

"So That Everybody Starts at the Same Line":
Exploring International English Language Learners' Perceptions of Learning English and
Studying in Canadian Universities

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A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
for the Degree of
Master of Education

Faculty of Education
Lakehead University

October 2016

Acknowledgements

My beloved grandfather, Earl Rodger taught me how to drive. I learned many life lessons sitting next to him that have guided me far beyond the road.

Know Where Your Tires Are

Knowing the position of the vehicle's tires on the road was essential for avoiding the countless pot holes in our small town. On a deeper level, this advice highlights the importance of knowing what—and who—root me to this earth. In this spirit, I wish to thank my family, especially my mom and brother, for their unwavering pride, encouragement, and reassurance. You provided a refuge from the stresses of thesis-writing, welcoming me home with a lot of love, laughter, and Jimmy Fallon episodes to catch up on. Thank you for being you.

Show Up

Without fail, my grandpa arrived at my house every morning of high school to drive me to school. He exemplified what it means to show up for those you love. While researching and writing this thesis, I have been blessed to have many individuals show up for me.

Sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor extraordinaire, Dr. Gerald Walton. When I met with Dr. Paul Berger before beginning my MEd, I could hardly contain my excitement when he suggested you for my supervisor. Your reputation as a dedicated mentor and advocate for graduate students preceded you. I continue to be amazed by your spot-on, lightning-fast feedback. Thank you for your steadfast support at every step of this process. Learning from you has been a great privilege.

Since I had the good fortune of being his undergraduate student, Dr. Ismel González has had a profound influence on my professional and academic pursuits. Ismel, if it were not for you, I would not be in the field of teaching English as an additional language. The many lessons I've

learned from you about the critical implications of teaching and learning English helped me go beyond my original vision for this project. Thank you for sharing your insatiable passion and expertise. I am honoured to now be your colleague.

As a graduate assistant, I learned how to conduct research from Dr. Laurie Leslie. Laurie, you helped me gain the skills and confidence needed to carry out my own research. I am grateful for your kindness and mentorship as well as all of the cups of tea and snacks we've shared.

Thank you to Dr. Anna Guttman, my internal examiner, and Dr. Xuemei Li, my external examiner, for lending their perspectives and expertise to my work. Your feedback was invaluable for enriching and strengthening the final version of this thesis.

I am most grateful to the international students who graciously participated in this study. Thank you for openly and enthusiastically sharing your stories with me. You are the heart within these pages and the soul of this project. Thank you, also, to the international students I have had the joy of teaching and getting to know over the years. You were the spark that inspired this research.

Find Your Person

Todd, you're it. I've written countless drafts trying to find the right words to thank you, but you leave me speechless. How sweet it is to be loved by you.

Abstract

The myriad voices of international English language learners, who must enrol in an English language program before beginning their academic programs, are frequently left out of conversations about Canada's current efforts to internationalize higher education. The purpose of this study is to explore international English language learners' perceptions of learning English and studying in Canada as they transition from English language programs to post-secondary studies. Using an embedded qualitative case study design, the researcher interviewed 15 international English language learners studying engineering, business, and science in Ontario to explore how well they feel their particular English language program prepared them to study their academic disciplines. Additionally, this study extends scholarship on language learners' investments in English by exploring the personal values that international English language learners place on learning English as an additional language. Through a neocolonialist lens, the researcher examines how learning English impacts international students' identities and how they position themselves in relation to native-English speakers and non-English speakers. Findings from this study have the potential to help university and language program administrators better understand the diverse needs of international students undertaking post-secondary studies in Canada and implement both program and institutional reform.

