I understand I had bad pronunciation. I try to repeat and explain again but when I see the person can't understand me I feel bad.*" In the gym, he was proud of his strength; however, in the classroom, he confided the following to me: "*Everyone wants to speak and I don't want to disturb another. If I say something wrong and another students laugh.*" These examples from the data, I believe, clearly indicate that anxiety and self-confidence are not personality traits but are socially constructed within the experiences that these learners lived each day.

Finally, with regard to cognitive styles and learner strategies, I found evidence that there was an indirect relation between whether the learners felt empowered in the classroom context and the choice of learning strategies they chose to employ. For example, when there was little pressure from testing and the locus of control rested with the officers in my groups (e.g., the subject matter was of interest or considered by them to be worthwhile), they would participate in the various strategies I used to encourage them to communicate in English. However, when they felt threatened or lacking control they would resort to their own strategies for learning, often seemingly non-productive ones, for example memorizing vocabulary lists or devising elaborate ways to get correct answers on incomprehensible listening tests. In these cases, they would resist using suggested strategies such as collaborative work or listening to peers when they spoke. I noted after a testing period: "*Nikola and Andrei are silent. They sit at their desks with blank stares looking moody and depressed. They refuse to ask questions of the young officer who wants to practice answering questions.*" And in another instance near the end of the program, Vasyl refused to speak in English entirely. He began responding in Ukrainian to any questions I asked of him. "*He appears to have given up.*" I noted. As McKay and Wong (1996) suggest, when learners' identities are at stake coping strategies take precedence over investment (p. 604).

Language and Identity

The importance of social interaction to higher-order thinking – that is, learning a second language, in Vygotsky's theories of language, helps to explain why, for the younger officers in my study, as they began to interact outside the classroom with native speakers, their language proficiencies improved inside the classroom. On the other hand, it might also

explain why, for the senior officers who often chose to avoid social interactions and instead chose to spend time in their rooms at self-study, their progress in language learning was less evident. Furthermore, as the younger officers engaged more in their second language, their ways of looking at the world were mediated and broadened. Language affected their thinking. In the beginning, they did not understand why native speakers did not want to converse with them: "*They don't really want to know about us for first time.*" However, at the end of the program, Sergei commented perceptively that this reluctance on the part of Canadians was because foreigners like himself do not share the same interests as Canadians: "*My words - to converse with Canadians you have to be interested in what they are interested in - sports, movies, politics, separation of Quebec.*" Their identities were no longer strictly a reflection of their culture and histories which in the North American context contributed to their feelings of being marginalized. Their identities were changing, to reflect their new ways of thinking and seeing themselves in relation to others. This new way of thinking and seeing themselves resulted in a sense of empowerment for many of the younger officers. For example, armed with this sense of empowerment, Anatoli ceased to fold papers in class as his response to being silenced. Instead he came to me with questions, became an active participant in collaborative activities and made suggestions as to how I could help him. Sergei became critical of some of the classroom strategies I used and of the program itself. He chose not to try the final writing test, judging it as useless to his learning. Both Sergei and Anatoli, as well as others, displayed what Vygotsky calls learning which is 'self-regulated' as opposed to 'other-regulated.'

Being a self-regulated learner is central to Peirce's theory of social identity and investment. If learners find themselves in potential learning situations which deprive them of their voice, **they** cannot regulate their own learning. Instead, they are at the mercy of the dominant party, **the other**, and their learning continues to be 'other-regulated.' Many of the senior officers in my study never succeeded in reaching the stage of being 'self-regulated.' The disempowering nature of certain aspects of the program, for example the units on planning a vacation, banking, and writing notices, as well as the anxiety caused by tests, alienated them in the North American context. In these situations, they were denied a voice and thus could not invest in learning through interaction either inside or outside the

classroom. Power relations inherent in these settings, aspects of the program inside the classroom and ethnic and economic marginalizing outside the classroom, denied them access to help from more capable peers in social interactions. And so they struggled with changing their old identities. Likewise, many years of being 'regulated' by a communist regime affected their ability to change and to adopt new identities. "*It is the stupor in our heads. After 70 years of communist rule we are all very serious, you know. You can see it in our faces*" remarked Sergei. In fact, many of the senior students admitted that they "*want to go back to Soviet times because there was a lot of sausage and government gave sausage and an apartment.*" Unlike the younger officers, these senior officers did not develop in a self-regulated way, nor did they challenge their **disempowered positions.** Thus their investment in learning a second language – that is, to interact in learning situations which would have allowed them **empowered** subject **positions**, was critically affected. Many left the program feeling disappointed with their progress in English. Indeed, they left feeling disappointed in themselves. As Artoum sadly reported about his colleague Vadim: "*When he came to Canada he thought he would be fluent after a few months. His thoughts were only pink dreams*" (personal communication, May 15, 2000).

Implications of the Study

> In order to decide on what to do, we have to figure out why things are the way they are, how they got that way, and what set of conditions are supporting the processes that maintain them (Simon, 1984, p. 380).

