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Closing The English Language Proficiency Gap In Post-Secondary Education In Canada

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Closing the English Language Proficiency Gap in Post-Secondary Education in Canada

Capstone Proposal

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

in the College of Professional Studies and Advancement

National Louis University

Priscilla Lothian-Hendrix

Higher Education Leadership

Closing the English Language Proficiency Gap in Post-Secondary Education in Canada

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of Education
in the National College of Education
National Louis University

Priscilla Lothian-Hendrix
Higher Education Leadership

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Abstract

The proposed research employed a mixed-method approach to investigate why the linguistic standards of the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) (levels 5–8) are deemed satisfactory for English as a second language (ESL) learners at the college level. An examination of the Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP) identified why an ESL learner with a CLB level of 5–8 requires English support services in post-secondary education to achieve academic success in Canada. The CLB levels of six female participants were analyzed using a questionnaire in reading, writing, listening, and speaking to explore their English levels in articulating the language, pronouncing words, and understanding the meanings in alignment with course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks. Additionally, a focus group discovered a correlation between a participant's current CLB level and the English support services. The questionnaire and focus group permitted the researcher to discern recurring patterns in their experiences using the English language at the college level.

The mantra that has taken me this far in life is

I will, I can, and I am.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Dr. Vincella Thompson, Dean of University Studies at Keyano College in Alberta, Canada, for encouraging me to complete the doctoral program in higher education leadership. I would also like to thank Dr. Eli Ahlquist, Dean of School of Health and Human Services, for helping me in exploring deeper into the literature in this field. I want to express my gratitude to Stephanie Brake, former Chair of Human Services, who had confidence in my abilities as an instructor in the field of education and Alexis Laird, a faculty member at Keyano College, for listening to my never-ending stories. Finally, I would like to thank the faculty at Keyano College for supporting the preparation of this dissertation and Dr. Brian Hamluk, professor at National Louis University in Illinois, who guided this thesis to its full potential.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my mother, Blaselma Williams, in Toronto, Canada, for pushing me through my challenges. I extend the most heartfelt thanks to my son, Keelan Lothian-Williams, and my daughter, Keemiya Lothian-Brown, who have always inspired me to be the best I can be. In closing, I have accomplished my goal and demonstrated that anything in life is possible. I will, I can, and I am.

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Closing the Gap in English Language Proficiency in Post-Secondary Education

In Canada, post-secondary education in reading, writing, listening, and speaking can become challenging for many English-speaking adult learners who enter classroom settings to secure the necessary education and work integrated learning (WIL) skills to join the Canadian workforce. If English is not your first language, imagine how challenging it could be for an English as a second language (ESL) learner to articulate English, pronounce words, and understand their meanings associated with course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks. An ESL learner who has passed the Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP) exam with a Canadian Language Benchmark level (CLB) of 5–8 is deemed ready to live, work, and attend post-secondary education in English. Although this learner possesses the language proficiency to attend college, they still encounter language-related challenges in completing college work. This capstone study examines students at a post-secondary institution in Alberta, Canada, to investigate why ESL students continue to face such language barriers.

Chapter 1

The first chapter addresses the history, mission, vision, and core values of Keyano College which allowed the capstone study to identify a topic for research. The research motivation was to investigate current ESL student-related trends and determine future growth and sustainability recommendations according to their challenges and successes, including those related to enrollment, the student body, and student development. Also addressed are an international marketing platform and academic learning tool, both of which permit the Keyano College programs to align with the needs of ESL students.

Keyano College History

Keyano College, located in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB), is according to the Province of Alberta (2009) study regulations a public, board-governed

college operating as a comprehensive community institution under the authority of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* of Alberta. The RMWB stretches from northeastern Alberta to the borders of Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories. Keyano College, approximately 430 km north of Edmonton, offers students access to education through several platforms, including face-to-face learning, online learning, work placements, and blended models (Keyano College, n.d.-a). To broaden the learning scope, the college owns two additional campuses in Fort McMurray and Chipewyan, Alberta. The scope of teaching is further broadened by the college's four mobile locations within the RMWB which act as learning centers in Cronklin, Janvier, Gregoire, and Fort McKay.

The college changed its name from the Alberta Vocational Centre in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada to Keyano College in 1966, which—in Cree—means "sharing," in line with the motto inspired by a sense of family—"yours, mine, and ours," a slogan used to support its inclusive learning environment (Keyano College, n.d.-a). Since its founding in 1966, the college has undergone several changes. For instance, its heavily industrial campus was opened in 1977, converting one part of the college into the Trades Department and, in 1979, the college introduced its first student housing, enhancing its capacity to increase student enrollment. Furthermore, in 1980, the college theatre and two of its campuses extended academic programs and advanced community involvement (Keyano College n.d.-a).

Mission-Driven Institution

Keyano College is a mission-driven institution supporting and meeting its region's changing needs while providing high-quality academic teaching and education which aligns with the workforce and industry. In many of its current trends, the college is comparable to other leading tertiary institutions within Canada and the United States. These trends include increased adult enrollment in post-secondary education, increased diversity of the student

population, an increased student presence at the college, and ESL support (Keyano College, n.d.-b).

Mission and Vision

The mission, vision, and core values of Keyano College ensure that students, stakeholders, and communities receive from the college a commitment to generating learning, leadership, and services. The policies and mandates supporting the college's mission—one which continues to propel the institution to excellence—include various collaborative efforts on the part of the institution. Below are the mission and vision statements along with the core values of Keyano College (n.d.-b):

> *Mission*: Keyano College is a comprehensive college of choice that is committed to excellence in teaching and learning, industry training, and applied research through the delivery of relevant and sustainable programs and services that maximize opportunities for our students, staff, and stakeholders, and that enable Keyano College to engage in community leadership.
>
> *Vision*: Keyano College is a quality, responsive, sustainable, and comprehensive college that consistently meets or exceeds the expectations of our learner stakeholders and communities.
>
> *Core values:* The college's core values include accountably achievement, communication, collaboration, diversity, empowerment, innovation, learning, responsibility, service, students, and transparency.

Motivation for Research

Canada is renown internationally for research and has made second-language acquisition one of its core focus areas (Derwing, 2017; Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002). Chow (2001) suggested that the English language is a bridge between the economy and families who immigrate to Canada and, upon arrival, families realize that

English language proficiency and education are prerequisites to avail the opportunities that the country offers (Chow, 2001; Derwing, 2017; Breitkreutz et al., 2001). According to Chow (2001), families who immigrate to Canada want their children to attend ethnic language schools while assimilating into the Canadian context.

The current challenges in Canadian higher education are the lack of academic programs and training to support ESL students after they complete the required English test— CELPIP. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), postmodern perspectives critique ways of thinking, allowing policymakers to call for action based on the need to change the CELPIP process. The challenges of thinking about ESL students and families stem from the underlying seats of power within the country making assumptions and decisions. Derwing (2017) articulated how the decision-making process about English instruction can affect ESL students who attend post-secondary education. Policymakers must examine the process of entry for families into Canada based on their English language proficiency skills. The entry process is an essential component in evaluating and transforming policies to guide Keyano College to providing the best practices in English language teaching and improving programs and training to support ESL students. According to CELPIP (n.d.) the CELPIP exam identifies the CLB level required to attend post-secondary education, with a level deemed satisfactory to live, work, and participate in post-secondary education. According to Keyano College (n.d.-b), ESL students who have attained a CLB level of 5–8 have demonstrated adequate English comprehension skills to succeed at the college level.

Derwing (2017) acknowledged the change in English comprehension within Canada's colleges regarding language. This acknowledgment supported a post-secondary institution in Edmonton, Alberta called NorQuest College, which categorizes students who arrive from over 80 countries worldwide as learners of ESL or English as an additional language (EAL) (NorQuest College, n.d.). Keyano College (n.d.-c) agreed with NorQuest College by

suggesting that the individual languages spoken by students entering Canadian post-secondary education impact the existing curriculum content, declaring that it required immediate attention (NorQuest College, n.d.).

One aspect impacting the post-secondary education of students speaking languages other than English is the level of support provided. Ignash (1994) highlighted that once an ESL student obtains the English language proficiency skills required to enroll in college, reduced English language support is imparted. Colleges may issue less attention to English language instruction because these students have successfully passed an English skill test, such as the CELPIP exam. The CLB score of 5–8 obtained from the CELPIP is a significant consideration for higher education because of its indication of ESL learners' ability to achieve academic success in completing courses and programs. Amato-Richard (2010) examined the work of theorists who highlighted that educators must proffer ESL adult learners support in increasing their English language proficiency skills, the findings pointing to the ongoing need to support ESL students to achieve academic success.

Keyano College offers ESL education to support students' practical life experiences. Eckel and King (2004) suggested that education aims to grant students experiences training them to become employed and knowledgeable residents. At Keyano College, the academic courses and programs aimed at supporting ESL students include continuing education and corporate training for the workplace (Keyano College, n.d.-c). Alberta's colleges and universities maximize opportunities for apprenticeships, academic upgrading, certificate programs, degree programs, and university transfers while maintaining a wide range of services.

ESL Recommendations for Future Growth and Sustainability

The Keyano College Annual Report of 2018–2019 highlighted that in June 2014, Keyano College was designated as a "provincial institution tasked with facilitating

international student's entry into Canada for academic studies by Alberta's Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education" (p. 54). Based on the governmental ESL recommendations for future growth and sustainability, the college developed the International Student Project Steering Committee (ISPSC) in 2017, whose committee outlined three stages of program development: Stage 1, preparation; Stage 2, moderate growth; and Stage 3, expansion (Keyano College, n.d.-d).

Stage 1 of the ISPSC plan aimed to use the advertising of the college to increase international student enrollment in programs such as in the Childhood Studies department through marketing, recruitment, and retention (see Figure 1) (Keyano College, n.d.-c).

Figure 1

Recruitment Plan

The goal of the ISPSC Stage 2 plan of moderate growth was to increase the programs and services aimed at improving international students' academic English skills, additionally including Language Instruction services for Newcomers (LINC), which supported students in completing an English language proficiency exam. According to CELPIP (n.d.) the exam results require international students to achieve a CLB level of 5–8, which is deemed satisfactory for admission to colleges or the advanced curriculum of grades 9–12. Other courses at Keyano College include a college preparation course, endowing students with practice in completing English tasks in anticipation of their admission to Keyano College

(n.d.-d). The preparation course offers students the opportunity to understand college life and what they must accomplish to become successful at the post-secondary level. Finally, Stage 3 of the ISPSC plan (Keyano College, n.d.-d) involved expanding career opportunities for students, with university transfer programs that lead to associate degrees, certificates, and diplomas for liberal courses in science, math, history, and language arts.

Enrollment

The international student enrollment plan at Keyano College for the Childhood Studies certificate and diploma programs in the academic years 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 in Table 1 presents a full-time, full load equivalent (FLE) projection for 2019–2020 of 4.758, which is 37% of the total projected enrollment. For 2020–2021, the FLE is 7.225, with a 56% of the total projected enrollment while the FLE projection for 2021–2022 is 7.225, with a 51% of the total projected enrollment (Keyano College, n.d.-c).

Table 1

International Enrollment Growth Projections 2019–2022

Credential Year	2019–2020		2020–2021		2021–2022	
Programs	International FLE	% of the total projected enrollment	International FLE	% of the total projected enrollment	International FLE	% of the total projected enrollment
Early Learning and Child Care	2.600	26%	2.600	21%	2.600	17%
Educational Assistant	2.158	11%	2.158	10%	2.158	9%
Early Learning and Child Care Diploma	0.000	0%	2.467	25%	2.467	25%
Keyano College Total	4.758	37%	7.225	56%	7.225	51%

Marketing Opportunities

Keyano College must identify and keep abreast of ESL students enrolled in other leading institutions (Keyano College, n.d.-c). Due to its geographical location, it lacks local educational competitors. Instead, the college uses its location as an opportunity to align its programming with other institutions to extend additional educational opportunities in its rural communities. According to Keyano College (n.d.-b, n.d.-c), marketing tools increase enrollment through articulation agreements with post-secondary institutions such as Medicine Hat College, NorQuest College, the University of Alberta, and MacEwan University. These agreements afford the college's students with the opportunity to enroll in programs locally, thereby ensuring students can live, work, and learn in their home communities.

ESL Student Body

According to Statistics Canada (2016a), Fort McMurray has a community of over 66,573 with a minority population of 18,695. According to Keyano College in 2017, the ESL population included 84 students from 23 different countries, including Canadian-born students, Indigenous students, and international students from Africa, the Philippines, and the Arab nations (Keyano College, n.d.-c). The institution embraces students of different races, sexes, sexual identities, and religions, supporting those who have a vested interest in forwarding their academic careers via a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Business Administration Certificate, or a diploma in office administration (Keyano College, n.d.-c). Moreover, the institution offers certificate and diploma programs as well as four collaborative degree programs that can be completed in Fort McMurray. According to the Keyano College Annual Report 2018–2019, the School of Continuing Education's FLE for its Language Institution was 108.284, with projected rates of 90.000 with a variance of 20.3%. Students are aware of higher education opportunities in larger cities; however, for many students, the

decision to commute locally to Keyano College allows them to take advantage of the Fort McMurray job market.

For admission, Keyano College (n.d.-b) requires that domestic students complete Grade 12 and be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants. Students would have to register for a course load of 60% to qualify for full-time status. Based on the admission process for international students, the college ensures that a student's credentials and language ability are at the same level as the curriculum standards applicable to the student's country of birth (Keyano College, n.d.-b). The college requires that enrolled students must complete a registration process for programs and submit original copies of their education credentials from a recognized institution in their country. They must also complete an English language proficiency test such as the CELPIP exam for entry into post-secondary education and provide proof of residency and health insurance.

As stated by Keyano College (n.d.-c), students who have completed post-secondary education have the opportunity for employment in the oil industry. According to Suncor, the sector has employment opportunities for Canadians and internationals with the skills to work with oil sands and heavy industry equipment (Suncor, n.d.). The institution's sectors, once dominated by men, are now sought after by women (Keyano College, n.d.-c). Jagire (2019) highlighted the gender change in the workplace by discussing immigrant women's challenges with language and the workplace refusal of foreign credentials. However, Keyano College stands by its mission to provide all students with high-quality teaching and learning. Cohen and Kisker (2010) supported the institute's mission by emphasizing the significance of gender, suggesting that the college offers opportunities for female students to enter professions, including power engineering and trades. Jagire (2019) also reinforced that immigrant women's roles within Canada are being reversed, with women now seen as the breadwinners for their families. Further, groups of marginalized women, such as Indigenous

students, have entrance quotas for nursing and social work programs, contributing to the role reversal (Keyano College, n.d.-c.). Keyano College aligns with Cohen and Kisker's (2010) stance on equality by asserting that the college will continue to strive for equal opportunities.

Student Development

According to Wilson et al. (2015), student programs and services contain a range of collegial forms and institutional structures. Colleges, such as Keyano College, are investigating collegial experiences by presenting ways to ensure that services are responsive and reflective (Keyano College, n.d.-d). The Academic Advising Department assists ESL students with credit programs and enrollment (Keyano College, n.d.-d) while the Skill Center provides tutoring, language instruction, and supplemental resources for students to share ideas, collaborate on projects, and acquire new learning perspectives (Keyano College, n.d.-d). Learning resources accessed via support staff and faculty include the Testing Center, which supports students with accommodations for exam purposes and ESL students with English. The institute's Wellness Services supports them academically and, simultaneously, the Accessibility Services help students with disabilities access learning services including assistive technology and adaptations (Keyano College, n.d.-d) among other resources. Wilson et al. (2015) indicated that 43% of educational student development services in post-secondary institutions in Alberta had made responsive and reflective changes in 79% of the institutions in the past seven years, which aligns with a new department at Keyano College called Student Life. The Student Life department organizes activities and events throughout the year to unite students, faculty, and the community while maintaining an inclusive balance between wellness and academic learning (Keyano College, n.d.-d).

Wilson et al. (2015) discussed students' roles and responsibilities within post-secondary education, identifying unique ways for educational student development to be structured. The Students' Association of Keyano College (SAKC), a service and advocacy-

based non-profit organization established under the Post-Secondary Learning Act in Alberta (Keyano College, n.d.-b), protects students' interests, lends support in battling language barriers, and advocates about issues affecting students' learning and their presence on campus (Keyano College, n.d.-b). The SAKC is comprised of three levels. The first governing level of membership comprises of students who control the association's direction: general members, the second level includes students elected from various groups to ensure support for the unrepresented population, and the third is an executive council of students who participate in the Keyano College governing board. Students are involved in decision making and moving forward to address concerns at the SAKC's various elected levels.

Academic Freedom

Hogan and Trotter (2013) suggested that academic freedom is the core of higher education and is essential to ESL information and research. Research assists in supporting ESL adult learners' transitions into and during post-secondary education (Keyano College, n.d.-c). It is significant to maintain mutual respect as per the college standards and to establish it in the students' and faculty's day-to-day interactions. At Keyano College, incorporated within the Collective Agreement, executive decisions mandate that faculty probation and standards should align with the mission and vision of the institution (Keyano College, n.d.-c). The Comprehensive Institutional Plan (CIP) document is designed to help the faculty develop goals to assist students and include ESL students in the academic path, to ensure the quality of the college's programs and services, and to meet the needs of all students in alignment with the mission and vision of the college (Keyano College, n.d.-c).

Fortunately, for Keyano College (n.d.-c), the foreign market supports the increased enrollment of international students who immigrate to Fort McMurray to attend college. An underlying problem at the college level is international students who have challenges with the Canadian processes regarding how to complete college work, including writing and English

articulation, the pronunciation of words, and the understanding of word meanings, and how to conform to the integrity and honesty of work at the college level. Additionally, the faculty is unprepared to integrate or modify course material, assignments, and in-class tasks to accommodate ESL student learners. Derwing (2017) suggested that even though students recognize a lack of English support at the college level, ESL students acknowledge and demonstrate skills early within programs that require support with college level work and English support services. Another underlying problem for international students attending Keyano College is an increase in academic misconduct, such as plagiarism (Keyano College, n.d.-c). As expressed in its policy, the college believes that it is vital to keep the board of governors and college abreast of academic misconduct reported to the Office of the Registrar. Although ESL students have passed the CELPIP exam for admission to Keyano College, many students discover that English comprehension in reading, writing, and listening is challenging. Therefore, many of them conclude that the preparation courses offered for ESL students before admission are not adequate to support ESL students at the college level.

Chapter 2

English as a Second Language Learner in Canada

Chapter 2 examines English comprehension, exploring the history of reading, writing, listening, and speaking and why families who migrate to Canada acknowledge that English is essential to attend post-secondary education and to live and work. Additionally, an investigation was undertaken to determine whether ESL learners with a CLB level of 5–8 in English from the CELPIP exam required English support services in post-secondary education for academic success in Canada. Hossler and Bontrager (2015) suggested that to increase retention and persistence, it is vital to be aware of ESL students' educational goals and provide targeted services facilitating academic success. Keyano College agrees that it is imperative to provide ESL students with support services for English language proficiency skills in order to help students be successful in their academic selection of courses and programs.