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Glossary of Acronyms

AUCC	Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learner
ELP	English Language Program
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language

Chapter One: An Introduction to Issues in Internationalization

As domestic enrolment declines, the internationalization of higher education is becoming a more prevalent phenomenon throughout Canadian universities and colleges, according to the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC, 2014). The AUCC reports that 95% of post-secondary schools in Canada currently include objectives related to internationalization in their strategic plans. The AUCC (2014) defines internationalization as "institutional efforts to integrate an international, global and/or intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of universities" (p. 3). A major component of these efforts involves recruiting international students to complete their post-secondary education in Canada.

Canadian institutions in which English is the language of instruction identify China, Brazil, India, the United States, Mexico, and Germany, among other emerging markets, as their geographic priorities for international recruitment (AUCC, 2014). For many international recruits, English is not their first or native language. As part of their admissions process, these students take a placement test to determine their level of English proficiency. Those who lack sufficient proficiency must complete an English language program (ELP), delivered on-campus, prior to beginning their undergraduate or graduate programs. ELPs are designed to help international students improve their academic and English proficiency skills, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In 2014, 137,416 international students were enrolled in Canadian ELPs accredited by Languages Canada, a national organization that governs public and private language education (Languages Canada, 2015). Of these, 56,577 students were enrolled in Ontario programs.

Because many international students require additional language support prior to beginning their academic programs, ELPs are a key component that enable internationalization

within Canadian universities. Evaluating the effectiveness of these growing programs provides beneficial information to international English language learners (ELLs) and administrators. Li, Myles, and Robinson (2012) critique ELPs for frequently delivering overgeneralized curricula that overlook their students' specific needs and contexts. In addition, international ELLs frequently struggle academically, in addition to culturally and socially, when transitioning from ELPs to post-secondary programs (Dooley, 2010; Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). Therefore, building from Li et al. (2012), there is reason to suggest that ELPs are not meeting the needs of many international ELLs, making further research in this area necessary.

Cheng and Fox (2008) acknowledge that not much is known about international students' academic acculturation experiences, particularly regarding their transitions from ELPs to post-secondary academic programs. Because much of the existing research on international ELLs' experiences in post-secondary education has been quantitative in nature, additional qualitative research is needed to better understand the perceptions and lived experiences of this population (Kelly & Moogan, 2012; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). Cheng and Fox (2008) further cite demands on language support programs to produce measurable outcomes, signalling a growing push for accountability within ELPs. Ultimately, ELPs are not only accountable to university administrators, but also to their clients, international ELLs. For my thesis research, I worked with international ELLs to learn more about their experiences learning English and studying in Canada. Including international ELLs in research can help their myriad voices to be heard and factored into university policies and programs that are better designed to support them.

A Note on Terms

For the purposes of this project, I will use the general term "international students" to refer to individuals who move to Canada from another country for the specific purpose of studying in a Canadian post-secondary institution. I will use the more specific term "international ELL" to refer to the subset of international students who are not native English speakers and who complete an ELP before beginning their undergraduate or graduate studies in Canada. My research focuses on international ELLs' experiences, so I will employ this term more regularly.

Within the context of my research, I will favor the term English as an Additional Language (EAL) over English as a Second Language (ESL). Both terms describe contexts in which students learn English at school while also living in an English-speaking environment (Gass, Behney & Plonsky, 2013). These terms contrast with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in which students living in their home countries only speak and learn English at school. Although similar, there are subtle, but important, differences between EAL and ESL. For one, EAL recognizes that international students may speak more than two languages (Carder, 2009). Furthermore, the identification of English as a *second* language suggests a hierarchical relationship between one's native language and English that positions a learner's ownership of English as secondary to or lesser than their ownership of their native language. EAL, in contrast, is a more inclusive term that positions native and additional languages more evenly (Carder, 2009; Wardman, 2012). Admittedly, ESL remains a standard, internationally used term (Wardman, 2012). Therefore, when discussing the work of other scholars or quoting my participants, I will honour their choice of terminology. Page vi provides a glossary of the acronyms used in this thesis.