This study is an attempt on my own behalf to come to grips with the various contexts in which I have participated over the last several years of teaching. In these contexts, I have made many assumptions that have proven detrimental to the learners in my classes. As such, I can hardly offer prescriptive advice for others on how or how not to conduct their teaching. On the other hand, I have discovered life is too short and the time I have with my students is too precious to engage in hit or miss practices. This is especially true for second language teachers like myself whose major concern is **not** passing on a system of rule formation but in developing our students learning potentials and empowering them to life-long enthusiasm for learning the second language. I have participated in this

reflective activity, called writing a thesis. This act of writing has involved examining how the Ukrainian students in my study took part in learning, what conditions and assumptions affected their learning, why these assumptions existed and finally, what effect these conditions and assumptions had on their learning. In the process, I have discovered that Vygotsky's theory of language and Peirce's theory of social identity and investment are useful in helping to understand what went on inside my classroom and outside the classroom, and indeed in many of the learning situations in which I have taken part.

What is more important to me than having a hook on to which to hang my findings is the realization that I am an integral part of the findings and of the experiences that lie within them. I cannot divorce myself from the fact that for many of my students, their initial experiences in the program involved a feeling of marginalization and disempowerment. My descriptions of this evidence cannot be reduced to objectivity according to the "doctrine of immaculate perception" (Beer, cited in Wolcott, 1990, p. 40). I am integrally intertwined and implicated, as a teacher, as a Canadian, and as a human being in the social identities of the officers in my study and inevitably in their language learning. Calls for self-directed, transformative and collaborative learning in education and in my classrooms start with my own reflective practice and on the ideological principles that inform my teaching. If I reflect on my experience with the Ukrainian military officers in my classroom, for example, I wonder if the role that rank played in silencing the younger officers is any different than the dynamics in high school classrooms where cliques can serve to silence so many students.

In considering the ethnic hierarchy that existed in the Eastern European delegations which prevented the Ukrainians from participating in language enhancing events, can we perceive a similarity to the domination along ethnic and socio-economic lines in schools which destroy opportunities for learning and keeps students silenced (see also Fine, 1983)? Do aspects of the second language program in my study which imposed a set of socio-cultural norms as standard on my students and which added to their feelings of marginalization, differ from the textbooks in our schools at all levels which impose one perspective of knowledge. This is a perspective that appears to serve an industry, a government and the political ideology of the dominant culture. Is the submissive position that testing placed the officers in my study in and which caused the senior officers to give up

on learning, reflective of the exploited status of contract teachers, mostly female, to whom we entrust the education of our children and who are under the scrutiny of our male dominated institutions?

I do not have any ready-made prescriptions to inform SLA theory, only these musings. Understandably, as just a teacher, I am not yet sure where I stand in the academy of language learning and research. If there is one thing I have learned in my years in education, as a student and as a teacher, it is that:

> To question from above holds intellectual promise: to question from below forebodes danger (Fine, 1983, p.158).

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APPENDIX A

Listening Tests at Levels 2 and 3

A. LISTENING TESTS at levels 2 and 3

Answers to these questions can be found in Annex B of the technical reports for PC EN A 402 91 dated 17 Jan 91 and PC EN A 403 91 dated 29 Jan 91.

1. Weight given to monologues vs. dialogues

	Monologues	Dialogues
402 89	7	18
402 91	5	17
403 89	7	23
403 91	5	15

2. Weight given to military vs. more general contexts

	Military (Job-related)	Military (Informal)	Social/Civilian
402 89	13 items	14 items	3 items
402 91	10 items	10 items	10 items
403 89	20 items	5 items	5 items
403 91	15 items	3 items	12 items

3. Average length per prompt

	Mean Text Length	Mean Number of Words per Item
402 89	50.1 words	41.75
402 91	56.7 words	41.5
403 89	71.33 words	71.33
403 91	80.8 words	53.87

4. General design of the multiple-choice questions

	Global (Topic/Main Idea)	Specific (Fact/Idea)	Inference (Global and Specific)[1]
402 89	17 items	13 items	3 items
402 91	16 items	14 items	3 items
403 89	25 items	5 items	16 items
403 91	19 items	11 items	4 items

[1]Items which were either global or specific in terms of language task and which also included an inference element

B. READING TESTS at levels 2 and 3

Answers to these questions can be found in Annex B of the technical reports for PC EN C 402 91 dated 21 Jan 91 and PC EN C 403 91 dated 21 Jun 91.