History of ESL

Alfred Fitzpatrick, a Canadian Reverend, acknowledged the need to support adult migrant workers' recruitment in British Columbia, Canada by opening Frontier College, an established national literacy organization, in 1899 (Derwing, 2017, p. 83). Based on the challenges that migrant workers experience due to a lack of English language proficiency, the college furthered their English comprehension through reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The ESL program established in 1899 by Frontier College enabled ESL educators to design and implement organizations at the regional and federal levels. Derwing (2017) highlighted that Canada soon possessed the most comprehensive system of adult ESL training in the world and produced internationally recognized research on second language acquisition (p. 83).

Derwing (2017) highlighted that the government at regional and federal levels began to attract migrant workers to Canada between 1870 and 1913, enticing them with land policies at both levels. At the beginning of 1913, 400,000 immigrant workers had arrived in Canada and by the end of 1913, there were 7,500,000 immigrant workers. Derwing (2017) went on to suggest that the Canadian work industry experienced a shifting economy, with ESL migrants working on the frontlines of mines and railroads. During this period, many migrant ESL workers wanted to bring their families to Canada, but the government wanted to ensure that Canada received what Derwing (2017) described as "quality" immigrants who could speak and understand English.

The government went through a period of establishing challenging steps for immigrants to migrate to Canada. The government developed methodologies such as the head tax, called the Alien Labor Act of 1897, and, in 1910, the Immigration Act. After World War II, English—the official language in Canada—was integrated into citizenship education to support adult immigrants. In 1947, the Citizenship Act followed these same criteria for immigrants identified as needing better English language proficiency. In the 1960s, the English language of immigrant workers became a factor which brought changes to Canada with the introduction of the Bill of Rights, altering how immigrant workers entered Canada to be based solely on work skills as opposed to an individual's nationality (Derwing & Munro, 2009).

In 1971, the 15th Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Trudeau, supported the entry of families into Canada by introducing a multicultural policy to lend assistance to ethnocultural groups and aid new Canadians in learning official English language. Based on his support in 1988, the multicultural policy became the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 (Derwing, 2017; Derwing & Munro, 2009) and sparked immigration initiatives focusing on the breadwinner of the family, who was typically male and needed preparation for employment.

This focus granted less acknowledgment to women and their language skills, who, upon arrival in Canada, were often the first to secure employment, despite Derwing and Munro's belief that women deferred to their husbands (Derwing, 2017; Derwing & Munro, 2009).

Since the 1960s, various programs have been introduced to ease the transition and enrollment of newcomers to Canada. These programs are intended to assist with language training for daily and academic purposes. In 1992, LINC introduced English lessons to provide families access to language training (Derwing, 2017, p. 88). Although the service came into effect in 1992, the federal government still wanted to align college courses and programs in Canada with the needs of adult learners new to the country. Derwing (2017) discussed adult learners' introduction to college-level work by explaining the results of a national working group that collected input from teachers, learners, and program directors on how to do this effectively. Based on the data collected and this group's findings, in 1998, the CLB was developed. Access to college and university-level programs for adult learners in Canada required adult learners to take according to CELPIP (n.d.) an exam. The CLB levels 5–8 represent the required passing score that an adult ESL learner must attain before enrolling in Canadian post-secondary education.

Government of Canada

The Government of Canada (n.d.) adopted the CLB assessment tools as criteria for entering Canada. Breitkreutz et al. (2001) supported their approach by highlighting research showing that second-language adult learners are given less attention in terms of their societies, perceptions, and needs. Derwing (2017) further drew attention to the fact that an adult learner's first language employs different strategies and techniques to communicate in English. According to the Government of Canada (n.d.), the CLB identifies and assesses the English language levels of adults entering Canada from countries where English is not the native language. According to the CELPIP (n.d.), the CLB tool assesses a level of English

language comprehension that is adequate to succeed in college. The Government of Canada (n.d.) have outlined guidelines and expectations for families immigrating to Canada to live, work, and attend post-secondary education. According to the Government of Canada (n.d.), an adult learner who enrolls in an accredited college or university in Canada can be accepted into a post-secondary institution based on their educational history and CELPIP achievement scores for English language proficiency.

According to the Government of Canada (n.d.) and CELPIP (n.d.), the CLB levels range from 1 to 12. An adult at a level of 1 possesses the lowest English proficiency level whereas an adult at a level of 12 shows a high level of English language fluency. As stated by the Government of Canada (n.d.), a person demonstrating CLB skills at a level 4 benchmark can utilize English to communicate daily living needs. A CLB level of 5–8 indicates that the individual has acquired more important English language proficiency skills. At level 6, a person possesses English language proficiency skills that are developing beyond daily living needs. At level 7, a person has adequate English language proficiency skills, while at level 8, the person's skills are considered acceptable in workplace and community contexts. The benchmark of levels 5–8 provides evidence that a person can live, work, and enroll in post-secondary education. This study will examine English language experiences associated with the Canadian benchmark level 5–8, as this is deemed satisfactory for an ESL student living in Alberta while completing a post-secondary education. The Government of Canada confirmed that adults who identify as ESL learners with CLB levels from 9–12 are considered advanced for university admittance.

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo in Alberta, Canada

According to RMWB (n.d.), the Municipality of Wood Buffalo was established in April 1995 through the amalgamation of the City of Fort McMurray. Fort McMurray, in Alberta, Canada, is a northern Canadian city surrounded by boreal forests rich in natural

resources and wildlife possessing relevant institutional and contextual factors attracting people from all over the world (RMWB, n.d.). The municipality, consisting of 10 smaller Indigenous rural communities, is the fastest growing industrial community in Canada due to the oil industry (RMWB, n.d.). Statistics Canada (2016a) highlighted Fort McMurray as having a diverse population, similar to population trends worldwide. Currently, according to Explore Buffalo (n.d.), there are 73,000 people in the heart of Wood Buffalo. Fort McMurray is a home away from home for many ESL residents (Keyano College, n.d.-a).

Unique and Relevant to Alberta

The RMWB (n.d.), Derwing and Munro (2009) and Murry and Shillington (2006) indicated a shortage of skilled workers representing a critical component of the economy. The natural resources in the Alberta region permit local and foreign businesses to establish foundations within the community through the employment of Albertans and immigrants who are ESL learners and might also be skilled tradesmen or women in the Canadian oil sands. Businesses in Fort McMurray, such as Syncrude and Suncor, generate wealth for Albertans through the substantial scale of resource extraction at oil sand sites. Moreover, Fort McMurray's refineries have contributed to Alberta becoming one of the wealthiest provinces in Canada (RMWB, n.d.). Keyano College has collaborative partnerships with the industry and local businesses, as its diverse programs prepare graduates to work in the local industry. The institution can potentially investigate strengthening partnerships with the industry by designing programs and teaching outcomes to align with the needs of the local industry, including the expansion of departments.

Growth of the Immigrant Population in Alberta

The Government of Canada (n.d.) identified a shift in population trends, noting that between 2001 and 2020, 35,519 new immigrants migrated to Alberta. During the third quarter of 2020, an estimated 65,785 interprovincial migrants came to Alberta. A further discovered

pattern of change was an increase in the number of immigrants availing higher education. Martel (2015) confirmed these trends, observing an increase in the diversity of students worldwide and of the ESL population applying to post-secondary education. Canada has experienced a rise in the number of residents who receive student visas, including those for post-secondary education (Martel, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2016b). Martel (2015) indicated that the student population in post-secondary education, as reported in the National Household Survey in 2011, suggests that approximately 46% of Alberta's residents are immigrants born outside Canada or from provinces other than Alberta.

According to the Government of Canada (n.d.), there is a process within the province that identifies programs and information to help immigrants study, live, and work in Alberta. Additionally, they highlight the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFW), which allows citizens from other countries to apply to live in Alberta for an extended period. Incentive programs such as these can contribute to the population growth among the interprovincial migrants. Statistics Canada (2016b) identified that the number of adult learner visa applicants for Canada increased from 2009 to 2015, revealing that while 58% of students applied for visas in 2009, by 2015, 69% of adult learners had completed a student visa application for Canada—leading to an increase in revenue of $21.6 billion for campus communities. The Government of Canada (n.d.) describes, as depicted below in Table 2, the immigrant population's growth in Alberta from 2000 to 2020. The graph underscores that the population in 2016 comprised of 5741 immigrants which had increased to 35, 519 by 2020.
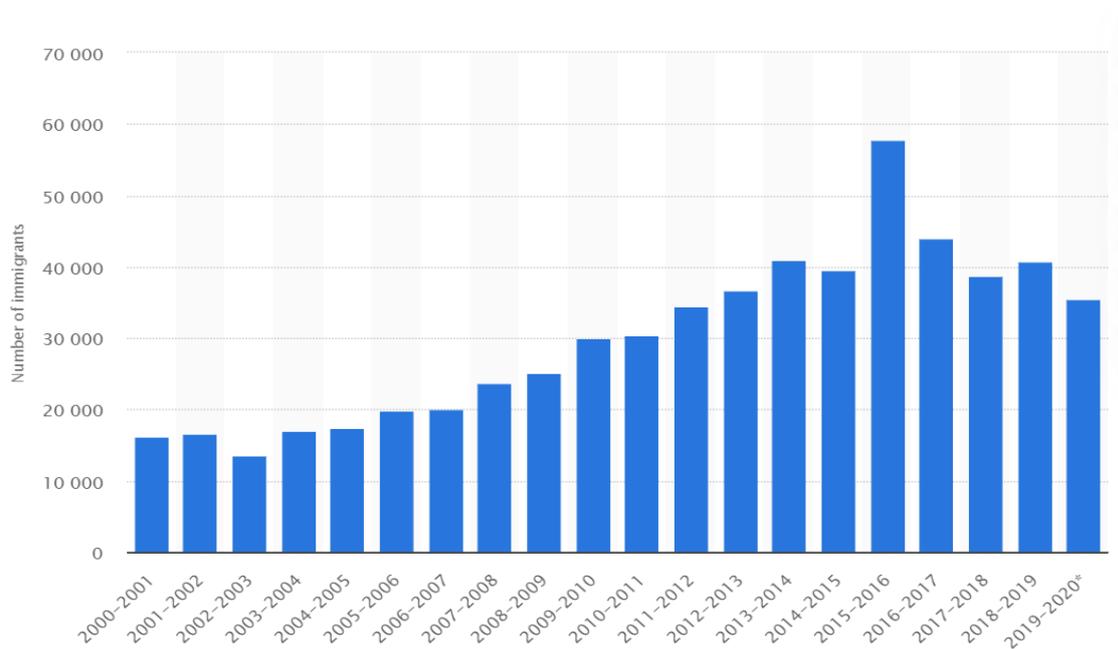
Derwing (2017) discussed that it is essential to reduce barriers at the post-secondary level to ensure that immigrant families contribute their skills to Canada. Before adult learners can navigate and enroll in programs at the post-secondary level, they must acquire a certain level of English language proficiency (Keyano College, n.d.-b). According to Breitkreutz et al. (2001), immigrants who lack English language proficiency skills receive an ESL designation from Canada recognizing this insufficiency. For Derwing (2017), the term "ESL" has become prevalent in post-secondary education, contributing to additional barriers in the field. ESL learners face obstacles that account for inconsistencies in the pronunciation of words and articulation of word meaning, which can cause communication breakdowns (Derwing, 2017; Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002).

Breitkreutz et al. (2001) and Derwing (2017) expanded on the discussion of LINC adopting a policy platform in 1992, developed by the government to provide families new to Canada access to additional language training in English language proficiency skills, including equipping ESL learners with consistent, accessible, high-quality, and cost-effective

training. Further goals included accommodating flexible training, developing collaborations with partner organizations, and integrating Canadian values into the training.

Canada's government additionally decided that although the LINC program was working effectively, it was still necessary to ensure language-teaching consistency and ESL learning measures in the country's provinces (Derwing, 2017; Breitkreutz et al., 2001). The federal government contracted consultants to gather a national working group of stakeholders and practitioners to learn how best to support ESL learners in taking on college-level work (Center for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2020; Derwing, 2017; Breitkreutz et al., 2001). In 1996, the Canadian Language Benchmark (Government of Canada, n.d.) identified a national group of 337 participants who established a language policy to support new immigrants to Canada, with the goal to develop a common ground via the English language to allow new immigrants access to services in Canada.

ESL Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education

Hossler and Bontrager (2015) discussed the seven Ps: product, place, price, promotion, process, people, and physical evidence—a concept that underlines the importance of English services that address ESL students' needs within the educational realm. They posited that the product of higher education consists of Keyano College's services, including two essential components: academic majors and the institution's brand. In this case, the place is Keyano College itself and the ESL students' initial contact with the college in addition to the support for academic majors offered through information and research—which includes accessibility, understandability, and navigation. This approach enables the students, including adult ESL learners, to connect with the institution based on how well the college sells its products. Keyano College's brand involves promotional ideas regarding what the college does well or stands for, including its vision and mission. The key to any strong brand is ensuring that it is relevant, distinctive, and true (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015). The staff could

support ESL students in English language use by using a predictive analytic tool to help with recruitment and retention.

To increase ESL enrollment at Keyano College, Leiber et al. (2018) suggested bridging the gap between theory and practice by using an analysis to provide quality assurance regarding the college's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). A SWOT analysis would consist of investigating change by examining the demographics of international student enrollment based on age, sex, and location. As Arum and Roksa (2011) suggested, it is essential to approach high schools to understand ESL students' needs and wants regarding their academic and career paths. They further discussed improving elementary and secondary school student preparation. The process would improve student preparation prior to enrollment in college with increased learning for better educational performance. Moreover, this method would allow students to obtain information about college life by familiarizing themselves with ideas regarding different careers and academic requirements.

The influx of ESL adult learners entering Canada, speaking a multitude of languages with several diverse cultures, has impacted the curricular frameworks in post-secondary education, demonstrating the need for a shift in policies requiring immediate attention. The Alberta Provincial Minister of Advanced Education, Demetrios Nicolaides, argued that making changes to existing policies necessitates a strategic plan that is thoughtful and deliberate and can provide a support system in post-secondary education (D. Nicolaides, personal communication, November 14, 2019). When adult learners attain the necessary knowledge and skills to graduate from Keyano College, students either turn to employment or continue their academic journey. According to Derwing (2017), this process should be supported by attainable English resources and support. Ray (2014) emphasized that academically inclined students, including ESL students, are motivated to study, which

becomes evident in enrollment, persistence, retention, and completion. Keyano College reinforces this dedication and commitment by implementing readiness programs and deploying resources to provide targeted support for ESL students along their journeys to graduation (Keyano College, n.d.-d). Finding the motivation to study may become challenging for some students which, especially for ESL learners, can create gaps in learning due to factors such as a lack of family and peer support in English, insufficient financial aid, and a lack of self-regulated motivation (Nixon, 2015; Ray, 2014; Suh, 2016).

Minister Nicolaides in 2019 discussed a vision of new metrics that will allow funding to be given to students, including ESL adult learners within post-secondary institutions, for several years instead of the current one-year formula. The new funding metrics will provide new scholarships and apprenticeship models. The Ministry of Education also plans to invest $10 million in programs for women and $11 million for a program called Careers: The Next Generation, offering academic and workforce support to Alberta's families (D. Nicolaides, personal communication, November 14, 2019). When Canada's government offers financial assistance for post-secondary institutions, colleges such as Keyano College can begin to strengthen programs to support the English prerequisites required for ESL learners.

Impact of English Language Proficiency

When families move to Canada and learn about the Canadian way of life, the value of the English language becomes clear (Gibson, 2016; Lee, 2016). Families new to Canada realize that living, working, and acquiring a post-secondary education requires Canada-specific work skills, a certain level of English language proficiency, and education (Chow, 2001; Derwing, 2017; Breitkreutz et al., 2001). Families begin to discover that even though members of the family have passed the CELPIP exam with a CLB level of 5–8, they still have difficulties in understanding English, including issues with pronunciation and language comprehension (Derwing, 2017; Breitkreutz et al., 2001). Due to English challenges, many

families revert to speaking their native language at home and within their communities. When adult learners within the family decide to attend post-secondary education to improve their academic and workplace skills, they—at times—find English challenging when attempting to enroll at the college level. After registration, ESL students face additional challenges in understanding the course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks. When adult ESL learners find it challenging to adjust to college-level work, they realize that English language support services are required (Derwing, 2017; Breitkreutz et al., 2001). The impact of limited English usage by newcomers to Canada, other than for functional purposes, creates challenges academically and in the daily lives of ESL adult learners.

Challenges

Among the challenges that arise in Canadian post-secondary education that can impact student success is deploying appropriate teaching techniques in academic programs for ESL learners who have English language proficiency skills deemed satisfactory for post-secondary education. The trends in some colleges and universities in Canada demonstrate a lack of mainstream inclusion of ESL learners (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Huang, 2013). There is increasing diversity in Canada. Statistics Canada (2020) reported in the 2018/19 academic school year, 2.1 million international students enrolled in Canadian colleges and universities—an increase of 1.8 million from 2017. This data reinforces Derwing's 2017 study, which highlighted the shift in cultural groups as it impacts teaching and learning. The rapid evolution of diverse groups in the classroom has limited the time available for implementing updated policies to guide and prepare teachers to support and work effectively with ESL learners. Teachers are now beginning to realize that one size does not fit all and that teaching and learning need to be responsive to student needs (Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Derwing, 2017; Derwing & Munro, 2009; Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Foote et al., 2011; Suh, 2016).

McDonald and Ward (2017). when researching Canadian colleges and universities, found that 63 post-secondary institutions out of 76 did not have data on race. Some Canadian post-secondary institutions did emphasize that they practiced diversity and inclusion but, for some ESL students, this may prove to be inadequate in addressing their English language needs. When such institutions lack data on race or have not implemented formal policies regarding diversity, the lack of research to support data on race and ethnicity could influence how teachers and institutions in Canada implement English policies to support race-related services (McDonald & Ward, 2017). The research stated that race-based evidence is key to addressing inequalities, assisting colleges and universities to uncover the obstacles and barriers that prevent diverse students from completing courses and programs. McDonald and Ward (2017) emphasized the importance of understanding the student body, including the languages present on campus.

The Government of Canada (n.d.) has acknowledged the change in languages within educational institutions. Language and culture are vital concerns in contemporary classrooms. Researchers have suggested that English language proficiency has become a deciding factor for many adult learners who want to pursue and further their educations (Chow, 2001; Nieto, 2010; Government of Canada (n.d.); Derwing, 2017). Many adult immigrant learners who return to post-secondary institutions, at times, do not understand that the journey to college can be lengthy and that they must first demonstrate an enhancement in English language proficiency (Bhaskar & Soundiraraj, 2013; Derwing, 2017; Ramos, 2001; Suh, 2016).