My Journey from an English Language Instructor to Researcher

Because of the interpretative nature of qualitative research, being a reflexive researcher, as endorsed by Creswell (2014), is particularly important to my study. Indeed, the manner in which I approach my research topic, interact with participants, and analyze their perceptions is shaped, in part, by my own background, culture, values, personal experiences, and biases (Creswell, 2014). Reflecting on the need for researchers to position themselves in relation to their research, Flyvbjerg (2013) holds that reflexivity also allows for more advanced understandings of the research topic and participant viewpoints. Creswell (2014) further notes that researchers should identify their previous experiences with the research topic to assist readers in better comprehending the relationship between the researcher and the study. Therefore, positioning myself within my research context is a crucial first step to my study.

I am a domestic Master of Education student who has always lived in Canada. I grew up in an isolated, northwestern Ontario community that is predominantly White and in which English is the dominant language. Taking core French courses in elementary and high school was the only language-learning context I was familiar with. The language of instruction in these courses was English, and I only spoke French in class with other native-English speakers. It was not until my final year of undergraduate education that I was introduced to teaching EAL. Because I was in the concurrent education program, I could choose an honours focus course to take in my professional year. I chose a course on teaching EAL simply because I was an English major. I presumed that because I was a native speaker of English and good at grammar, the course would be a natural fit. Essentially, I believed that since I spoke English, I could teach it.

Unbeknownst to me at the time, my naiveté was informed by ideologies that position White, native-English speakers as the "owners" of English (Kubota & Lin, 2009). Never mind

that I was a monolingual English speaker who had not yet traveled outside of Canada. Because it was my native language and I was White, I assumed ownership over English and positioned myself as someone who could teach the language and, more significantly, claim authority over it.

As an undergraduate student, I realized that there was more to teaching EAL than simply knowing the language. The most significant lesson I initially learned was the connection between language and culture. Indeed, scholars consistently recognize the inseparability of these entities (Liddicoat, 2011; Norton & Toohey, 2004). Agar (2006) even coined the term *linguaculture* to capture their interconnectedness. He argues that learners go beyond using grammar or vocabulary as resources for language learning to also make use of their biographies, histories, and cultures. Taking influence from the critical pedagogue, Freire (2005), I came to understand that teaching and learning English was not just about the word, but the world.

In the five years since I was introduced to teaching EAL, I have completed professional development courses on additional language learning and become a TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) certified instructor. I have taught international ELLs whose English proficiency is not yet high enough to be admitted to their academic programs. My role is to help these students transition to living in a new cultural and social environment and learn the necessary language and academic skills to successfully complete their academic studies.

When I began teaching EAL, I positioned myself as an apolitical, benevolent figure, helping grant international ELLs access to education by teaching them English. Likewise, I considered ELPs to be benevolent and ideologically benign. Ostensibly, we were doing a *good* deed by helping these students. Haque (2007) notes the potential for teachers to be blind towards the ideological functioning of language programs. She acknowledges that it is common to view such programs as a helpful service that gives international ELLs access to a neutral body of

knowledge. Other scholars have explored how fluency in English grants individuals access to otherwise closed opportunities. For example, Pennycook (2002) connects English with access to education, employment, business, and popular culture. Phillipson (2003) extends this list to include science, technology, medicine, research, computer software, trade, shipping, diplomacy, mass media, news, journalism, youth culture, sports, and education systems.

Initially, I viewed English as the language of opportunity for my students, and I felt satisfied that I was helping grant them access to this language. Looking back, my satisfaction was similar to that garnered from doing a good deed for someone less fortunate, leading me to reflect on the connection between power and language. As a White, middle-class, Canadian-born native-English speaker, I was awarded easy access to Canadian education systems. As a language instructor, I had the power to open the doors to higher education for my students based on my assessment of their language proficiency. I recognized my privilege and acknowledged that it was not natural or rightfully mine. I had done nothing to deserve it; my privilege as a native-English speaker and EAL instructor was socially, culturally, and politically determined.