1. Weight given to military vs. more general contexts

	Military (Job-related)	Military (Informal)	Social/Civilian
402 89	2 items	11 items	17 items
402 91	14 items	7 items	9 items
403 89	3 items	13 items	9 items
403 91	12 items	10 items	8 items

Average length per prompt

	Mean Text Length	Mean Number of Words per Item
402 89	103.0 words	44.5
402 91	101.3 words	50.6
403 89	109.17 words	78.6
403 91	145 words	73

General design of the multiple-choice questions

	Global (Topic/Main Idea)	Specific (Fact/Idea)	Inference (Global and Specific)[1]
402 89	8 items	22 items	4 items
402 91	11 items	19 items	4 items
403 89	13 items	12 items	2 items
403 91	15 items	15 items	5 items

[1]Items which were either global or specific in terms of language task and which also included an inference element

2. Form/text type

	A	B	C	D	E
402 89	2 texts	2 texts	nil	9 texts	nil
402 91	3 texts	7 texts	nil	5 texts	nil
403 89	2 texts	3 texts	1 text	11 texts	1 text
403 91	3 texts	3 texts	1 text	6 texts	2 texts

A - Announcement/Advertisement/Notice
B - Letter/Memo
C - Message/Note/Comment/Summary
D - News/Magazine Article
E - Report/Rule/Regulation

3. As these texts are realistic, they contain some acronyms and military terminology. Contextual clues should enable the candidate to figure out the approximate meaning of any unfamiliar terms. In any event, answering the item correctly does not depend on the candidate's knowledge of acronyms and military terminology; to the extent that they are present, they are included to enhance authenticity; they are not key to getting the item.

APPENDIX B

Permission to do Research

Date: August 25, 1999

To: Arunas Staskevicius

From: Paula Charbonneau-Gowdy

Regarding: Research

For the past couple of years I have been researching the concept of motivation with regard to learning a second language in preparation for a Masters in Second Language degree from McGill University.

My experience with the MTAP program in general, and the Ukrainian students in particular, will be included in my discussion of the topic. I would also like to interview some current Ukrainian officers about their language learning over the next few months. No actual names will be used in my writing and I would certainly make a copy of my thesis available to the students as well as to CFLS-St. Jean for their interest.

I would appreciate very much if you would discuss this matter with those whose approval is necessary and I thank you in advance for your interest and cooperation in my professional development.

APPENDIX C

Introduction Letter

As well as a teacher at this school I am a graduate student at McGill University in Montreal. For the past two years I have been taking courses and studying about how we learn second languages. One subject that interests me very much is motivation. This is a complex subject and some researchers have disagreed on it a lot in the past and others have ignored it. They do agree, though, that we need to use the second language to improve. What interests me is why sometimes a person who is learning a second language chooses **not** to use or participate in using the language and at other times the same person is enthusiastic to use the second language. Recent researchers are looking at these questions especially in groups of people who have come to a country to live and work. I would like to find out more about your experiences in learning English in this immersion program. I will use this information in my thesis to help support my arguments about motivation. I am hoping that this information will help you and me understand your experiences while you are here better and may have positive effects on future programs.

I hope this explains the reasons I am asking you to take part in the study. If you choose to be in the study it is important that you understand why I am doing it. If you choose to be in the study I will ask you to keep a diary of your language learning, to meet sometimes as a group and to speak with me in a brief private interview at the end of the course. It is also important for you to know that **you can decide to withdraw from the study at any time**. If you choose to do one part of the study you do not have to continue with other parts. Your name will not be used anywhere in the written report. Only my advisor and I will know this information. Finally, you will have a chance to read my thesis before I give it to the University and if there is anything the you have said that you do not want in it I will take it out of the paper.

On the next page I will ask you to sign a consent form to show that you want to take part in my study.

APPENDIX D

Consent Form

Research Project Title: Motivational Issues in an ESL immersion program

Researcher: Paula Charbonneau-Gowdy
Masters of Arts Program in Second Languages
McGill University
Montreal, Quebec

I am a Masters student in Second Language Education at McGill University. I am doing a Masters thesis on motivation and I would appreciate very much if you would participate. Before you decide, you should read the attached explanation which explains what my thesis is about and what you will do if you decide to participate. If you do want to help me in my study it is also important that you read and agree to the following points:

1. You will be asked to write a diary of your experiences as you learn English. We will meet as a group at various times to discuss your experiences. At the end of the program there will be a short individual interview with me.

2. I will use the information that is useful to my discussion of motivation in my research paper.

3. Your name will not be used in this paper. Only I and my advisor, who guaranties that this information will be kept confidential, will know your identity.

4. I will also use a code to disguise you as a participant in all parts of the study.

5. You will not suffer in any way. However, if you feel uncomfortable or want to withdraw at any time you are free to do so.

6. You will have a chance to read a copy of my thesis before I formally give it to the University and to the school administration.

In order to show that you agree to the points above and want to be in the study at this point I would ask you to sign and date this form below.

Participant's name	Participant's signature	Date
Researcher's name	Researcher's signature	Date

APPENDIX E

Course Critique

1) What helped you to learn English in the classroom?

2) What made it difficult for you to learn English in the classroom?

3) What helped you to learn English outside the classroom?

4) What made it difficult for you to learn English outside the classroom?