Conclusion

The review of the literature and overview of the Canadian, Alberta, and Keyano College contexts have laid the foundation for why the research motivation of determining how to support ESL learners is essential and why it is paramount to conduct the study at Keyano College with its ESL students. An investigation into the CLB linguistic standards of

levels 5–8, deemed satisfactory for ESL at the college level, uncovered that adult ESL students who enter post-secondary education continue to suffer challenges with the language, such as the articulation of English, pronunciation of words, and understanding of the meaning of words to complete course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks. A further investigation into the CLB levels 5–8 identified that English support services are required in post-secondary education for ESL student to achieve academic success in Canada. The next chapter examines the proposed study in which six female CLB level 5–8 students participated in a questionnaire to articulate their English skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Additionally, a focus group was conducted to correlate between the participants' current CLB levels and the English support services that were accessed or available. The evidence-based data from the survey and focus group allowed the ESL students to receive the support needed at the CLB levels of 5–8.

Chapter 3

Purpose of the Study

Chapter 3 discusses a conceptual framework for the proposed capstone study that supported the research questions of whether an ESL learner who earned a CLB level of 5–8 from the CELPIP exam requires English support services in post-secondary education for academic success in Canada. To answer the question, six ESL adult learners participated in this study, completing a pre-assessment survey of English language proficiency and partaking in a focus group. The survey identified the participant's background knowledge of English with the CLB levels 5–8 as associated with challenges or successes with reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Both the focus group and survey permitted the conceptualization of the participants' articulation of English, pronunciation of words, and understanding of word meanings through English language stories and experiences. Their stories and experiences were collected into data from course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks. The ESL participants' data from the language proficiency survey and focus group helped the researcher determine whether an ESL student would be more likely to complete post-secondary education with English support services.

Conceptual Framework

The new approaches to qualitative research involved eight layers of uncertainties embedded within a conceptual framework called the taxonomy of wisdom and uncertainty in qualitative research (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010). The conceptual framework in this study discussed four layers of uncertainties—epistemological, ontological, moral, and purpose-related—in working closely with the ESL participants. Further, the framework—according to Savin-Baden and Major (2010)—was employed in making decisions about wisdom and uncertainty by using stance, method, and space to identify and outline the underlying problem

while understanding the importance of examining the shared real and relevant experiences of the students.

They suggested qualitative research methods which involved examining a naturalistic approach to interpreting and investigating wisdom and uncertainty. The wisdom discussed by Savin-Baden outlined that one must possess the knowledge to be wise but the experience to be honest and trustworthy, while uncertainty allowed for the examination of what is considered valid and untrue. Wisdom and uncertainty are interconnected, according to Savin-Baden and Major (2010), suggesting that wisdom can lead to uncertainty and uncertainty can lead to wisdom. This analogy becomes twofold with opinions and choices that can impact an ESL student's perception and understanding.

Savin-Baden and Major (2010) reinforced that by understanding the underlying problem through wisdom and uncertainty, the researcher must consider the epistemological question, "what is the nature and reliability of human knowledge?" (p. 2). The research data on ontological knowledge enabled the researcher to identify what would be considered real or relevant from the innate perception of the student's language world (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010). They believed that research must include questions and probing discussions to prove the claim of inconsistencies and allow the ESL students to discover the truth within themselves by conceptualizing the uncertainties of morals and purpose. Morals include lessons to be learned in English and the purpose of having ESL students consider why things are executed in a certain way.

The morals and purpose allowed the researcher to determine the study' s truth as well as untold truth and uncertainty by using stance, methods, and social space (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010). The evidence put forth using the stance of positioning a participant within the perimeter of the discussion allowed the researcher to use a variety of methods to ask questions in a safe and welcoming social space to uncover the truth. This truth allowed the

researcher to apply a lens to examine the participant's cultural history and language, which uncovered the interrelated truth associated with the participant's articulation of English in regard to accents, the pronunciation of words, and the understanding of the meanings of words as illustrated through their voice and English engagement.

Underlying Problem

The underlying ESL question at Keyano College is how to improve the best practices in English to support ESL students. Feedback from their English experiences allowed the researcher to base conclusions on the students' articulation of English and accents, pronunciation of words, and understandings of word meanings in course material, assignments, and in-class tasks impacting decisions that affect the ESL learners. Creswell and Poth (2018) considered the cause and effect of a scientific approach and how current pedagogical practices can shape ESL students' thinking. Munro et al. (2006) reinforced and identified that foreign accents are a common, everyday aspect of second language (L2) acquisition.

Research Questions

The aim of the research for this proposed capstone study (see the bulleted list below) are to investigate the CELPIP and ask why the linguistic standards of the CLB levels 5–8 are deemed satisfactory for ESL at Keyano College and whether students at these levels still require English support services to achieve academic success in Canada. Success in English reading, writing, listening, and speaking may require support articulating in English, pronouncing words, and understanding the meaning of words associated with the completion of course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks.

- What types of English language support are required by ESL students to ensure their English success at the college level?

- How did previous English language support received by ESL students with CLB levels 5–8 promote success?

- Are online courses at Keyano College providing adequate ESL support in individualized learning in reading, writing, listening, and speaking? Furthermore, what additional measures can the faculty employ in programs to support ESL students in engaging with course material, assignments, and in-class tasks?

According to Savin-Baden and Major (2010), wisdom, uncertainty, morals, and purpose can contribute to why ESL students must understand their background knowledge in language to learn English, which allowed students to achieve improved language proficiency at the college level. ESL students utilized their innate wisdom and uncertainty to strengthen skills and conceptualize morals and purposes from lessons learned to understand how the English support cycle in Figure 3 was used to improve their English. The English support cycle identified measures for improving ESL students' English language proficiency by using Savin-Badin and Major's (2010) stance, methods, and social space with CLB levels of 5–8 to foster and enhance ESL English at the college level. Figure 3 laid the foundation for students' English support by availing a cycle to improve the 5–8 CLB levels. The English support cycle intended to strengthen the ESL students' CLB levels in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Moreover, its use would improve ESL students' skill sets in articulating English, pronouncing words, and understanding the meaning of words necessary to complete assignments, course materials, and in-class tasks at the post-secondary level.

Figure 3

The English Support Cycle to Improve the CLB Levels From 5–8
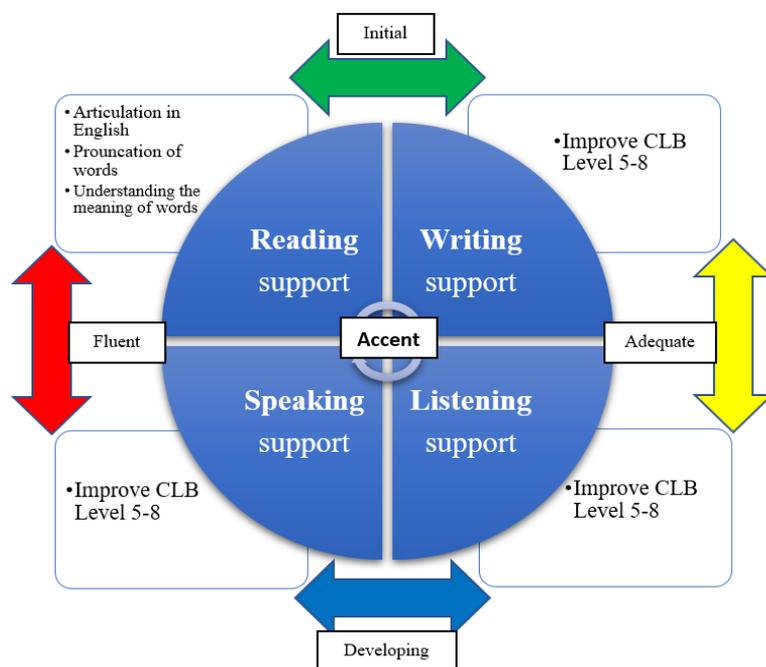
Population and Sample

From the naturalistic approach to interpreting and investigating perspectives, Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) discussion of the taxonomy of wisdom and uncertainty in qualitative research about the methodological ideologies are pertinent to ESL participants who meet academic and English language proficiency requirements. The population sample included students currently experiencing challenges in English and enrolled in a Childhood Studies program at Keyano College—one that prepares students for future careers with children and youth (Keyano College, n.d.-c).

Participants

Six female participants were selected to participate in this capstone study. Students who have passed an English Language Proficiency exam with a CLB level of 5–8, deemed satisfactory to pursue college-level work in Canada were chosen. The six participants enrolled at Keyano College ranged in age from 18–50, having migrated to Alberta, Canada within the past five years and enrolled in a Childhood Studies program at Keyano College.

While enrolled, the female participants shared their experiences with English challenges through feedback about their work in articulating English, pronouncing words, and understanding the meaning of words from course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks.

Sample

The capstone study used informed consent forms (see Appendix A.1 and A.2) for six female participants who identified as ESL students with challenges in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in English. The consent forms aligned with the feedback from the ESL students articulating English, pronouncing words, and understanding the meaning of words associated with course materials, assignments, and class-tasks. According to Cox et al. (2017), data-driven decision making (DDDM) captures the entire cycle of collecting data, interpreting findings, and using the resulting evidence to inform decision making. The first part required the researcher to understand the background information of the participants.

Materials

Researcher

According to Savin-Baden and Major (2010), the researcher must bring their subjectivity to the research table to remove prior biases while using themselves as an instrument to represent a significant change in approach. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested that the researcher must become observant, becoming a documenter, examiner, and distiller of assumptions and behaviors. Savin-Baden and Major (2010) and Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested that the researcher must include critical points of wisdom and uncertainty to possess the knowledge, multiple truths, and constructions that are fundamental pieces of a qualitative process inquiry.

The observations and documentation confirmed the validity of the independent and dependent variables, determining a clear direction regarding the hypothesis. Creswell and Poth (2018) and Savin-Baden and Major (2010) have shed light on the fact that a researcher

should acknowledge that ESL participants have "multiple perspectives and that the researcher should discuss this as content-dependent, meaning the researchers must understand the dynamics of the purpose of the research topic" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 30).

The ideology involved for this study is to use a protocol plan with phases to conceptualize each student's English language proficiency using Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) conceptual framework, i.e., the taxonomy of wisdom and uncertainty in qualitative research and, thus, conceptualize how best to improve English skills through the English Support Cycle in Figure 3. The researcher's protocol plan explains how the study addressed the research question.

Protocol Plan

- The researcher distributed an online informed consent (see Appendix A.1 and A.2) form which provided an overview of the study and explained the researcher's intent and methods used to retrieve the primary data. If the ESL participants required further clarification, a scheduled Zoom meeting with the researcher would present the study's details and outcomes.

- The ESL students participated in an online scheduled survey (Appendix B., C) to provide the researcher with the participants' current CLB levels in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

- The focus group Zoom meeting data (with the use of Appendix D and E) determined the ESL students' articulation in English, pronunciation of words, and understanding of word meanings associated with course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks.

- The improved English services (Appendix F) was to establish information to support the participants' improvement from CLB levels 5–8 in English language proficiency.

Once the researcher received the signed consent from the six female participants (Appendix A1., A2), the researcher used an English Comprehension Survey (Appendix B) to

establish each participant's current English language proficiency levels in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In alignment with the participants' current English language proficiency levels (Appendix C), the researcher categorized the participants' CLB levels as initial, adequate, developing, or fluent. The data retrieved from the English Comprehension Survey allowed the use of Appendix D during a focus group Zoom meeting with the six female participants to ask a series of interview questions, allowing the researcher to document the conversation in a journal and probe for further investigation within the participants' English responses. By probing for English responses, the researcher identified and documented CLB levels using Appendix E and, through the participants, articulation in English, pronunciation of words, and understanding of word meanings while exploring recurring patterns in English. The recurring English patterns established if and how an accent can impact reading, writing, listening, and speaking in correlation with the mispronunciation of words and misunderstanding of word meanings. Furthermore, it examined whether the participants' cultural backgrounds and current English knowledge impeded them from asking for clarification regarding course material, assignments, and in-class tasks. The evidence from the survey and focus group allowed the researcher to suggest using an English Support Cycle (Appendix F) to the participants to document how the recurring English patterns from the survey and focus group can be used to analyze the data to support improving the participants' CLB English levels 5–8 required for post-secondary education in Canada.

Survey

The capstone study used the researcher's wisdom and uncertainty as an instrument to facilitate an inquiry into stance, methods, and space (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010) and compile data from the ESL students through a survey and focus group (see Appendices B, C). The Survey Monkey tool's pre-test phase in March 2021 would identify the ESL learners' current English language proficiency levels. The mixed-method approach survey would

measure their English language proficiency benchmark levels by accessing English language comprehension with a) reading, b) writing, c) listening, and d) speaking associated with articulating English, the pronunciation of words, and the ESL students' understandings of word meaning. During a Zoom meeting, the researcher would explain how to complete the survey by tapping into the student's morals and purpose (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010) and by explaining each question to the participants.

An explanation provided to the ESL participants would direct them to insert numerical responses on the survey ranging from 1 through 4. The number 1 indicates beginning-level English comprehension, 2 adequate English comprehension, 3 developing English comprehension, and 4 fluent English comprehension. Each numerical response was associated with a color code (see Appendix B): green as initial, yellow as adequate, blue as developing, and red as fluent. The survey's final question would ask the ESL students to use Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) morals and purpose to decide which CLB level they believed they would achieve after receiving English language support services. The participants would complete the online survey without further assistance. Once the survey is completed, the participants would be directed to submit the survey and, then, be informed by email when the researcher received the surveys' notification through Survey Monkey. The survey's post-test phase was to follow the same procedure, with the participants identifying their current CLB levels. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested examining data using theories while thinking about the ESL participants' responses, further indicating that studying articles from qualitative research could support the framing of the research to base it on grounded theory. This may look different from questions posed from a phenomenological perspective.

Focus Group

Before the focus group meeting would commence, the researcher planned to remind the participants of the informed consent observation interview (see Appendix A.2). The ESL

participants in the online focus group would receive a verbal notification at the start of the meeting that this would be a recorded session. The transcribed focus group meeting would discuss the students' uncertainty regarding morals and purpose (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010). Morals and purpose was to be explored in association with using past and present experiences to articulate in English, pronounce words, and understand the meanings of words in the Childhood Studies program associated with course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks (see Appendix D, E). The researcher planned to ask the participants to articulate their expectations of their college courses and perceptions of the support for student success in English comprehension regarding reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The researcher's focus group questions were tailored from the survey responses and intended to provoke conversation and establish the ESL learner's expectations. Furthermore, questions were asked regarding what the ESL students needed to support their learning (see Appendix D). While the six ESL participants engage in conversation during the focus group, the researcher planned to document the participants' stances, methods, and social spaces (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010) concerning English articulation, including speech patterns, sounds, and accents; the pronunciation of words; and the ESL learners' understandings of the meanings of words during the discussion. Using these methods, the researcher will suggest techniques and strategies for improving English comprehension for the ESL participants. At the end of the one-hour focus group, the researcher will explain to the participants that they would receive a copy of the transcript by email within one week and if changes had to be made to the documentation, the ESL participants would let the researcher know one week from the emailed date.

Data Analysis

According to the method of Savin-Baden and Major (2010), the results from the participants' CLB levels, observations, recordings, transcription from the focus group, and

other considerations will allow the researcher to grasp the ESL learners' levels of English language proficiency, align the students' accents with pronouncing words, and determine their understandings of the meanings of words. Data from the focus group will shed light on the uncertainty of how the ESL participants felt about their current understanding of the Childhood Studies course material, assignments, and class tasks, with documented concepts and descriptions of the participants' techniques (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010).

The survey and focus group's documentation and recorded footage will be continually subjected to comparative methods from the survey and focus group. New data would be compared in a chart and then correlated with the color-coded questions, numbers, and letters associated with the survey. The focus group data will identify the participants' levels of reading, writing, listening, and speaking associated with the articulation of English, participants' accents, pronunciation of words, understanding of word meaning, and which patterns and themes will become linked to the questions discussed in the focus group.

As Savin-Baden and Major (2010) and Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested, the researcher's stance will allow for a reflection and examination into the background of the ESL participants' cultures and work experience (see Appendix B). The researcher plans to visually categorize the findings of the areas of English which were challenging to articulate, including accents, the pronunciation of words, and word meanings. The data collection findings will be organized in different themes and the lists developed to align with the types of responses from the participants. The most recurring data in responses will allow the researcher to identify the top shared English challenges for the ESL participants.

Data Collection and Analysis

Following the processes in Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) work, the data collection process in the present study aimed to discover connections using stance, methods, and social space applied to selected ESL learners from the Childhood Studies department. Furthermore,

to support the data analysis, a survey and focus group data analysis chart (see Appendix C, E) will provide quantitative and qualitative information to support the participants' CLB levels. The survey data analysis will provide the participants with a numerical score of initial, adequate, developing, or fluent English comprehension in reading, writing, listening, and speaking associated with English comprehension. The focus group data analysis will provide written documentation of the participants' articulation of English associated with accents when speaking, their pronunciation of words, and understandings of the meaning of words during the focus group discussion. The survey and group data analysis charts would also identify any reoccurring patterns from the participants' conversations (see Appendix E).

According to Savin-Baden and Major (2010), to avoid uncertainty, the data collection and analysis from the survey and focus group will be examined to ensure that the misinterpretation of any aspects of the information collected would be limited. However, before concluding the results of the data collection and analysis, the researcher will allow the charts to be reviewed by the ESL participants, who will confirm that no misinterpretation of data occurred. It is essential to document and distribute the content to the ESL participants, who have the right to refrain the researcher from using certain content (Creswell, 2014).

As the survey responses are examined using wisdom and uncertainty (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010), the data will be hand-coded by the researcher and the relationships and patterns identified by seeking similarities in the textual information and its numerical counterpart. In addition, referencing the question numbers and letters associated with the surveys allow for comparisons and the elimination of unwanted data. Additional naturalistic inquiry and questioning investigated themes or patterns related to questions such as: "What are your feelings of uncertainty about English in the Childhood Studies courses?" and "What techniques would help you become successful in English in the Childhood Studies course?" The participants' responses of wisdom and uncertainty correlates and connects data, leading

to the formulation of definite opinions. Once the researcher establishes a clear picture of the study, the assessment conceptualized different perspectives. According to Creswell (2014), "Thus, interpretation in qualitative research can take many forms; be adapted for different types of designs; and be flexible to convey personal, research-based, and action meaning" (p. 201).