This growing awareness prompted me to question my initial views of ELPs as ideologically neutral and benevolent. In a pragmatic sense, I appreciated the need for students in English-speaking institutions to possess adequate English skills. ELPs can help international ELLs acquire such skills. However, over time, I came to recognize these programs as a gatekeeper that policed international ELLs' access to academia. Majhanovich (2014) has also brought forth this critique. Additionally, I wondered what happened to the students I taught *after* they graduated from the ELP and began their academic programs. *Did what they learn in their English courses help them with their engineering, business, or science courses? Were they at a disadvantage compared to domestic students? Did the ELP meet their needs?*

In part to grapple with my growing critiques of ELPs, I returned to university in January 2015 to pursue graduate studies in education, focusing in general on internationalization in higher education and specifically on international ELLs' experiences studying in Canadian universities. According to Harklau (2011), much of the existing research in this field has been undertaken in the United States. Guided by Harklau's claim, my research has the potential to contribute to growing knowledge about international ELLs' experiences in a Canadian context. Notably, it is beyond the scope of my research to comment on internationalization within Canada as a whole. Based on interviews with 15 international ELLs who completed ELPs in medium-sized Ontario institutions, my thesis explores international ELLs' perceptions of learning English and transitioning to post-secondary programs. I have broken down this topic into two questions:

- a. What are international English language learners' perceptions of how well English language programs prepared them for their academic disciplines?
- b. What personal value do international English language learners place on learning English as an additional language?

In investigating these questions, my objective is to better understand international ELLs' perceptions of how their ELPs prepared them for the academic challenges of their undergraduate and graduate programs, including the development of academic language proficiency and general and discipline-specific academic skills. In her critique of previous research on international students' academic experiences, Haque (2007) notes the troubling tendency for researchers to position international students as a homogenous group, differentiated solely based on their language proficiency or nationality. Haque (2007) stresses that considerations of motivation need to take into account individuals' "complex, overlapping and perhaps even conflicting needs" (p. 96). By examining the personal values that international ELLs place on English, my aim is to

understand my participants' individualized reasons for learning EAL and how learning English informs their senses of self. Pursuing this question further enables me to consider the extent to which my participants are aware of the ideological implications of learning English in ELPs.

Using Neocolonial Theories to Problematize the Internationalization of Higher Education

In order to analyze the ideological issues that underlie internationalization, it is helpful to situate such discussions within a wider theoretical framework. Neocolonialism offers a lens through which to examine the treatment of international students in Western universities.

Theories on neocolonialism focus on how imbalanced power relations between colonizer and colonized continue in new forms ever after the abatement of formal colonial relations (Rudunka & van Aarde, 2007). Although these previously colonized countries are now geographically and politically independent, they continue to be dominated via education, economics, culture, military, and ideology (Chilisa, 2005).

According to Slemon (1994), neocolonialism is marked by "the voice of the colonizer in renewed function and in institutionalized form" (p. 29). Education is one means through which colonizers inject their ideologies into the colonized (Chilisa, 2005). Within my research context, I recognize the internationalization of higher education in Canada as an institutionalized strategy that reinforces the superiority of the Western world and marginalizes international students as *other* and lesser than. By studying in Canada, international students are not engaged in a neutral learning process; rather, they are being actively integrated and assimilated into a wider system that privileges dominant Western discourses and ideologies over those in their home countries.

When completing their cross-cultural sojourns, the onus is on international students to adapt to the education system of their host country (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). In other words, international students must change to fit the system; the system does not change to fit the

students. This demand speaks to the ideological underpinnings of internationalization in higher education that reinforce and legitimize institutional power. Walter (2003) traces the origins of ELPs as a means to provide immigrant laborers with literacy and citizenship training. The goal was to use language to assimilate these immigrants into Western society. Steckley (2013) looks further back in history, identifying Canadian residential schools, in which Aboriginals were removed from their homes and forced to abandon their own languages and cultures to learn English, as an even earlier form of ELPs. These early forms of language programs adopted more overt policies of assimilation; nevertheless, the current rise in internationalization suggests that Western efforts to assert dominance over others remain a contemporary phenomenon.

Majhanovich (2014) recognizes the irony that cross-cultural understanding and communication are typically cited as motivating factors for internationalization, yet such initiatives actually function to reinforce the dominance of Eurocentric knowledge. In order to attract international students to North America, administrators, marketers, and recruiters must posit Western education as superior to the education that potential recruits would receive at home. After all, it is unlikely that nearly as many individuals would pursue undergraduate or graduate studies in North America if they believed they would be awarded the same quality of education and breadth of opportunities at home. Therefore, reinforcing the superiority of North America and, in effect, upholding hegemonic power relations between countries and between Western institutions and international students, are essential, if hidden, components of internationalization.

Bourdieu (1991) further examines the operation of power in education. He argues that educational institutions reproduce inequality in society, reinforcing the legitimacy of knowledge possessed by privileged groups over that of the marginalized. In the case of higher education,

international students arrive with the understanding that they must conform to the university's expectations in order to receive access to a form of education supposedly superior to that they would receive in their home countries. Guo (2013) positions ELPs, which many international students must attend prior to beginning academic studies, as sites in which students are re-colonized by being forced to conform into and accept a static and idealized conception of Canadian culture that favors white, middle-class experiences. Extending Guo's argument, by requiring international students to develop advanced language and academic skills in ELPs, post-secondary institutions hold international students to a higher standard than domestic students in terms of the level and type of English skills they are expected to master. Indeed, before they can begin their academic studies, international students must demonstrate a mastery of academic forms of expression, such as the formal essay, that native-English-speaking high school graduates often lack proficiency with (see, for example, Gillespie et al., 2014).

Luke and Dooley (2011) point out the paradox of using ELPs to aid internationalization efforts. On a practical level, language programs help minority groups access higher education by improving their English proficiency. Such an initiative seems to make higher education more equitable for all. On an ideological level, though, language programs covertly function to reinforce the legitimacy and superiority of English as *the* language of education. To destabilize these power relations, Liddicoat (2011) calls for both home and host cultures to become "de-centered," thereby challenging dichotomies of home/host, domestic/international, inside/outside, and self/other. Examinations of international students' experiences in ELPs are incomplete without such interrogations of how power and ideology operate within international education.

Significance of Research

Analyses of internationalization tend to focus on how increased international enrolment within universities benefits Canadians. In particular, Zhou and Zhang (2014) and Simon (2014) highlight the economic advantages of internationalization in that international students typically pay much higher tuition fees compared to domestic students. In his overview of Canada's federal international education strategy, Simon (2014) further argues that international education serves as a foreign-policy aid that results in global commercial and social benefits for Canada.

Considering these gains, there is a risk that institutions may seek to profit from increased international enrolment without adequately supporting their recruits once they arrive on-campus (Zhou & Zhang, 2014). In her review of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programs, Hamp-Lyons (2011) calls on post-secondary institutions to focus more attention on helping international ELLs improve their English proficiency and adjust to their academic programs. While she identifies no easy solutions, Hamp-Lyons calls for additional research that focuses explicitly on learners' experiences in ELPs as well as increased training for language instructors as crucial first steps towards better supporting international ELLs.

Reforming ELPs to be more responsive to students' needs is also in the best interest of university administrators pursuing internationalization initiatives. Research on international ELLs' perceptions can provide language program administrators with valuable information on how to best meet their students' needs in preparing them for their academic programs. In turn, increased student satisfaction will aid universities in their efforts to recruit international students, thereby further increasing the economic benefits of internationalization. Murray and Christison (2011b) acknowledge the fierce competition to attract international students, both internationally and among Canadian provinces. Research on international students' experiences learning English

in Canada, thus, presents a win-win scenario for universities and students. Students will be more likely to enrol in institutions that offer quality programs that are tailored to their needs, and institutions will benefit by developing programs that lead to increased international enrolment and, thus, increased revenue from tuition. In the next chapter, I explore the existing scholarship on internationalization and international ELLs, providing direction and justification for my own research objectives.