The focus group intends to capture the stance, methods, and social space conversations, ensuring that the researcher gathers related data to best support ESL learners in online settings, including course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks. The researcher's method will also document the ESL participants' techniques, strategies, and discussed ideas to improve English comprehension and re-examine transcribed missed data from the conversations while listening to the audio recordings. The researcher will scan and filter the conversation to document accents, mispronunciations of words, and misunderstandings of word meanings.

According to Saldaña (2013), research perception and interpretation depend on what is happening in the data and the type of coding filter covering the research lens. To begin the process of a codebook, the data extracted from the focus group will go through the taxonomy of wisdom and uncertainty of qualitative research (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010), which includes examining actual experiences and decisions about transcribing real and relevant data. Strategies for this qualitative data analysis includes memos, categorizing, and connecting strategies (Maxwell, 2013). The researcher coded categories of the data to create segments identifying the analytic procedures which will be employed. The researcher will ensure that the theory or conceptual model's uncertainty of epistemology, ontology, morals, and purpose are understood (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010). Moreover, the memo-strategies of documentation plans to identify the information shared by the participants from the survey and focus group. The data will become filtered and employed through categorizing strategies

by connecting the participants' wisdom to English and their relationship to the course (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010).

The survey will divide organizational categories with a numerical value of English and how English articulation, the pronunciation of words, and the understanding of word meanings affects reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The focus group will examine the participants' similarities and differences, including the pronunciation and understanding of meanings, by classifying recurring patterns. The data collected in this study is partial and incomplete, as a caveat to the research.

The present research study, using a categorizing approach with support from the transcripts from the focus group and thematic techniques, allows for the development of a data matrix chart, thereby establishing an instrument to aid in identifying relevant and reoccurring words through patterns and themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When extracting information from the focus group transcripts, the coding will go through cycles. According to Saldaña (2013), the first cycle of coding ranges from checking the participants' use of a single capitalized word to words used with reoccurring words and patterns. The numerical label from the survey distinguishes the participants' levels of English. On the other hand, the second cycle will entail a more comprehensive process, including filtering the participants' mispronunciation of words and interpretations of word meanings. As stated by Saldaña (2013), when codes emerge, the patterns identified tell a short narrative.

Protection of Human Subjects

According to Creswell (2014), any research plans must be reviewed by an Institutional Research Board (IRB) on the relevant college and university campus. The IRB serves as a guide to ensure that there are no potential risks. This research followed the university's policies and procedures for conducting ethical research that involved the participation of human subjects. The IRB application process consisted of the researcher's

current certification in the Protection of Human Subjects in Research with evidence of the completion of human subjects training. The application went through an IRB decision guideline to identify the risks to the human subjects. Additionally, permission from the Keyano College's Research Ethical Committee was also required to commence with the research. Creswell (2014) asserted that a given research project's characteristics depend on the participants, the community, and a commitment to conduct research. The researcher completed the IRB forms, and submitted all IRB-related questions, and completed the application forms and supporting documentation.

Before completing the IRB application process, the researcher ensured that the research questions focus on the methods and a plan to obtain relevant data-driven decision results. Finally, if minors receive a required consent form, their parents' signatures are necessary. Keyano College (n.d.-b) also enforces an information and research protocol which includes completing an information and research application in addition to presenting the research topic to the Keyano College research ethical committee. The committee's role ensures confidentiality, anonymity, and that human participants are not at risk (Permission to commence with research was received on March 11, 2021).

Limitations and Delimiters

One limitation of this research is that the study design of the survey from the ground up serves different human experiences, collaborative work, and multiple triangulation methods in reading writing, listening, and speaking as well as in association with articulating English, pronouncing words, and understanding word meanings. The focus group questions were developed by synthesizing the literature and exploring concepts. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested that a study must discern a definite problem with a purpose and rationale for the research question to avoid issues arising later. Moreover, the problem must make sense regarding the reason for the research and its essential purpose. As claimed by Savin-

Baden and Major (2010), qualitative research is a broad field of inquiry that can allow the researcher to wrestle with explicit methodologies and methods. Maxwell's (2013) and Creswell's (2014) limitations involved delimiters that could identify gaps in the study relative to the research method. The restriction indicates that the researcher would not make claims regarding ESL students and their behaviors beyond the present case—of the context of Keyano College. The participants' data cannot be generalized or viewed as transferrable (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013). However, the data retrieved from the surveys and focus group may shed light on how other institutions might find this research valuable for future explorations in this area.

The research design and methods used in this study may require follow-ups and further explanation, entailing an in-depth look into other ESL learners' experiences with English within the Canadian context. Since English is a barrier for ESL students, stories of wisdom and uncertainty are told, including paradigms of epistemology, ontology, morals, and purpose, that ask what one seeks to understand of the world by engaging with others (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010). The opportunity to empower such learners using the ESL students' stances, methods, and social space through stories allowed the researcher to evaluate new or reoccurring knowledge and clarify the ESL students' challenges with English comprehension in post-secondary education. Further, exploring other theories and artifacts facilitated new ideologies pertinent to ESL students that can provoke further thought and shifts to explore new ideologies.

Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested that researchers' philosophical assumptions can also limit a study's growth by manifesting biases that can develop narrow-minded thinking. Savin-Baden and Major (2010) advocated for re-presenting research to include what we see or erase from our view. The participants' observations would define methodologies that demand the researcher's eyes be opened to observe what can be seen and heard, capitalizing

on the environment and its benefits for the study. Research must allow others to conceptualize the study's different perspectives, acknowledge that people may disagree with the data and employing experimental methods to either enhance the grounded theory or leverage place displacement to show data differently (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Validity

Maxwell (2013) asserted that "validity is a property of inference rather than methods and is never something that can be proven or taken for granted" (p. 32). Validity through the survey and focus group will correlate and identify relationships (Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013). Relationships among the English comprehension survey responses and focus group conversations will be determined to affirm the expected outcomes and establish the participants' current CLB levels of English comprehension in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The CELPIP exam ascertains the how and why of its organizational systems and clarifies its frameworks and policies. Artifacts will strengthen the validation process to reconfirm the capstone's intent to identify the challenges of an ESL student using English in post-secondary education after completing the CELPIP exam. Maxwell (2013) noted that research should be on what the study genuinely wants to know. Theorists, such as Breitkreutz at al. (2001) and Derwing and Rossiter (2002), have identified information and analyzed ESL students regarding the aforementioned four skills as well as articulating English with accents, pronouncing words, and understanding the meanings of words.

Maxwell (2013) indicated that one should identify the specific threat in potential questions and develop ways to rule out the danger. The internal validation of miscued measures may occur if participants do not follow instructions when receiving online English support services or if participants are absent or withdrawn from an online course. To avoid such blunders, the researcher was going to ensure that an English instructor from the Human

Services department would take attendance, thus, indicating that each participant receives

support in articulating English, pronouncing words, and understanding word meanings

associated with reading, writing, listening, and speaking (see Appendix F). The English

instructor was going to document:

- if a student has English articulation challenges because of an accent,

- if a participant mispronounced words, and

- if a participant has difficulties with word meanings.

Furthermore, the English instructor would have identified whether each participant

understands the English support available at the (1) initial, (2) adequate, (3) developing, and

(4) fluent levels. Lastly, the documentation from the instructor was planned to outline the

number of online instructional hours provided per month.

Rockinson-Szapkiw (2013) highlighted that compensatory, resentful demoralization

might have occurred if some students have varying English language proficiency skills before

the pre-test. One ESL student might demonstrate a proficiency level associated with CLB

level 5, whereas another may show indications of proficiency closer to CLB level 8. External

online factors affecting validity can also occur, including interaction within the setting, and a

treatment may require the researcher to conduct a new experiment to conceptualize the data

and results in alignment with the first testing set. If necessary, further research will be

conducted with a different group of ESL learners at a CLB level of 5–8 enrolled at Keyano

College.

Reliability

Anfara et al. (2002) suggested that a study's reliability must follow Lincoln and

Guba's trustworthiness criteria of addressing the qualitative term "dependability" to include

an audit trail, a code-recode strategy, a triangulation, and a peer examination. Doing so

allows the researcher to understand that there are many steps to research, including

collecting, checking, documenting, and rechecking data to prevent unwanted biases.

Moreover, Anfara et al. (2002) asserted that triangulation could put the researcher in a frame

of mind to critically examine, test, and identify the weaknesses of the research, thereby

enabling the researcher to determine where further testing is required. Inviting multiple

individuals to reaffirm a study supports the findings, data triangulation, and verification.

Post-secondary educators or peers who are familiar with the research or ESL participants can

include faculty, tutors, ESL leads, and administration who can verify the data, recheck it, and

document the accuracy of evidence. Additionally, a holistic account of the data that uses

multiple perspectives can offset problems within the study so that it can be explored to

enhance or develop more theories (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Trustworthiness

Savin-Baden and Major (2010) allow the researcher to interrelate concepts in

alignment to wisdom and uncertainty, acknowledging that one concept leads to another and

that the study's trustworthiness and authenticity is highest when the researcher has used all

methods (Iloh, 2016). Anfara et al. (2002) recommended using Lincoln and Guba's

trustworthiness criteria—credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformity—in

alignment with Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) wisdom and uncertainty. Credibility is

achieved in the present study by using the same ESL participants within the same post-

secondary college context engaged in the same program. The rich data's transferability will

be assessed during the surveys and focus group, and wisdom and uncertainty from the

observations can conceptualize the truth through the participants' shared stories while

articulating English, pronouncing words, and sharing their comprehensions of the meanings

of words used in course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks. Dependability through re-

examining uncertainty will be maintained, since the data will be coded, re-coded, and then

recorded months later. Wisdom, as propounded by Savin-Baden and Major (2010), will allow

for an audit trail including journal articles, audio recordings, and verbatim transcripts that will reinforce the methodological perimeters of the study's naturalistic application (Iloh, 2016). Finally, conformity is assured when the researcher continuously reflects on data and processes before, during, and after the survey data and focus group.

Positionality of the Researcher

Savin-Baden and Major (2010) pointed to that the positionality of the researcher requiring a reflective return to re-presented experiences, including class, colored, and greying positionalities. The class positionality grants the researcher the potential to look at the background language and working-class experiences from England, Canada, and the U.S., allowing for the acknowledgement of the challenges faced by people within different countries to read, write, listen, and speak that can impact the articulation of English through the pronunciation of words and understanding of word meanings within an environment that is culturally and linguistically different. The researcher could also identify with the colored positionality given that the researcher is a person of color, which allows for a reflection on biases in the language of what is seen and heard regarding what type of English fits into a society's profile. The greying position is associated with labels such as black, white, accent, non-accent, English, or ESL. Labels that have become woven into the researcher's life could also become ingrained into the fabric of the ESL students' lives.

According to Savin-Baden and Major (2010), the reflective return of trustworthiness addresses the study's nature and how the research enables the researcher to examine themselves by problematizing their positionality within the research and acknowledging who the researcher is and how they relate to the study. The reflections of the researcher include examining the epistemological, ontological, moral, and purpose uncertainty to avoid what Savin-Baden and Major (2010) claimed to be "positional piety" (p. 9), in which moral authority is claimed through an affinity to the subjects. Using the researcher's position to

listen and observe the ESL participants and using English without bias causes the conceptual framework to unfold with the truth and untold truth that plays a pivotal role in shaping worldviews. The English language can become conceptualized as the language best seen as paradoxically capable of enabling and inhibiting understanding (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010).

From the lens of a faculty member at Keyano College, observations have been made that identified the challenges ESL learners experience in reading, writing, listening, and speaking associated with articulating English, pronouncing words, and understanding the meanings of words to support course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks in the Childhood Studies program. The ESL learners faced challenges in the lack of success with grades and retention in the program. As a researcher, and through the lens of working-class, coloring, and greying positionalities, I will investigate and examine, with wisdom and uncertainty, that the ESL students within Keyano College align with the gaps in the CLB levels 5–8, and with an adult learner's inability to speak and listen to understand English sufficiently to complete post-secondary success in Canada.

Conclusion

The underlying question of this research is how to improve the best practices for ESL students in English through training and research at Keyano College. Using the taxonomy of wisdom and uncertainty in qualitative research, conclusions will be uncovered from the evidence-based data of epistemology, ontology, morals, and purpose, through the stances, methods, and social space of the students. These student experiences will assist the researcher in basing conclusions on the students' articulations of English, pronunciations of words, and understandings of the meanings of words in reading, writing, listening, and speaking as they align with the course material, assignments, and in-class tasks that impact the learners. The need for authenticity in research inspired the methods and methodologies that must evolve

over time in order to adequately validate the uncertainty of the findings. When examining challenges that ESL students face in acquiring English language proficiency with reading, writing, listening, and speaking within the post-secondary context, Savin-Baden and Major (2010) reinforced the importance of wisdom and uncertainty. A qualitative inquiry with rich and meaningful data that generates real and relevant truth is required within the research. As discussed by Creswell and Poth (2018), a conceptual framework provides methodological congruence through the ESL participants, which identifies and shares stories and experiences shedding light on the challenges that the ESL students encountered while attending post-secondary education in Canada. Epistemological, ontological, moral, and purpose paradigms will remove the uncertainty regarding information or written accounts (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010). The gathered evidence will allow the researcher to grasp the investigation's essence to support the ESL students' English comprehension skills within a post-secondary education context through the research findings and participants' stances, methods, and social spaces.

Chapter 4

Method, Results, and Data Analysis

Chapter 1 addressed Keyano College's history including the mission, vision, and core values, which allowed the capstone study to identify the research topic. Chapter 2 examined an ESL learner who earned a CLB level of 5–8 in English from the CELPIP exam requiring English support services in post-secondary education for academic success. Chapter 3 discussed the taxonomy of wisdom and uncertainty in qualitative research to align with a protocol plan to investigate the CLB levels with six participants who are ESL students to answer the question of why the linguistic standards of the CLB level 5–8, deemed satisfactory for an ESL at the college level, require English support services to achieve academic success in Canada. Finally, Chapter 4 will examine the method, results, and data analysis in response to the research question.

Method

The six female participants enrolled in the Childhood Studies program at Keyano College attended a Zoom conferencing meeting to discuss the informed consent forms for an English Comprehension Survey and focus group meeting (Appendix A.1 and A.2). A generated meeting ID with a required passcode was forwarded to the participants to maintain confidentiality. On entry, the researcher thanked them for attending the meeting, informing the participants that the mute and video options were on. The researcher introduced the topic for research, explaining to the participants that they must have taken and passed the CELPIP exam receiving a benchmark level of 5–8 to be deemed satisfactory to participate in the English Comprehension Survey and focus group meeting. The researcher notified them that an electronic signing tool emailed the informed consent forms to the participants' Keyano College email address.

English Comprehension Survey and Focus Group Informed Consent Forms

The researcher shared the informed consent forms (see Appendix A.1 and A.2) on Zoom, asking the participants to raise their icon hands if they had any questions. The researcher, then, read the informed consent forms aloud, pausing after each paragraph. On the conclusion of this activity, the researcher asked the participants if they had any questions. After waiting for a short period, the participants were asked to retrieve and sign the informed consent forms from their Keyano College email accounts. Once the researcher received confirmation that the informed consent forms were present in the researcher's email account, the researcher proceeded with the English comprehension survey.

English Comprehension Survey Informed Consent Process

The researcher shared the English Comprehension survey (see Appendix B), reinforcing that if they had any questions about the survey, the participant could raise the Zoom icon hand. The researcher explained how to complete the survey by rating the participants' English skills from 1 through 4 using the color-coded chart to identify their English skills as initial, adequate, developing, or fluent while reinforcing that initial is the beginning level of English skills while fluent indicated competent English skills. The researcher briefed them on where to insert the survey's numerical responses, by scrolling and stopping with the computer mouse at the selected questions.

The researcher asked the participants to raise the icon hand if they had any questions about the survey. When questions were not asked, the researcher told the participants that the survey link had been emailed to the participants' email accounts and when it was retrieved, the participants must open the link and raise the icon hand when they were ready to begin the survey. The researcher additionally ensured that the participants were informed that on completing the survey, they must click submit. Once the researcher confirmed six raised hand icons, the participants began the survey. When the researcher received the surveys to the

Survey Monkey account, the researcher thanked the participants and informed them that a Zoom invite to participate in a focus group meeting would occur within the next seven days.

Focus Group Meeting Informed Consent Process

One week later, a focus group meeting request was sent to the six participants using the same procedure, including a Zoom ID and passcode. On entry to the meeting, the researcher welcomed each participant, informing them that the online platform Zoom was not on mute and that the participants' videos were on. The researcher notified them that the focus group meeting would be recorded and transcribed; the word transcribed was defined to the participants. The researcher started the meeting by introducing the research topic and then, asked the participants to share their English experiences in the Childhood Studies program in association with course materials, assignments and in-class tasks, with stories and experiences that could shed light on their English language experiences (see Appendix C, D, and E). After the one-hour focus group meeting, the researcher thanked the participants for attending, letting them know that a copy of the discussion would be emailed to them and if they had any questions or wanted to make changes to the notes, they could email the researcher within one week.

Results

English Comprehension Survey

The Survey Monkey pre-test online tool for data collection using (Appendix B and C) allowed the researcher to conceptualize the participants' level of articulation in English, their pronunciation of words, and understanding of word meanings with their current CLB level in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Figure 4 identified their CLB levels with one participant at the CLB level 5, two participants at CLB level 6, two participants at CLB level 7, and one participant listed as other. The results of other showing that the participant passed

an English 20-1 course which, according to the Government of Canada (n.d.-d), a person must have passed the CLB level 5–8 demonstrating fluent levels of English to qualify.

Figure 4

The Current CLB Levels of the ESL Students
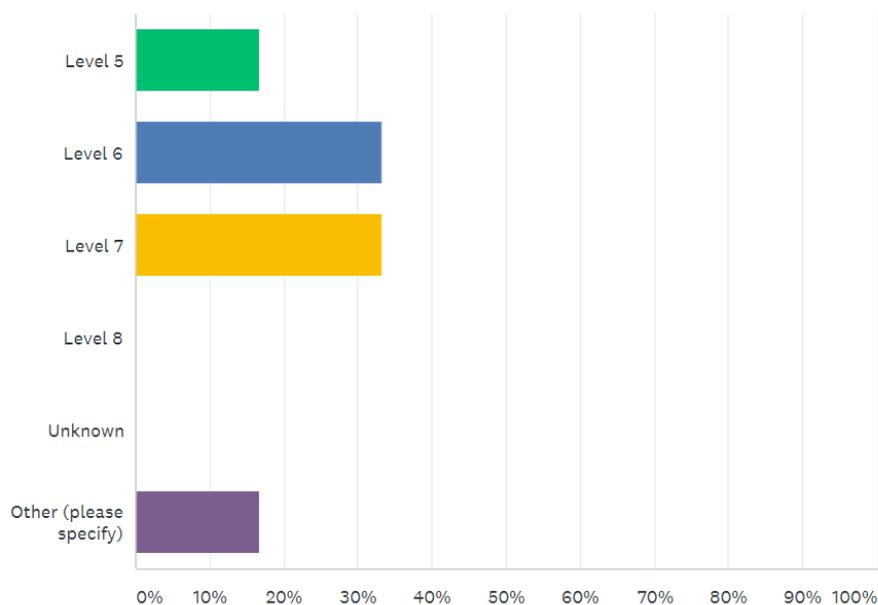
Additional results from the survey revealed that the participants had lived in Canada since 2014 and were unemployed for one month to two years, with 50% of the participants receiving English classes and 60% receiving no English language support from their family, friends, or other resources. The participants' native languages included Tagalog, Punjabi, Ilonggo Bisaya, French, and Somalia, with the results highlighting that the native language was spoken mainly at home.

The survey's final question required the participants to rate their English language proficiency after receiving English support services. The data revealed that the participants considered their English language proficiency to range from CLB level 5–7. The participant who identified as other after completing an English 20-1 still considered herself at a CLB level below 8.

Focus Group Meeting

Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) taxonomy of wisdom and uncertainty paradigms of epistemological, ontological, morals, and purpose aligned with the participants and the researcher during the focus group meeting. The researcher's class, colored, and greying positionalities led to the emergence of subjectivity, removing language biases and included stance, methods, and social space to engage the participants further. The epistemological paradigm enabled the participants to investigate their interpretation of the nature and reliability of human knowledge by sharing language encounters and experiences of articulating English—with an accent, the pronunciation of words, and understanding their meanings. The ontological approach allowed the participants to identify the language experiences and what is authentic or relevant to share in the discussion. The moral and purpose approach were illustrated when the participants chose lessons learned from their language experiences and why English was interpreted in an uncertain way in the Childhood Studies program with course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks.

The researcher's stance through personal stories was shared about language experiences in England, Canada, and the U.S. The researcher utilized methods to ask the ESL participants questions of language encounters in the classroom setting and how the language was perceived when having conversations with English-speaking members, such as "What are your feelings of uncertainty about English in the Childhood Studies courses?" and "What techniques would help you become successful in English in the Childhood Studies program?" During the discussion, a safe social space began to emerge through stories that paved the way for the participants to share more language experiences (see Appendix H).

Data Analysis and Documentation

The English comprehension survey results allowed the researcher to incorporate Rockinson-Szapkiw's (2013) discussion of compensatory and resentful demoralization to

identify if the participants' relationships in English language proficiency correlated with the CLB levels. The focus group provided shared experiences that pointed out language trends. The survey and focus group documentation and recorded transcribed occurrences used Maxwell's (2013) memos categorizing and connecting data to establish the language relationships while validity and reliability occurred using Anfara et al.'s (2002) Lincoln and Guba's trustworthiness criteria of addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformity. The survey's results from the students' responses was categorized using a color-coded question and score chart in association with their CLB levels into initial, adequate, developing, and fluent (see Appendix G). The participants' English language proficiency in articulating English with an accent, the pronunciation of words, and understanding their meanings were associated with course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks during the focus group meeting using recurring themes in the language (see Appendix H, I, J, and K). The reoccurring patterns and trends connected resources from a theorist who examined English language proficiency in Canada's post-secondary education (see Appendix L).

Survey Data Analysis and Documentation Phases

The researcher used phases to examine the survey data to authenticate its credibility and determine the best results. Phase one examined the participants' background information, ascertaining that they had lived in Canada for a maximum of five years and were unemployed from one month to two years on arrival. The data also revealed that three participants received English support services from a family member or friends or completed an English class. Based on the participants' cultural backgrounds, five languages emerged with confirmation from the survey results that the participants mostly spoke their native language at home.

The transferability of the data was illustrated in phase two, using transcribed notes, categorizing the data into themes of reading, writing, listening, and speaking while examining

the participants' survey questions labelled 1 through 4 (see Appendix G), in alignment with the color-coded CLB levels marked initial, adequate, developing, and fluent. The researcher created question codes (Q 1, Q 2, Q 3, and Q 4) in response to the participants' answers analysis of their CLB levels—the initial, adequate, developing, or fluent (see Appendix G). The examined codes addressed reoccurring patterns, and the researcher inserted them into the English comprehension data collection chart. In phase three, dependability occurred when the survey data went through a second round of categorizing with checking and re-checking the question-codes to ensure each question and response was accurately inserted under the corresponding color-coded CLB level. Once the data was re-checked, the researcher confirmed the accuracy by color coding each question code to align with the CLB levels. Conformity emerged in phrase four when the researcher reflected on the individual CLB levels and recurring patterns and trends to establish which responses mostly aligned with initial, adequate, developing, and fluent responses. The results from the English comprehension survey results confirmed the following data.

Reading Comprehension

The results of the question of detecting the students' CLB levels for understanding how to pronounce English words and phrases when reading and how to follow 5–7 steps of instruction when reading assignments were depicted as 33.33% as adequate, 33.33% at developing and 33.33% as fluent. Taking relevant information from graphs, charts, or maps presented that 16.67% of the participants are at the initial stage and 33.33% at adequate and developing, with 16.67% identifying as fluent. Finally, the answers for the question of whether they are able to read out loud in front of the class without errors demonstrated 33.33% at adequate, 50.00% at developing, and 16.67% as fluent.

Writing

The data identified 83.33% of the participants were adequate in making errors in spelling or grammar when completing writing assignments, with 16.67% at the developing stage. Taking notes when the instructor is speaking led to the conclusion that 33.33% are at the initial level, 16.67% adequate, 33.33% developing, and 16.67% fluent. The results asking the participants to reduce a one-page document to a paragraph to incorporate important points identified 16.67% as initial and adequate, and 66.67% as developing. Lastly, writing a descriptive paragraph including who, what, where, and when presented 16.67% as adequate, 50.00% developing, and 33.33% fluent.

Listening

The CLB level results discovered that 33.33% of participants are adequate in understanding the main topic idea, with 66.67% identified as developing. Additionally, the data revealed that 16.67% are at the initial and adequate stage of identifying opinions or facts from listening, while 50.00% are developing, and 16.67% recognized as fluent. The question "Do you ask to repeat questions when listening to conversations?" claimed that 33.33% were adequate, 50.00% developing, and 16.67% fluent. Lastly, asking people to repeat information, including the following 5–7 steps in English, depicted 16.67% as adequate, 66.67% developing, and 16.67% fluent.

Speaking

The results identified 50.00% for adequate and developing to explain the main idea of a topic in classroom conversations. The answers from sharing ideas and opinions in small groups and to agree or disagree showed 33.33% at the initial stage, 16.67% at the adequate, 33.33% identifying as developing, and 16.67% as fluent. Further, asking instructors questions in the classroom revealed the participants to identify themselves as 33.33% initial, 50.00% adequate, and 16.67% developing. Lastly, the answers to the question asking whether the

participants had an accent while speaking resulted in 33.33% for initial and adequate and 16.67% for developing and fluent. The survey's final question required participants to rate their English language proficiency after receiving English support services. Figure 5 identified 66.67% of the participants project being at the developing stage of English language proficiency, while 16.67% identified at the initial and adequate stage with no participant identifying as fluent after receiving English support services.

Figure 5

English Language Proficiency After Receiving English Support Services
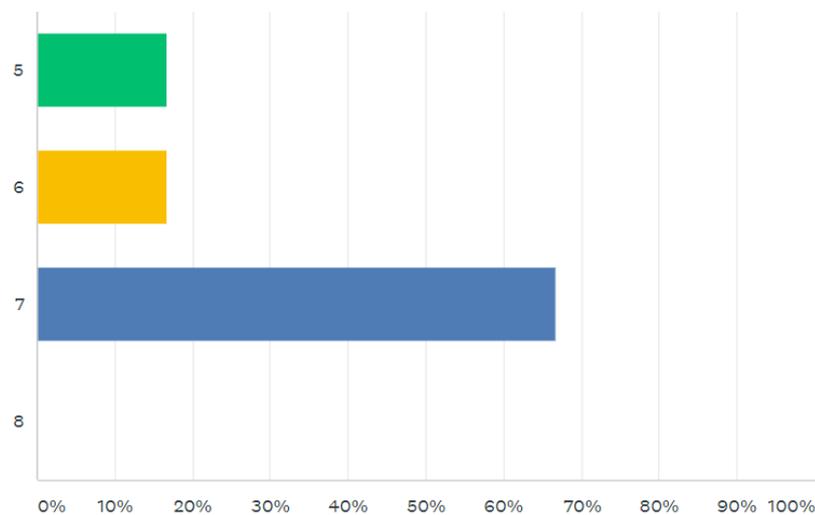
Focus Group Data Analysis and Documentation Phases

The researcher listened and read the transcribed events and journal notes of the participants' untold stories (see Appendix H) that emerged from Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) epistemological, ontological, morals, and purpose paradigms. An epistemological paradigm surfaced with a participant who indicated that English challenges occurred with her instructors who spoke fast in English and she was unable to understand; when asked by instructors if she failed to understand, she would use the internet to find out the word and meaning. The ontological approach identified an authentic and relevant discussion to the topic by participant two, who received English experiences from being employed speaking

English in her native country. The participant found it challenging to understand other people with an accent, highlighting that she required detailed instruction to avoid miscommunication. Participant three received help with assignments from her family, admitting her difficulty in pronouncing the words and finding English challenging when speaking to people at the college. The experience made her nervous because she did not understand.

The participants also shared morals and purpose throughout the discussion. Participant four (see Appendix H) identified that face-to-face instruction allowed her to speak in English and speaking in her native language at home hindered her ability to improve her English skills. Additionally, completing assignments in reading was challenging and required the instructor's support. Participant five explained that English was also hard and frustrating, and challenging to put into words which forced her to use her native language at home, and she was scared to complete coursework in fear of grammatical errors. Lastly, participant six reinforced that she must be in class to learn English because when she spoke the language, she was scared to mispronounce words, which became a barrier for her to ask for help.

Challenges Due to COVID-19

The improved English services chart (see Appendix F) supported the participants in improving their CLB levels 5–8 in English language proficiency. During the focus group conversation, the researcher informed the participants that they could receive English support in reading, writing, listening, and speaking using an online English support cycle. The participants' phenomenological perspective emerged when asked about completing an online English support cycle. When the participants were notified that the sessions would be accessible online, they declined the English support and wanted to continue improving their English at Keyano College. Alberta (Alberta Health Services, n.d.; Keyano College, n.d.-e) reinforced that students were receiving an online education during unprecedented times,

limiting face-to-face instruction at the college. The researcher informed the participants when the Alberta Health Services eased restrictions and Keyano College reopened for face-to-face instruction possibly during the spring of 2021, English support would be re-offered.

The researcher reflected on the decline in participants making use of the English support cycle, thus, enabling them to complete an English comprehension post-test survey to confirm if the English support cycle would improve their CLB levels of 5 through 8 or beyond. The researcher used stance, method, and social space to conceptualize the participants' responses, recognizing that although the participants were not using the English support cycle, critical data from the study will investigate English and its impact on the CLB levels.

Series of Cycles

The researcher organized the individual participants' responses from the focus group through a series of cycles to confirm its truth. The ESL participants' focus group transcribed shared experiences and stories (see Appendix I), demonstrating a series of reoccurring patterns from a singular word, two-three words, and/or complete sentences that extracted codes (see Appendix I). The codes allowed for triangulating data from the deductive codes using a matrix chart to outline deductive codes to tell a short story (see Appendix J). Once the story emerged, themes began to surface (see Appendix K), confirming that the ESL students had an accent and required English support and social interaction to improve skills from being scared and silenced when speaking in English. The accent prevented the ESL participants from improving their CLB levels from adequate or developing to articulate in English, pronouncing words and understanding their meanings in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in support course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks. The researcher validated the trustworthiness of the survey and focus group findings to determine the best

results, which confirmed that an ESL student with a CLB level of 5–8 requires English support services to achieve academic success in Canada's post-secondary education.

Validation and Trustworthiness of Phases

To achieve the results, the focus group data went through phases. During phase one, credibility was achieved when the researcher read the transcribed text while listening to the recording to compare and identify a heavy or light accent and word inaccuracies from the text (see Appendix H). Phase two transferability of data surfaced when the researcher separated the transcribed notes into sentences, identifying each participant's responses labelled with participant one to six. Once the researcher confirmed these, the transcribed data was re-read, and the researcher examined the sentences for reoccurring patterns and themes significant to the study. Each sentence illustrated a code with a memo note using a singular word, two to three words, or a short sentence.

Dependability in phase three occurred when the researcher re-read the transcribed data, re-checking the sentences in correlation with the identified pattern or theme in alignment with the participants' accents and the correct meanings of the words. Phase four conformity occured when the researcher reflected on the phases. Once verified, each memo note was color-coded. The researcher checked the transcribed document and labelled each memo code with a numerical value. The results from the themes identified from the coding process (see Appendix I) are summarised in Figure 5, with ten themes that reoccurred in the focus group discussion: face-to-face instruction reoccurred 22 times, English support 40 times, 29 times for social interaction, 13 times for English challenges, understanding words listed at 20 times and 26 times for pronunciation, 19 for accent, 27 for silent, 22 for scared, and 27 times for course work.

After the ten codes were re-checked based on the top ten reoccurring patterns and themes that emerged from the participants' sentences during phase three, the researcher re-

read the transcribed data identifying the most frequently used codes. To conceptualize the participants' stories, the conformity of research began to emerge by reflecting and further categorizing the data into grouping the sentences from participant one through six, allowing for questions about your feelings of uncertainty to become answered. The questions allowed for individualized stories reinforcing Figure 5, which illustrated the most frequent codes discussed to include English support, social interactions, being silent, and course work (see Appendix K).

Figure 6

Top Ten Codes
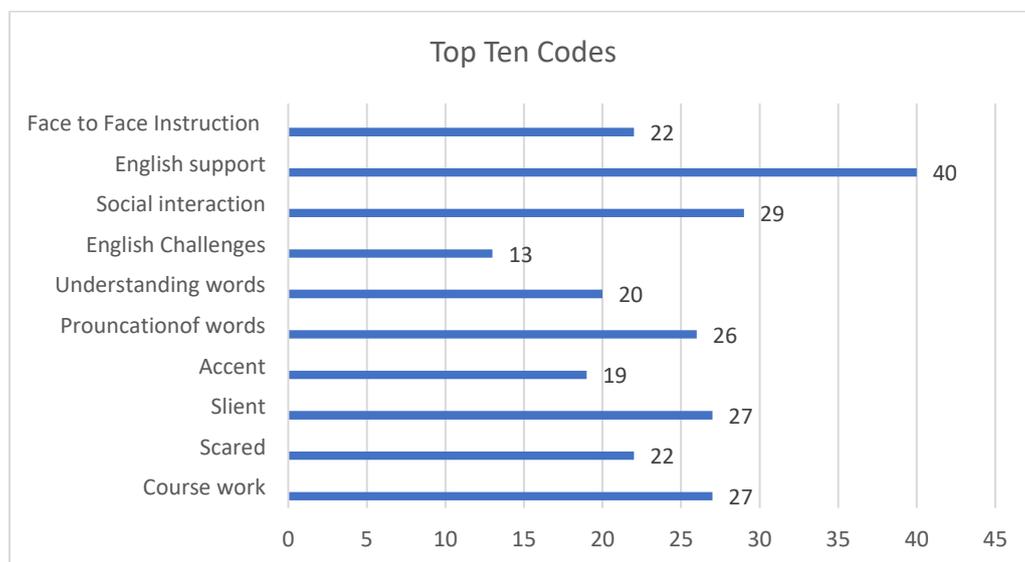
English Support

According to the participants, during the focus group meeting, they discussed requiring face-to-face interactions with people speaking English to improve English support. Participant three discussed, "My cousin really helped me to do with my assignments; she helped me to like sometimes to translate in my land, in my language that whole assignment, so that I can understand, and I did take help from Skill Center too from college." The exposure to English at college permits the participants to listen and practice saying words, allowing them to speak to instructors, peers, and other people who can help with course work.

Moreover, listening to spoken English enables the participants to pronounce words and investigate their meanings (see Appendix H).

Social Interactions

The participants suggested that listening and seeing the person speaking conceptualizes sounds and facial expressions to further conversations when talking to people face to face. Participant four stated, "If it's about helping me with English language, I will prefer the face to face, because it gives you the possibility to interact with other people, and when interacting you learn new words" (see Appendix H). Additionally, seeing instructors and peers at the college grants time to share ideas with coursework and speak English. Online teaching does not allow for such social interaction. Going into groups and talking online is not the same experience as face-to-face conversations, where you can speak in groups, write, listen, and share ideas.

Silent

The participants shared their English experiences as to why they sometimes remain silent, one shared that, "I got nervous to speak in English because I knew I had an accent, and I did not want people to know I was scared to say the word wrong" (see Appendix H). According to some of the participants, English words shed light that having an accent, not understanding what English speakers are saying, and possible fear of being scared can prevent them from engaging in English conversations and potentially pronouncing a word incorrectly or being misunderstood.

Course Work

The participants identified that they have less time to listen and learn new words when learning online, making coursework more challenging. Participant two identified their need to complete course work by suggesting, "Some directions that is really broad to be able to understand, I need to specify any details, more details about it, just to be able to avoid any

miscommunication and misunderstanding" (see Appendix H). When reading at home, they sometimes have an English-speaking person to ask questions to or share their thoughts about English with as well as practice pronouncing words correctly or appropriately using grammar. The participants would prefer to complete their course work at the college and receive support in English.

Data Summary

Background Information

Theorists who have worked with the ESL population suggested learning English in reading, writing, listening, and speaking can take up to five to seven years or more of living in the host country. The participants in this study identified having a CLB level of 5–8 and having lived in Canada for five years, suggesting their current level of English at the developing stage in articulating English, the pronunciation of words to include accents and understanding the meaning of the words associated with course material, assignments, and in-class tasks will require more time to become fluent. The survey results presented that 60% of the participants were unemployed when they arrived in Canada. For an unemployed immigrant to improve English, barriers can occur if the adult learner has limited opportunities to use English in the community or workplace. The workplace was reinforced by Derwing, (2017), Derwing and Munro (2009), and Murry and Shillington (2006), who suggested that increased workplace culture and interactions by listening and speaking would allow immigrants to work in teams with native English speakers to improve English. Another contributing factor is that the participants speak in five different languages and, according to Breitkreutz et al. (2001), people either speak with either a light or heavy accent. Lastly, speaking the native language in the home environment could also limit opportunities to improve English and receive English support from family members or friends. Language and

its use are blamed for communication difficulties (Derwing, 2017; Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Derwing & Munro, 2009; Foote et al., 2011; Suh, 2016).

Articulation of English With Accents

According to the survey, the ESL participants identified having an accent and experiencing challenges in articulating English in understanding how to pronounce English words and phrases, follow steps of instruction, and take relevant information from course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks. As previously discussed, (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Foote et al., 2011; Munro & Derwing, 2006), English and the pronunciation presents challenges in utterance, segmental, and stress error when understanding a person when speaking for the first time. According to the survey and focus group data, some of the participants were not exposed to English when they arrived in Canada because they were unemployed and mainly used their native language at home.

In a classroom setting, participants found reading challenging if attention is directed to their accent and conceptualizing the meanings of words. The results exhibited that participants displayed outcomes in reading aloud in front of the class without errors to support course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks. The results were also reinforced by a few researchers (Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Foote et al., 2011) who recommended that when an ESL person reads sentences aloud, they modify the words and pronunciation to conceptualize their meaning and better understand the language. Derwing and Munro (2009) examined the modification in language as "Foreigner Talk" (p. 484) to include another way of modifying English when trying to control grammar and their vocabulary. Pronunciation is a learnable skill (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Tong et al., 2015) to ensure that the right students be exposed to English properly, lending them an opportunity for targeted language changes in articulation in English, pronunciation of words, and understanding meanings which can occur over time.

Tong et al. (2015) identified prior learning in English as a critical component in articulating writing and analyzing its content. The survey identified that the ESL participants had spelling and grammatical errors when completing assignments and lacked in note taking and reducing a one-page document to a paragraph to incorporate essential facts. A suggestion made by Foote et al. (2011) and Tong et al. (2015) addresses that the ESL participant's ability to refrain from errors and their inability to condense a document is related to developed writing skills to that of their native country, including incorporating the culture, style, and similarities of their native language's writing structure. Another challenge Tong et al. (2015) highlighted in developing writing skills is synthesizing and connecting. Finally, participants depicted difficulties in articulation and writing a descriptive paragraph to include the who, what, where, and when. Tong et al. (2015) reinforced the participants' challenges in identifying a paragraph's body from the ESL participant's intercultural rhetorical contrast between their first language and English, finding the most effective approach to express themselves in writing.

Pronunciation of Words

Derwing and Munro (2009) discuss dimensions of the salience, intelligibility, and comprehensibility of accents by highlighting listener sensitivity, which are characteristics of someone who can understand when listening to a conversation and then display listening challenges. The participants indicated that they had challenges with listening and the pronunciation of words when completing in-class tasks. Additionally, Munro (2003), Munro and Derwing (1995), and Munro et al. (2006) reinforced listener sensitivity with utterance and foreign accents. The ESL user requires more time to verify and process words because of an accent, impacting their skills in articulating English, pronouncing words, and understanding their meanings. Derwing and Munro (2009) suggested that listeners are sensitive to whether a person is an English speaker or a person with an additional language

which can be discovered by distinguishing patterns from speech and sounds allowing them to detect their origin. Breitkreutz et al. (2001) and Derwing and Rossiter (2002) examined English pronunciation research findings to suggest that non-native prosody strongly affects native listeners' comprehension. The survey and focus group results indicated that listening challenges could impact the ESL participants' pronunciation when attempting to understand the main topic or idea. The ESL participants attempted to identify opinions or facts from listening to a conversation. Listener sensitivity requires the comprehensibility of English, discussed by Derwing and Munro (2009), to include when English challenges occur for people confronted with accents that are heavier and harder to understand (see Appendix H). When this happens, the ESL participant must ask for repeated information, including following steps in English. Based on the findings, the challenges of listening and pronouncing in English impact an ESL person in articulating in English, pronouncing words, and understanding word meanings to support course material, assignments, and in-class tasks.

Derwing and Munro (2009) discuss that producing speech identifies that a person's accent is and how their speech pattern is different from that of an English-speaking person. Canada's oral fluency, as suggested by Derwing (2017), Breitkreutz et al. (2001), and Rossiter et al. (2010), is of great importance to second language learners who must participate with an accent academically and in a social context. The results of the survey and focus group revealed that for ESL participants, speaking challenges occurred when verbally explaining the main idea in a classroom setting as well as when sharing views and opinions, and in situations where they had to agree or disagree during a conversation. The native language speaker, as mentioned by Derwing & Munro (2009), Breitkreutz et al. (2001), and Munro et al. (2006), suggests that speakers can be judged because of their strong accents, which reinforced the challenges that ESL participants may have encountered when verbally explaining the main idea. Lastly, language difficulty was proven in the survey for ESL

participants asking instructors questions in the classroom. Derwing and Munro (2009) highlighted that accents are blamed for miscommunication and language discrimination, and Breitkreutz at al. (2001) reinforced that pronunciation was a contributing factor for communication problems.

Understanding the Meaning of Words

Cultural learning results from interactions, as discussed by (Harrison & Shi, 2016; Munro et al., 2006), although it does involve more than a conversation. the study participants identified understanding the meanings of words were challenging when engaged in a conversation with peers, instructors, in the college, and when in classroom settings. The study's focus group identified that the participants did not understand the terminology used to complete the enrollment requirements on entry to the college. One participant shared, "The people at the college were like telling us like what we need to do that, and that made me nervous, I did not understand" (see Appendix H). Keyano College suggest enrollment may have many facets including an online enrollment procedure. For ESL learners, this may be challenging for students; therefore, entry into the college for clarification may become necessary. Conversations such as credit, non-credit, add or drop a course, prior learning assessment, Early Learning, and Childcare or Education Assistant are terms mistakenly used by the ESL students who may conceptualize the meaning differently from what is known or used in their native country. The representation of a target language and culture (Munro et al., 2006; Munro, 2003) can impact people's motivation to respond in English.

Moreover, Munro et al. (2006) and Munro (2003) suggest stereotyping based on language occurs with the absence of first-hand English knowledge. This misconception of the conversation can set the tone from both the listener's and speaker's ends. The challenges of understanding meaning in English became evident when instructors spoke fast and used school-related terms that were not familiar to the ESL learner, such as "anti-bias" and its

relation to the curriculum. When this type of conversation occurred, the ESL student would refrain from speaking and withdraw from the conversation.

In addition, another challenge is understanding the meaning of words when an ESL student listens. One participant voiced: "Some teachers, and some people have this very strong accent that is so hard to understand, and it bothers me, of course, because you will not be able to know what they are trying to say" (see Appendix H). As indicated by Munro and Derwing (1995), Derwing and Munro (2003), and Derwing and Munro (2009), ESL students could experience challenges with utterances when listening to an English conversation, which would make an ESL student unable to recognize phonetic segments of words or larger units pronounced with an accent. During social discussions, much of the information can become lost when an ESL student processes the frequency of divergences from the norm. The focus group meeting results also revealed that when the participants converse in conversation, they act like they understand the topic, becoming scared or silenced when they must reciprocate a response.

Conclusion

Creswell and Poth (2018) and Creswell (2014) discussed the validity as to whether measures and outcomes can provide meaningful and valuable inferences from scores and authenticity, re-coding, the triangulating data source, and the audit trail to convince the reader of the possible truth (see Appendix I, 4, 5, and 6). The study's English comprehension and focus group were essential because they guided the questions and supported the researcher's requirements to determine the trajectory of the responses. Answers to questions provided measurable CLB outcomes to establish if English articulation and having an accent aligned with why the participants mispronounced words and why the participants experienced challenges understanding the meanings of words associated with reading, writing, listening, and speaking to complete course materials, assignments and in-class tasks. Also, validating

the focus group's discussion from the participants' lens allowed the researcher to comparatively examine the phenomenology and grounded theory illustrating Creswell and Poth's (2018) steps as distinct phases occuring over time. Additionally, ecological validity examined how the data correlated and related to the ESL leaners' real-life instances in alignment with Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) morals and purpose in post-secondary education.

According to Breitkreutz et al. (2001), English responses were analyzed according to first language groups and proficiency levels. The ESL student's post-secondary CLB levels are assessed in Canada with the expectation that the students must communicate independently to live, work, and attend post-secondary education at a level of English deemed satisfactory for the Canadian way of life. The English comprehension survey and focus group gained a snapshot into the current CLB Canadian English practices within a post-secondary institution reinforcing Breitkreutz et al.'s (2001) viewpoint of the importance of analyzing the ESL students' CLB level responses. English language proficiency was essential in examining the participants' backgrounds, including their country of origin, current CLB level, employment status on arrival to Canada, and if they acquired English support from family members, friends, and/or other resources. It was also examined if the participants preferred speaking their native language at home. Breitkreutz et al. (2001) reinforced the importance of participants' background knowledge by suggesting that various language backgrounds establish the experienced difficulties in communication. The survey and focus group results revealed Breitkreutz et al.'s (2001) theory of experienced communication difficulties through challenges in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The data's reliability used to construct criterion, internal, and external validity supports the dependability of the research. A developed construct's English survey from theorists' works (see Appendix L) identified an ESL student's challenges with the English

CLB level 5–8 in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The criterion outcome correlated similarities and relationships from the survey and focus group and examined measures from theorists, such as Breitkreutz et al. (2001) and Derwing and Rossiter (2002), as data is known to be true. The internal and external elements looked at establishing conclusions from the data about whether a specific time, place, and the ESL student's language had an active role. The focus group captured the phenomenological research aspect from the participants' lens, collaborating on English experiences and stories using Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) conceptual framework to document, check, and recheck the transcribed notes. The researcher's approach allowed for an ontological reflection that confirmed the epistemological of the participant's English reality—based on the emerging evidence allowed reflecting on a grounded theory analogy for strategies in English.

Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) stance, method, and social space confirmed that the ESL student challenges are the lack of English support to improve the articulation of English associated with an accent that contributed to their mispronouncing words and inability to understand the meanings of words. The confirmation further indicated that the ESL participant required English support and social interaction to deter them from becoming scared and silenced. On a final note, when the researcher during the focus group meeting suggested implementing English support to improve English, the participants declined, indicating that they would prefer face-to-face instruction to improve. According to Alberta Health Services (n.d.) and Keyano College (n.d.f.), face-to-face instruction cannot occur due to the continued challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which limits access to post-secondary education, both in Alberta and internationally.

Chapter 5

Significance of the Study

This capstone study in Chapters 1, 2, and 3 describes a post-secondary college in Alberta, Canada, examining an ESL learner with a CLB level of 5–8 from a CELPIP exam requiring English support services in post-secondary education to attain academic success in the country. Also incorporated was Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) taxonomy of wisdom and uncertainty in qualitative research to support the research topic. Chapters 4 and 5 examined the method, results, and data analysis in response to the research question of why the linguistic standards of the CLB level 5–8, deemed satisfactory for an ESL at the college level, required further English support services.

According to the Government of Canada (n.d.) and CELPIP (n.d.), the participants from this study have passed a CLB exam with a level of 5–8 deemed satisfactory to live, work, and attend post-secondary education in Canada. If this statement is true, then why does the data from the English comprehension survey and focus group illustrate reoccurring trends and patterns revealing that the participants require more English support in listening and speaking through social interaction and coursework. More English support to refrain from being silenced in articulating English, pronouncing words, and to understand the meaning of words when completing course material, assignments, and in-class task. Chapter 5 will examine the research question and interpret the CLB levels.

The ESL History

Derwing (2017) examined the history of an ESL student in Canada, identifying a Canadian Reverend, who opened Frontier College—an educational institution in British Columbia, Alberta, Canada designed to improve the English skills of migrant adult workers. Additionally, ESL programs were implemented in the 1960s to help transition the English language into Canada. As a researcher examining the audit trail (see Appendix L) with

research dated from 1993 to the present day, the content about ESL students in post-secondary education and the need for English support in Canada has not changed. Foote et al. (2011) discussed research a decade ago, mentioning pronunciation and instruction. Derwing (2017) and Derwing and Rossiter (2002) suggested that although there is a great deal of research on communication strategies to support ESL students' English including pronunciation, the teaching and learning of English skills remains general. Harrison and Shi (2016) support the researchers, confirming that many studies focus on diversity but few concentrate on English language learners.

Paribakht and Wesche (1993) argued that literature on second language acquisition reinforced adult learners acquiring grammatical and other kinds of language knowledge through exposure to and comprehension to understand the meaning of oral and written texts in the language. Aligning with other ESL theorists, they verify that the data presented in this 2021 study of an ESL adult learner's exposure to English can vary the levels of English support services required after receiving English assistance deemed satisfactory for post-secondary education. During the research, there are inquiry-based questions to consider, why has the ESL data not changed? Why does the ESL student who enters post-secondary education require English support even though they have passed the CLB exam? This final chapter will explore the rationale as to the why in the research question.

Immigration and Citizenship

The Government of Canada (n.d.) and CELPIP (n.d.) espoused an assessment tool for people entering Canada from countries where English is not their native language. Families, on arrival to Canada, are required to improve English skills from English available programs throughout the country. Once an adult learner completes the initial English readiness program, they are expected to take an ESL proficiency exam. The CELPIP exam in this study assesses English in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Once a person passes the CLB

exam with a level of 5 through 8, they are deemed satisfactory to live, work, and attend post-secondary education at a level of English permitting an adult learner to use English to assist in the Canadian way of life.

Once an adult learner passes the CELPIP exam and receives a CLB level of 5–8, the Government of Canada (n.d.) recommends that adult learners continue English classes to improve reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Munro (2003) reinforced the recommendation by suggesting that the ESL speaker sometimes has problems making themselves understood because of pronunciation difficulties. The recommendation to improve English in Canada is not mandatory; adult learners can continue to improve English by attending English instructional classes, receive English support from families and friends, or for some adult learners they may decide to use their native language and not seek English support. The data from this study revealed that during the early stages of living in Canada, the participants experienced unemployment. While seeking employment, the participants mostly spoke in their native language, with some receiving English support up until enrolling in post-secondary education. Tong et al. (2015) support the research question by suggesting that to be competitive and contribute to society, an ESL student choosing to attend college needs to have the adequate academic literacy skills to begin college courses or programs to meet the demands of the workforce successfully.

Labor Market

Derwing and Munro (2009) believed that the Canadian labor market in the next decade will grow to be comprised of people migrating to Canada. Evidence provided by Derwing and Munro (2009) and Murry and Shillington (2006) suggest that there is a shortage of level 3 workers in Canada including social work, childcare and homecare workers. Murry and Shillington (2006) drew attention to the fact that adults' work skills in Alberta were below level 3 with 1,094,669 to 1,232,588 in 2006 to 2016, with the Alberta population

forecasted to grow by 16.3% with a decrease of level 3 workers by 1%. As reinforced by

Derwing (2017), Derwing and Munro (2009), and Murry & Shillington (2006), employable

skills include people who can correlate text for practical work to include information,

inference, and communicate tasks, such as tables, charts, and graphs relevant to a role.

Derwing and Munro (2009) argued although migrant workers have superb technical

skills, their oral and written language can cause a lack of communication. The survey and

focus group data from the current study illustrated that the participants lacked language skills

when entering Canada, as the English language and education are prerequisites in the

Canadian workforce. Many adult learners enroll in post-secondary education to secure

employment. To narrow the gap in the shortage of workers in the country, post-secondary

institutions like Keyano College must find alternative ways to increase ESL student retention

and graduate students, especially students who have earned a CLB level of 5–8 and meet the

enrollment requirements to obtain the necessary academic and practical work skills to

complete college-level work.

Language Readiness

Tong et al. (2015) argued that adult English language learners and English levels in

their academic literacy preparation could impact college readiness and their abilities to

complete and develop an education and language for employment. Foote et al. (2011),

Harrison and Shi (2016), and Tong et al. (2015) expressed that the participant's English

background is required to better understand English levels by examining employment history,

English support, and the most spoken language. Foote et al.'s (2011) study was reinforced by

Paribakht and Wesche (1993), and this 2021 study presented that the participants exposed to

English from their native country or within Canada had improved listening and speaking

skills. Some of the focus group participants also confirmed that having English exposure

from their native country helped them communicate more effectively when they arrived in

Canada. Derwing and Munro (2009) highlighted evidence indicating that ESL learners with English exposure can make progress in phonological development over time in global accents, vowel production, and timing.

Harrison and Shi (2016) argued that instructors must know their student language levels. Besides, post-secondary education must inquire about ESL students' English knowledge on entry to classroom settings. The beginning phase of an ESL learner's language ability would allow faculty to concentrate on the required English support needed for students which, according to the CLB levels 5–8, can vary from one student to the next. Breitkreutz et al.'s (2001) research on the pronunciation of teaching practices in Canada revealed that teachers recognized that they believed English instruction was more effective after the student's first few years in an English-speaking country. Moreover, teachers lacked the knowledge to teach segmental and word stress errors, intonation, rhythm and speech rates effectively.

Derwing and Rossiter's (2002) research illustrated an investigation into an ESL student's background from various languages by directly asking if the accent impacted English content or whether students felt that they had control of their pronunciation and what they did when experiencing communication difficulties. This question posed in their study could help the faculty develop an English curriculum to determine the best practices and support students in their academic achievement to complete course materials, assignments, and in-class tasks. English demands in post-secondary education using Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) conceptual framework allowed the questions posed in chapter 3 to evoke the researcher to address the uncertainty in supports for an ESL student.

English Support Cycle

What types of English language support are required by ESL students to ensure their English success at the college level?

Harrison and Shi (2016) suggest the type of English support for students to achieve academic success at the college level involves interactions. The interactive English Support Cycle (See Appendix F) was to be used to improve the participants' CLB levels with additional English support in reading, writing, listening and speaking in articulating English pronunciation words and understanding their meaning. A few researchers (Breitkreutz at al., 2001, Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Foote et al., 2011; Munro & Derwing, 1995) and the focus group believe that English support is required to improve the pronunciation of words with accents and understand the meaning of words associated with college-level work. To reinforce Derwing and Rossiter's (2002) English support, after examining the data from the survey and focus group, the results identified participants' CLB English levels as adequate and developing in reading, adequate in writing skills, initial for listening, and initial and adequate for speaking.

The English support cycle that was declined by the participants for this study (see Appendix F) planned to uncover ways to facilitate and improve English to engage the ESL learner through the Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) model of stance, method, and social space. Tong et al.'s (2015) idea of content-based instruction using stance would have supported previous types of ESL instruction the participants received in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, including the academic culture and learning with the CLB levels 5–8 that would have provided integrated English language support with academic proficiency to enhance cognition—to include assessments, mentoring, critical thinking, and various other models of instruction.

The method would have connected with suggestion of teaching to support pronouncing words (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002), to begin with— global segmenting and paraphrasing. Global segmenting and paraphrasing could have provided a correlation when measuring variables such as stress, rhythm, phrasing, and

intonation. Foote et al. (2011) identified suprasegmental as another approach to include educators adopting a different voice and changing the protrusion of the lips and tongue. Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) social space linked Derwing and Rossiter's study (2002), reinforcing that global segmentation and paraphrasing could be accessed through course materials such as textbooks that included phonetic symbols, diagrams, charts, graphs, and data articulating English vowels and consonants.

English Support

How did the previous English language support received by ESL students with CLB levels 5–8 promote success?

Previous English support received from the participants was reinforced by Savin-Baden and Major's (2010) discussion on the topic of uncertainty in qualitative research and how questions are left unanswered. According to participants, to improve their English CLB results in listening and speaking, the participants would listen to videos, peers, instructors, watch movies, and attend English support services at the college to better assist with the ESL student's English language experience. Derwing and Rossiter (2002) and many theorists contributed significantly to the conversation by communicating that educators in post-secondary education facilitate English but have yet to determine the most effective way to support an ESL student. Breitkreutz et al. (2001) suggested educators are at times uncomfortable teaching English, including pronunciation. To overcome the fear, educators must be—as Harrison and Shi (2016) suggest—visible, build relationships, and prep before class. Given the multilingual nature of most ESL classrooms, individuality for English support is essential in delivering instruction toward sustaining language characteristics.

Online Courses

Are online courses at Keyano College providing adequate ESL support in individualized learning in reading, writing, listening, and speaking?

To continue with the English Support Cycle of instruction, in the spring of 2021, Keyano College implemented an online Hy Flex teaching and learning hybrid model that is adaptable for a face-to-face synchronous online approach with an asynchronous experience. According to the participants they would benefit from the face-to-face instruction and attend class to listen and speak in English. The Hy Flex model's design is tailored to student education, including the ESL students' simultaneity for in-class or online. To support the delivery of educators' English instruction, face-to-face or online breakout sessions would allow the ESL students to maximize small group collaboration to focus on immediate English improvement areas. Direct instruction, as suggested by Paribakht and Wesche (1993), such as "incubation" or "internalization" periods where learners concentrate on understanding the meanings of oral and written text (p. 10). Derwing and Rossiter (2002) accentuated that English language support received by the ESL students can help in improving English in addition to using segmenting and paraphrasing techniques. Besides, although segmenting and paraphrasing are facilitated, not all ESL students understand teaching and learning in the same way.

One contributing factor reinforced from this study is an ESL student's challenge in pronunciation due to their accent. Participant four reinforced by stating "I think everyone has an accent like Canadians have an accent." Harrison and Shi (2016) provided the suggestion that instructors must pay attention to language use patterns in classroom settings. Additional instruction measures to support working with accents must develop and facilitate personalized pronunciation and attention to support an ESL's student improvement of the language. This step can become incorporated when educators are informed of an ESL student's language, country of origin, and English exposure. The information could determine the type of utterance support required to improve the ESL students' CLB level of English from the developing stage to fluent.

Measures for Improved English Support

Furthermore, what additional measures can faculty use in programs to support ESL students in engaging with course material, assignments, and in-class tasks?

For English comprehension to be improved the participants must focus on listening and speaking while participating in course material, assignments, and in-class tasks. This interaction is required for educators within post-secondary education to be prepared with prosodic instruction. Breitkreutz et al. (2001) believed that this interaction will be more successful for an ESL student in improving pronunciation than with the traditional types of segmenting while Foote et al. (2011) reinforced that faculty beliefs and attitudes can become impactful if positive teaching traits become evident. Derwing and Rossiter (2002) acknowledged that educators have insufficient resources to support prosodic instruction, and educators have identified that there are specialized ESL classes that can address direct pronunciation. Breitkreutz et al. (2001) reinforced specialization by emphasizing that ESL learners require immediate assistance in speech patterns as well as recognized that teachers are sometimes challenged with working with pronunciation, while some Curry (2004) suggested it is difficult to identify the CLB level of the ESL learners due to the language gaps and the variation of the students cultural-linguistic, educational background, experiences, and language goals, but it is essential for educators to know their students.

Breitkreutz et al. (2001) stated that instructors that they have encountered have some training for teaching phonetics and phonology and those with training have basic skills in identifying suprasegmental and segmental elements. Teachers facilitating an ESL student with an accent have become assimilated with the instructor's viewpoint on intelligence. Resources, according to Breitkreutz et al. (2001), Derwing (2017), Derwing and Rossiter (2002), and Foote et al. (2011), must guide instruction in teaching pronunciation and steer instructors to apply suitable types of support for the right student. Some educators within the

post-secondary sector should also continue to receive training instructions on the best English practices to improve students' CLB level to develop to be possibly fluent. Further, educators can explore the ESL student's background knowledge of the CLB level of English comprehension, including how long a student was in Canada and if they received English language exposure before enrolling in college. These personalized questions can help educators begin the process of tailoring individualized English instruction.

Limitations and Delimiters

When people speak, they have different ways of producing speech (Derwing & Munro, 2009). Munro and Derwing (1995) reiterated that speech differs in some noticeable respect from the native speaker's pronunciation norms. This study's participants confirmed the results of the studies, declaring that the students entered the study with varied English levels, which was reinforced by their background information. Some participants had English exposure and English language support, while others had limited English engagement before enrolling in post-secondary education. The participant's level of English also surfaced when the researcher listened and engaged in the discussion during the focus group, successfully identifying their skill level in articulating English, pronunciation of words, and understanding meaning.

Ignash (1994) suggested that a curricular design with the least likelihood of promoting ESL student retention and persistence is the truncated design, which requires an investigation into the CLB levels 5–8 to improve its service. The Government of Canada (n.d.) policies recommend English instruction when an ESL adult learner passes the CELPIP exam. The recommendation allows ESL adult learners flexibility in how and when they maintain English, granting them the freedom to either enroll in English classes, receive English support from a family or friend, or not seek English support. Andrade (2009) identified that

adult ESL learners are generally satisfied with English and do not recognize that their English level may not equate to that of day-to-day interactions within Canada.

According to the Government of Canada (n.d.) suggestions also align with policies recommending that the ESL adult learner with a CLB level of 5–8 continue receiving English support services to improve English for courses and programs. Ignash (1994) maintained that these recommendations can prove to be challenges to assess English levels for post-secondary education, further declaring that no matter how well faculty and administration provide ESL funding, students must fully engage in the support in order to improve English. Additionally, ESL English support must be tracked and assessed by college departments. Andrade (2009) suggested cultural adjustments are affected when there are limited interactions. If policies within Canada's immigration and post-secondary education offered improved English recommendations, then the ESL adult learner can fluctuate between English levels depending on when and how they receive the English language support. English support becomes evident when the adult ESL learner engages in English when enrolling in post-secondary education.

Although an ESL student wants to learn English, the faculty awareness of the background knowledge of the student's English and their country of origin can impact pronunciation lessons. Accents as well as the type of accent can cause what Breitkreutz et al. (2001) identified as discrimination, which is in the form of a student having either a heavy or light accent. Derwing and Rossiter (2002) discussed a Canadian study of 100 ESL students, the results of which indicated that 97% of the participants strongly agreed that it was essential to pronounce English well while 95% stated that they wanted to sound like an English speaker to avoid what was identified as three types of discrimination: stereotyping, harassment, and monolingual interlocutors. Monolingual interlocutors are people who fail to listen and understand a person with an accent. Their results align with this study in agreeing

with the importance of pronunciation. However, the participants of the current study did not indicate that they wanted to sound like an English speaker but voiced that everyone has an accent. Foote et al. (2011) identified 53% of the participants in a study felt Canadians would respect them more if they did not have an accent. Reviewing the survey data and focus group research suggested that the faculty failing to understand the participant's English skill level because of an accent can cause a breakdown in communication.

The need to train teachers to support pronunciation instruction delivery and the English instruction's current practice is ineffective (Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Derwing, 2017; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Foote et al., 2011). Derwing and Rossiter (2002) also suggested the focus should not only be on teaching but on how to deliver techniques to reduce barriers. Barriers that hinder communication in teaching for students who have a CLB level of 5–8 and are recognized with sufficient English language proficiency to enter post-secondary education and complete course work. They suggested that the Canadian system has received training in teaching pronunciation; however, the nature of a communication classroom with students from first language backgrounds discourages teachers from introducing pronunciation lessons because of salient segmental or prosodic instruction type of segmenting and paraphrasing that is required. There is limited research on pronunciation to support an ESL adult learner's need to be successful in mastering speech and communication (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Foote et al., 2011). Chow (2001) also iterates that attention should be made to aboriginal language because language is one of the most tangible symbols of the culture and group identity.

As Breitkreutz et al. (2001) and Derwing and Munro (2009) reinforce, teachers are reluctant to teach pronunciation, in part because they have limited training in this area, and when training is accessible, courses do not offer instruction, specifically on phonology. The type of English instruction may vary in a classroom setting, dependent on the pronunciation and the need (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Foote et al., 2011). Teachers also considered it

inappropriate to draw attention to language errors in fear of morally offending the students, which reinforced the participants' responses in this study of being scared and silent when in English conversations. Additionally, Derwing and Munro (2009) and Foote et al. (2011) asked 100 ESL learners in Canada if they felt their identity would be threatened when speaking English with a native-like accent. The responses presented that ESL adult learners should be able to use English and express themselves in their language without fear of embarrassment and stigma. Foote et al. (2011) and the participants from this study agreed that instructors who incorporate pronunciation instruction must regularly correct pronunciation and grammatical errors. The role of pronunciation and the identification of language amongst the ESL learner and how teachers must recognize and teach English skills effectively is essential to the ESL students' comfort level.

Discussion

The Government of Canada (n.d.) must re-examine CLB policies and change the existing model to allow ESL adult learners to maintain or improve their English language CLB levels. A shift in policy from the recommended English instruction to mandatory English instruction after an adult learner completes the CELPIP exam would allow the adult learner and families to continue improving English comprehension in reading, writing, listening, and speaking while seeking employment enrolling in post-secondary education. Andrade (2009) argues that the cultural adjustments are effective for increased interactions, which would, in turn, increase self-esteem and language use. The mandatory English instructional training would also allow them to engage in social interactions, shifting current practices and perceptions of English from scared and silent to that of possibly confident and vocal. Such exposure would also give ESL adult learners an optical lens and a different perspective when enrolling into post-secondary education and seeking employment.

When a shift occurs in how CLB levels are improved or maintained, an ESL adult learner will transition and be given the opportunity to use English and their native language within the Canadian context. The shift in Immigration and Citizenship policies would then align with the CLB levels deemed satisfactory for post-secondary education. The mandatory exposure to English would allow the ESL adult learner to listen and speak in English more frequently, allowing for improved listening and speaking CLB levels. When families speak in their native language continually, whether at home or in the community, having limited English exposure and social interactions in the language can create barriers with listening and speaking, which can then hinder an ESL student from improving English. Moreover, it can become a disadvantage for the adult learner when enrolling in post-secondary education or seeking employment.

Foote et al. (2011) suggested that, for the most part, Canada has not changed in the last decade with teaching pronunciation. Derwing and Munro (2009) supported this point, reporting that the country has limited programs offering courses for facilitating pronunciation. However, without preparation courses, instructors could neglect lessons to prepare students for the workforce. A labor shortage of skilled workers suggest that industries are beginning to become more involved by improving language skills with ESL workplace training (Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Derwing, 2017; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Derwing & Rossiter, 200; Foote et al., 2011). It is evident that educators in post-secondary education require support in training and that Canada must offer courses in how to teach pronunciation (Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Derwing & Munro, 2009). Without preparation, many language instructors will overlook this aspect of language learning. Besides, Foote et al. (2011) reinforced that educators find pronunciation challenging to teach, indicating that ESL students have difficulty comprehending sounds that are not in their first language. Educators are not reinforcing enough English instruction for ESL students who have CLB levels of

adequate or developing English and require some support in reading, writing, listening, speaking to articulating English, pronouncing words, and understanding the meaning of words to complete course material, assignments, and in-class tasks.

Some ESL students enter post-secondary education with a cultural disadvantage of language while facing obstacles or disequilibrium, leading to a breakdown in communication because of the difference in their teachers' cultures in classroom settings. Andrade (2009) emphasized this cultural disadvantage by suggesting adjustment affects the students' social interactions with teachers and peers because of the lack of English language skills, further indicating that less interaction is evident with students when their culture is perceived as significantly different. The focus group study data presented that the participants would become scared or silenced when expected to speak English. These different types of dialogue sometimes shift the ESL student's communication to that of their native language, identifying as a barrier for ESL students to improve English (Andrade, 2009; Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002).

Munro et al. (2006) argued that speaking can display a negative undertone and that minority accents are often disparaged or held to be a sign of ignorance or lack of sophistication. Teachers must dismantle the pronunciation process occurring as it appears in three views, medical, business, and pedagogical view (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002). The medical view involves others seeing an accent, including pronunciation, as a disorder or abnormality that requires medical professionals. The business viewpoint is marketing the need to improve ESL and how ESL adult learners can identify their current English language level and receive support. Lastly, the pedagogical viewpoint facilitates and directs education and teaching to support pronunciation and improved English. The medical and business view an accent as a challenge and that marketing improved language can somehow fix the problem. Munro et al. (2006) examined accent-reduction programs that claimed to reduce or

eliminate an accent for it not to create or impede communication. As the participants suggested from the focus group meeting, everyone—including Canadians—has an accent. The pedagogical view must become more widely encouraged and used by teachers to identify individuality to include English speakers. Foote et al. (2011) looked at pedagogical training and determined that 50% of the respondents had pronunciation and training, 18% indicated that none did, and 32% were unsure. The results from this study reinforce the data from Munro et al. (2006) that teachers tended to limit interactions to simplify classroom management discourse rather than discuss the subject matter.

Conclusion

Canada is officially bilingual, a country that speaks both English and French, with English identified as the dominant language (Chow, 2001; Munro et al., 2006). Chow (2001) argued that language is one of the most significant markers of ethnic identification and the broader context of aboriginal and other heritage languages. Canada is an immigrant-receiving country that is becoming diverse and beginning to outnumber students who are native speakers (Kanel, 2004; Munro et al., 2006). Chow (2001) identified that ethnicity determines the multifaceted relationship of social, cultural, personal development encounters, which help form the individuality of one's sense of self. Kanel (2004) also reinforced that educators must affirm students from diverse backgrounds and see diversity as a learning resource.

Post-secondary education and English comprehension in Canada can become difficult for English-speaking adult learners who have passed a CELPIP exam with a CLB of 5–8 deemed ready to live, work, and attend post-secondary education in English. Adult learners, who arrive in classroom settings to receive education and work experience to contribute to the Canadian workforce. Imagine, if English was not your first language and, as an ESL adult learner, you were prepared with a prerequisite of language skills to articulate English, pronounce words, and understand the meaning of words associated with course materials,

assignments, and in-class tasks. English language proficiency skills are a prerequisite for an ESL adult learner who wishes to attend college and receive the necessary skills to succeed academically within a post-secondary institution in Canada.

According to Rossiter et al. (2010), speaking fluency is of great importance in Canada to second language learners who must participate in an academic, occupational, and social context. When adult learners migrate to Canada, they conceptualize that they must learn English. Ignash (1994) discussed that ESL groups are becoming one of the fastest-growing community colleges and that completing a college degree without first knowing the language can be a long and challenging process. Many migrants spend time and energy finding English resources to assist in English. Rossiter et al. (2010) claimed that many learners invest large amounts of time and, in some cases, financial resources to acquire English language proficiency deemed ready for post-secondary education.

When examining questions earlier identified in this chapter, the reason as to why the ESL has data not changed emerged. Furthermore, why does the ESL student who enters post-secondary education require support in English even though they have passed the CLB exam? Kanel (2004) argued that post-secondary institutions have been accommodating students for decades while at the same time holding ESL students' English language proficiency to the same standards as the mainstream, going on to suggest that post-secondary education is adjusting standards to accommodate and relate to the learning population. English language organizations and colleges must begin examining policies and standards by rebuilding and extending the bridge toward providing mandatory English support services, including face-to-face instruction and resources to strengthen English engagement for students to meet the language standards required to succeed in post-secondary education.

Ignash (1994) asked questions presented in this study to identify what appropriate instruction is there for ESL students and how they provide language training to improve English skills. Theorists are still examining how to support and improve the same to meet English language needs in academic teaching and learning. Rossiter et al. (2010) suggested that fluency is neglected in many ESL classrooms and in the learner text that is often the basis of communication for second language instruction. Kanel (2004) validates this point by putting forth the idea that the challenge is for post-secondary systems to expand the notion of what a proper college education is, rethink old classroom educational standards, and assess the student's ability to perform an action or service to improve the overall academic performance standards.

Based on the research, ESL learners have an array of explanations for attending post-secondary education. Curry (2004) suggests the complexity of English requires ESL students to prepare for college-level academic work. Munro et al. (2006) believed that complexity is essential in English words with errors in stress and rhythm which can cause severe misunderstanding and that other aspects of non-native prosody can also result in miscommunication in English intonation patterns and functions. ESL adult learners entering a post-secondary education system in Canada involve more than simply learning and studying. Students must be willing to focus their attention on English, including specializing in academic courses comprised of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, such as the English Support Cycle offered to the participants to improve English. Curry (2004) declared that learning academic literacy comprised of engaging in a range of educational and social practices that play a pivotal role in retaining ESL in community colleges. Without this step, gate-keeping approaches to articulating English, the pronunciation of a word, understanding the meaning of words, and completing the course material, assignments, and in-class tasks are

at risk of success, thus, allowing students to display a greater chance of withdrawing from programs.

This study's research to include the survey and the focus group discovered more listening and speaking challenges than reading and writing. To improve the adult learners, CLB level 5–8 requires, according to Foote et al. (2011), that teachers give ESL students explicit feedback, focus on the English challenges to improve teaching and learning, and provide students and teachers with resources to improve English. Suh (2016) maintained that collaboration with other departments to support course design and English content is crucial to ensuring students' success consistency.

The research from this study data and English challenges aligns with the ESL students who have an accent and find listening and speaking can become compromised when articulating English, pronouncing words, and understanding their meanings. Teaching pronunciation to include oral fluency is a crucial part of ESL instruction and post-secondary institutions (Derwing, 2017; Breitkreutz et al., 2001; Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Foote et al., 2011; Munro et al., 2006; Rossiter et al., 2010). Additional help is required to support ESL students in post-secondary education. Administration, faculty, and students must be included in the change process, acknowledged and recognized as an ongoing phenomenon. Breitkreutz et al. (2001) voiced that provinces such as Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta should provide more pedagogical approaches and a need for curricula instruction that integrates pronunciation. ESL training for students and teachers should become a prerequisite in Canada to teach and speak with students in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Breitkreutz et al. (2001) clarify that more should occur for ESL adult learners through English instruction programs and training.

Recommendation of Future Growth

Future research can continue the study's English support cycle and English comprehension survey post-test. The data will guide the research and identify if English support is required for an ESL student in post-secondary education to improve CLB levels of 5–8 for academic success in Canada in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Furthermore, the study can focus on improved policies and standards currently impacting the ways English is improved or maintained and English delivery in post-secondary institutions. Certain areas to consider are:

1. Alberta must raise more awareness of languages and accents;

2. Identify gaps in English language services;

3. Develop and maintain internal and external partnerships to support language;

4. Consider tailored lessons in English to support course materials, assignments and in-class tasks;

5. Establish the improved English language proficiency pathways in English to include articulating English, the pronunciation of words, and understanding their meanings.

Future growth and sustainability recommendations can assist and support the change to Alberta's English Language proficiency policies. For an adult learner to succeed in college programs, it requires them to articulate in college-level English, leading to acquiring the Canadian English language proficiency standard needed to live, work, and attend post-secondary education. To attain this standard of English, a shift in policies would allow the adult ESL learner to be tasked with improved CLB levels to transition and enroll in post-secondary education with CLB levels 5–8 deemed satisfactory to complete college work, graduate, and become a contributing member of the Canadian workforce.

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Appendix A.1: Informed Consent Online Survey

You are being asked to participate in an online survey for a research project carried out by

Priscilla Lothian-Hendrix, a student at National Louis University. The study is called

"Closing the English Language Proficiency Gap in Post-Secondary Education in

Canada," and is occurring from **03-2021 to 05-2021**. The purpose of this study is to identify

whether an English as a second language (ESL) learner who has the Canadian Benchmark

Level 5–8 requires English support services in post-secondary education to achieve academic

success in Canada. This study will help the researcher develop a deeper understanding of

ESL and its application in research. The information given outlines the purpose of the student

and provides a description of your involvement as a participant.

Please understand that the purpose of the study is to explore the process and impact of

induction coaching and *not* to evaluate coaching or teaching. Participation in this study will

include:

Completion of the following online survey expected to take approximately 15 minutes to

complete.

Your participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without penalty or bias.

The results of this study may be published or otherwise reported at conferences and employed

to inform coaching practices at Keyano College, however, please rest assured that the

participants' identities will in no way be revealed (data will be reported anonymously and

bear no identifiers that could connect data to individual participants). To ensure

confidentiality, the researcher will keep the data file of compiled results in a password-

protected folder on an internal university workspace. Only Priscilla Lothian-Hendrix (researcher) will have access to the data.

There are no anticipated risks or benefits, no greater than those encountered in everyday life. Further, the information gained from this study could prove useful to the Keyano College and other schools and school districts seeking to initiate or refine induction coaching.

You may receive summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur upon request. Please email the researcher, Priscilla Lothian-Hendrix, at plothianhendrix@no.edu to request results from this study.

In the event that you have questions or require additional information, please contact the researcher, Priscilla Lothian-Hendrix, plothianhendrix@nl.edu, 780.715.3900.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that has not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Brian Hamluk at bhamluk@nl.edu or the co-chairs of NLU's Institutional Research Board:

Dr. Shaunti Knauth; email: Shaunti.Knauth@nl.edu; phone: (312) 261-3526;

Dr. Christopher Rector; email: CRector@nl.edu; phone: (312) 621-9650.

The co-chairs are located at:

National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Thank you for your consideration.

Consent: I understand that by checking "Yes" below, I am agreeing to participate in the study *(STUDY NAME)*. My participation will consist of the activities below during *XX time*:

Completion of an online survey taking approximately 15 minutes.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below. You may print a copy of this consent form for your records. Clicking on the "Agree" button indicates that:

You have read the above information.

You voluntarily agree to participate.

You are 18 years of age or older.

Agree

Disagree

Appendix A.2: Informed Consent Observation Interview

My name is Priscilla Lothian Hendrix, and I am a student at National Louis University. I am asking you to participate in this study, "Closing the English Language Proficiency Gap in Post-Secondary Education in Canada," occurring from 03-2021 to 05-2021. The purpose of this study is to identify whether an English as a second language (ESL) learner who has the Canadian Benchmark Level 5–8 requires English support services in post-secondary education to achieve academic success in Canada. This study will help the researcher develop a deeper understanding of ESL and its application in research. This information outlines the purpose of the student and provides a description of your involvement as a participant.

By signing below, you are providing consent to participate in a research project conducted by Priscilla Lothian-Hendrix, student at National Louis University, Chicago.

Please understand that the purpose of the study is to explore the process and impact of induction coaching and *not* to evaluate coaching or teaching. Participation in this study will include the following:

One focus group meeting will be scheduled at your convenience in the winter of the 2021-03 academic year.

The meeting will last up to 60 minutes and include a conversation to understand how ESL students develop, conceptualize, and interact with English experiences.

The meeting will be recorded and participants may view and issue the final approval on the content of the interview transcripts.

Priscilla Lothian-Hendrix will take field notes during the focus group meeting to capture the ways ESL students interact with each other (e.g., taking observational notes, asking reflective questions, and speaking to students).

Participants may view the field notes and provide final approval on their content.

Your participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without penalty or bias.

The results of this study may be published or otherwise reported at conferences and employed to inform coaching practices at Keyano College, however, the participants' identities will in no way be revealed (data will be reported anonymously and bear no identifiers that could connect data to individual participants). To ensure confidentiality, the researcher will secure recordings, transcripts, and field notes in a locked cabinet in her home office. Only Priscilla Lothian-Hendrix will have access to the data.

There are no anticipated risks or benefits, no greater than those encountered in everyday life. Further, the information gained from this study could prove useful to the Keyano College and other colleges seeking ways to refine ESL's best practices.

You may receive the summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur upon request. Please email the researcher, Priscilla Lothian-Hendrix, at plothianhendrix@nl.edu to request results from this study.

In the event that you have questions or require additional information, please contact the researcher, Priscilla Lothian-Hendrix, plothianhendrix@nl.edu, 780.715.3900.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that has not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Brian Hamluk, bhamluk@nl.edu, or the co-chairs of NLU's Institutional Research Board:

Dr. Shaunti Knauth; email: Shaunti.Knauth@nl.edu; phone: (312) 261-3526; or

Dr. Christopher Rector; email: CRector@nl.edu; phone: (312) 621-9650.

The co-chairs are located at:

National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Thank you for your consideration.

Consent: I understand that by signing below, I am agreeing to participate in the study

"Closing the English Language Proficiency Gap in Post-Secondary education in Canada."

My participation will consist of the activities below during the *March time period*:

A focus group meeting which will last up to 60 minutes, including a conversation and

observations to understand how ESL students develop and conceptualize English

experiences.

Priscilla Lothian-Hendrix will take field notes during the meeting to capture the ways ESL

students interact with each other (e.g., taking observational notes, asking reflective questions,

and speaking to students)

_____   _____

Participant's Signature   Date

_____   _____

Researcher's Signature   Date

Appendix B: English Comprehension Survey

Participant Background Information

In what year did you move to Canada? _____

What English benchmark level did you receive after taking an English language proficiency

exam? 5, 6, 7, 8, or (unknown) _____

How long were you unemployed? 1–2 years, 3–4 years, 5–6 years, or never *(circle choice)*

Did you take any English language classes upon your arrival in Canada? Yes or No_____

If yes, how many did you take? _____

Did you get help in learning English from a friend or family member? Yes or No_____

Your native language: _____

The language that is mostly spoken in your home: _____

The instructions for the survey instrument will be explained to the ESL participants on the

online portal, Zoom. The researcher will demonstrate to the participants where to place the

number on the survey. (The participants will record their responses online.)

Green	Yellow	Blue	Red
Initial (no)	Adequate (sometimes)	Developing (most of the time)	Fluent (Always)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

Reading Comprehension

1. Can you understand and pronounce English words and phrases when reading? ☐

2. Are you able to follow 5–7 steps of instruction when reading assignments? ☐

3. Can you identify relevant information from graphs, charts, or maps? ☐

4. Are you able to read out loud in front of the class without errors? ☐

Writing

1. Do you make errors in spelling or grammar when completing writing assignments? ☐

2. Do you take notes when the instructor is speaking? ☐

3. Can you reduce a one-page document to one paragraph to include the essential points? ☐

4. Can you write a descriptive paragraph to include who, what, when, and where? ☐

Listening

1. Do you understand the main topic idea when listening? ☐

2. Can you identify when someone is suggesting an opinion or a fact? ☐

3. Do you ask people to repeat questions when listening to conversations? ☐

4. Are you able to follow 5–7 steps of instructions in English? ☐

Speaking

1. Can you verbally explain the main idea of a topic in classroom conversations? ☐

2. When in small group discussions, do you read and share your opinions and ☐

   if you agree or disagree?

3. Do you ask the instructor questions in classroom settings? ☐

4. Do you have an accent when speaking in English? ☐

If you had to rate your current English language proficiency level after receiving English language support services using the benchmark levels of 5, 6, 7, or 8, at which level would you rate yourself? _____

Appendix C: Survey Data Collection

Participants	Green	Yellow	Blue	Red
Level	Initial (no)	Adequate (sometimes)	Developing (most of the time)	Fluent (Always)
Score	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reading				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participant 6				
Writing				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participant 6				
Listening				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participant 6				
Speaking				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participant 6				
CLB Level				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participant 6				

Appendix D: Focus Group

Research Question	Focus Questions
Does an ESL learner who has a CLB level of 5–8 require English support services in post-secondary education to achieve academic success in Canada?	• What are your feelings about using English in the Childhood Studies course? • What would help you be successful in using English in the Childhood Studies course? • What success have you had with using English in the Childhood Studies course? • What do you find challenging in English regarding assignments and/or in-class tasks? • What online English language support is helpful for you?

Appendix E: Focus Group Data Collection

Participants	Green	Yellow	Blue	Red
Level	Initial (I)	Adequate (A)	Developing (D)	Fluent (F)
Score	(no)	(sometimes)	(most of the time)	(Always)
Articulation in English				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participate 6				
Pronunciation of words (accents)				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participate 6				
Understanding the meaning of words				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participate 6				
Recurring patterns				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participate 6				
Participated in group discussion				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participate 6				

Appendix F: Data Collection Online English Support Services

Codes	Code: (A) English articulation, (M) mispronunciation of words, (W) word meaning			
Reading: Code (Time)				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participant 6				
Writing: Code (Time)				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participant 6				
Listening: Code (Time)				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participant 6				

Speaking: Code (Time)				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participant 6				
CLB level (1) Initial, (2) Adequate, (3) Developing, (4) Fluent				
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participant 6				
Total Hours of Instruction				
Week	Mar. 29–Apr. 2	Apr. 5–9	Apr. 12–16	Apr. 19–23
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Participant 6				

Appendix G: Survey Data Collection Notes

Participants	Green	Yellow	Blue	Red
Level	Initial (no)	Adequate (sometimes)	Developing (most of the time)	Fluent (Always)
Score	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reading				
Participant 1			Q, 4	Q, 1, 2, 3
Participant 2		Q 1, 3, 4	Q 2	
Participant 3		Q 2, 3	Q 1, 4	
Participant 4	Q, 3	Q 1, 2, 4		
Participant 5			Q, 3	Q 1, 2, 4
Participant 6			Q, 1, 2, 3, 4	
Writing				
Participant 1		Q, 1, 2	Q, 3	Q,4
Participant 2		Q 1, 3	Q 2, 4	
Participant 3	Q, 2	Q, 1	Q, 3	Q, 4
Participant 4	Q 2, 3	Q 1, 4		
Participant 5			Q, 1, 3, 4	Q, 2
Participant 6		Q, 1	Q, 2, 3, 4	
Listening				
Participant 1		Q, 3	Q, 1	Q, 2, 4
Participant 2		Q 1, 2	Q 3, 4	
Participant 3			Q 1, 2, 4	Q, 3
Participant 4	Q, 2	Q 1, 4	Q, 3	
Participant 5			Q, 1, 2, 3, 4	
Participant 6		Q 3	Q, 1, 2, 4	
Speaking				
Participant 1		Q, 3, 4	Q 1, 2	
Participant 2	Q 2, 3	Q 1, 4		
Participant 3	Q 2, 4	Q 1, 3		
Participant 4	Q, 3	Q 1, 2		Q, 4
Participant 5			Q, 1, 2, 3, 4	
Participant 6	Q, 4	Q, 3	Q, 1	Q, 2
CLB Level				
Participant 1			7	
Participant 2			7	
Participant 3			6	
Participant 4			5	
Participant 5			7	
Participant 6			7	

Appendix H: Focus Group Data Excerpts

Participants	Green	Yellow	Blue	Red
Level	**Initial** **(I)**	**Adequate** **(A)**	**Developing** **(D)**	**Fluent** **(F)**
Score	**(no)**	**(sometimes)**	**(most of the time)**	**(Always)**
Articulation in English				
Participant 1 (Accent)	"It was so hard for me to understand the teacher's language, because they are speaking very fast, so there are so many words that I could not understand them."			
Participant 2 (Accent)	"Once I graduated college back home, I worked as a call center agent, so I've been conversing with foreigners for quite a while for like two years, so I think it, it has a great impact on me to learn English."			
Participant 3 (Accent)	"My cousin really helped me to do with my assignments she helped me to like sometimes to translate in my land in my language that whole assignment, so that I can understand, and I did take help from skill center too from college."			
Participant 4 (Accent)	"If it's about helping me with English language, I will prefer the face to face, because it gives you the possibility to interact with other people, and when interacting you learn new words."			
Participant 5 (Accent)	"I so worried all the time, like, if I can pass this course if I can't like put my words in English, I have lots of thoughts with a kind of and it's so hard it's frustrating sometimes."			
Participate 6 (Accent)	"Would you learn online about your writing and your reading you have to be in class with everyone who speaks English."			
Pronunciation of words (accents)				
Participant 1	"So many times, they are like what did you say."			
Participant 2	"What I told you, a while ago, some teachers and some people have this very strong accent that is so hard to understand and it bothers me, of course, because you won't be able to understand what they're trying to say."			
Participant 3	"It was hard to say words."			
Participant 4	"Having like French at home, all the time really impacted the fact that I have difficulty speaking English but also outside of the house with everybody else speaking English, you are kind of pushed to speak English as well."			
Participant 5	"So, it was hard to think, in a group that your English experiences were scary because you spoke your native language at home to not speak English."			
Participate 6	"I got nervous to speak in English because I knew I had an accent, and I did not want people to know I was scared to say the word wrong."			
Understanding the meaning of words				
Participant 1	"So, I used Google to help me find to find the words because I didn't understand."			

Participant 2	"Some directions that is really broad to be able to understand, I need to specify any details more details about it, just to be able to avoid any miscommunication and misunderstanding."
Participant 3	"People at the college were like telling us like what we need to do and that made me nervous, I did not understand."
Participant 4	"So, I had a lot of challenge with reading my books and be able to do the assignments, and I know it; with the instructor, I know they used to take a lot of time to explain."
Participant 5	"When I started like my course assignment, I was so shy because I might have a wrong grammar and I'm like put my English in the wrong way."
Participate 6	"I did not get help to speak, did not want to make a mistake."
Reoccurring patterns	
Participant 1	Understanding the meaning of words, scared, pronouncing words, course work, social interaction, face to face.
Participant 2	English support, social interaction, face to face, and course work.
Participant 3	Silent, course work, social interaction, face to face, and silent.
Participant 4	Course work, pronunciation of words, silent.
Participant 5	Course work, challenges in English, social interaction, face to face, and silent.
Participate 6	Course work, pronouncing words, silent
Participated in group discussion	
Participant 1	Most of the time and spoke with a heavy accent (D)
Participant 2	Most of the time and spoke with a light accent(D)
Participant 3	Sometimes and spoke with a heavy accent (A)
Participant 4	Most of the time and spoke with heavy accent (D)
Participant 5	With probing and questions and spoke with a heavy accent(I)
Participate 6	With probing and questions and spoke with a heavy accent (I)

Appendix I: Code Definition

Codes	Definition of codes
Face-to-face instruction	• When an ESL student is assigned course work to be completed in class or with a group
Course Work	• When an ESL student has English challenges with course material, assignments, and in-class tasks.
English support	• When an ESL student receives English support from the internet or Keyano College
Social Interaction	• Interactions with English-speaking people
English Challenges	• ESL students have challenges with communicating in English
Understanding words	• ESL students have challenges with understanding the meaning of words
Pronunciation of words	• An ESL student who has challenges pronouncing English words
Accents	• A student speaking with a distinctive language accent • How an ESL student's speech is articulated when speaking in English
Silent	• An ESL student who does not engage in English conversations
Scared	• An ESL student who does not want to speak English in public

Appendix J: Matrix Chart

Deductive Codes	Survey and Focus Group Participant sub-topics	CLB Level (I) Initial (A) Adequate (D)Developing (F) Fluent
Articulation of English	• I feel scared when speaking in English, it bothers me, I feel uncomfortable.	(I)
Pronunciation of words (accents)	• I got nervous to speak in English because I knew I had an accent, and I did not want people to know I was scared to say the word wrong. • I believe everyone has an accent.	(A)
Understanding the meaning of words	• People would be talking, and I would have no idea what they are talking about because they spoke fast, and I did not understand what they meant.	(A)
Reoccurring patterns	• When English people speak, I kept quiet.	(A)
Participation in the group discussion	• The ESL students participated in the focus group conversation; however, probing and questioning were reinforced through the discussion.	(I)

Appendix K: Themes

CATOGORY	THEME
1	• English Support
2	• Social Interaction
3	• Silent
4	• Course Work

Appendix L: Audit Trail

Author	Method	Validity
Lothian-Hendrix (2021)	English Comprehension Survey	Construct Criterion Internal and External (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Savan & Major, 2010)
Lothian-Hendrix (2021)	Focus group meeting	Epistemological Participant's lens Moral and Purpose Ontological Grounded theory (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Savan & Major, 2010)
Derwing and Munro, (2009)	Putting accents in its place: Rethinking obstacles to communication	Researcher's lens Phenomenology Critical theory (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018)
Derwing and Munro (2009)	Comprehensibility as a factor in listening interaction preferences: implications for the workplace	Researcher's lens Ontological Critical theory (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018)
Breitkreutz et al. (2001)	Pronunciation teaching practices in Canada; An ESL student challenge in communicating effectively	Researcher's lens Ontological Phenomenology Critical theory Creswell and Poth (2018)
Derwing and Rossiter (2002)	ESL learners' perception of their pronunciation needs and strategies;	Researcher's lens Moral and purpose Critical theory Dependability Creswell and Poth (2018)
Foote, et al., (2011)	Survey of the teaching of pronunciation in adult ESL programs in Canada	Researcher's lens Phenomenology Moral and purpose Critical theory Credibility Creswell and Poth (2018)
Munro and Derwing (1995)	Processing time, accent, and comprehensibility in the perception of native and foreign-accented speech	Phenomenology Epistemological Ontological Critical theory Creswell and Poth (2018)
Munro et al. (2006)	Salient accents, covert attitudes: Consciousness-	Moral and Purpose Creswell and Poth (2018)

	raising for pre-service second language teachers	
Munro (2003)	A premier on accent discrimination in the Canadian context	Epistemological Ontological Credibility Creswell and Poth (2018)

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