Chapter Two: From Internationalization to International English Language Learners: An Exploration of the Literature

For my thesis research, I explored international ELLs' perceptions of learning English in ELPs after they have transitioned from a language program to their academic disciplines. Following Smith and Khawaja (2011) and Zhou and Zhang (2014), I define transition as the linguistic, academic, cultural, social, and emotional adjustments or changes international students experience when beginning undergraduate or graduate studies. Because my research is centered on the transition from ELPs to academic programs, my analyses, largely, focus on the linguistic and academic aspects of international ELLs' transition experiences. I also explore the impact that learning English in Canada has had on my participants' sense of identity.

To contextualize my research, this literature review begins with an overview of the state of internationalization in Canadian higher education and a profile of international students. I then explore overriding theories of cross-cultural transitions and second language acquisition before turning to scholarship that is directly related to my research questions. My research is comprised of two parts. First, I aim to better understand international ELLs' perceptions of how well ELPs prepared them for their academic disciplines. For this question, I sought out research on the organization and effectiveness of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programs, international students' readiness for university, and issues in curriculum reform. For my second question, on the personal value that international ELLs place on learning EAL, I reviewed major theories of motivation and investment in language learning.

The State of Internationalization in Canadian Higher Education

Canada's current internationalization efforts reinforce the timeliness of research on international students' experiences studying in Canada. In 2014, the government of Canada

released its federal *International Education Strategy* (Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development Canada, 2014). The report announced Canada's objective to recruit 450,000 international students by 2022, noting that international student enrolment has annually increased by 8% in recent years. The government cites Canada's economic leadership, quality academic institutions, and reputation as a tolerant, multicultural, safe, and welcoming country as key pull factors that attract international students to its borders.

International students are a growing presence on Canadian campuses. In 2014, 89,000 full-time international students were enrolled in undergraduate university programs, 44,000 international students were enrolled in graduate programs, and an additional 18,000 were enrolled in part-time programs (AUCC, 2014). These students come from over 200 countries. The AUCC (2014) identifies China as Canada's top recruitment priority followed by India, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, and Nigeria. Top programs for international enrolment include business management, public administration, architecture, engineering, and social and behavioural science (AUCC, 2014; Simon, 2014).

The AUCC survey findings (2014) and the federal government's *International Education Strategy* (Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development Canada, 2014) mostly paint an optimistic view of Canada's potential to recruit and retain international students. However, Simon's (2014) report, commissioned by the Canadian International Council and the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, indicates that Canada's Chinese recruitment has been unsuccessful, capturing just 3.8% of the market due to a lack of government leadership, a fragmented internationalization strategy, and fierce competition with the US, the UK, and Australia. Simon identifies further weaknesses in Canada's internationalization strategies. Canada is currently ranked 8th, behind Australia, the US, Britain, and other developed countries, in international student recruitment.

Simon (2014) cautions that increased competition for international enrolment and decreased outflow from key markets may hinder Canada's ability to reach its enrolment targets.

To overcome these difficulties, Simon (2014) advises that international education initiatives should be more closely aligned with federal trade and diplomacy. That way, Canada can strengthen its global profile and solidify international partnerships. Simon further suggests that Canadian recruiters concentrate their efforts on under-developed or neglected markets to claim a competitive edge against leading countries. In addition, recruitment efforts should be driven by quality rather than quantity. In other words, instead of reaching towards a numerical target, recruiting international students whose qualifications fit the country's current economic and industrial needs ought to be the government's top priority. However, a lack of national unity, perhaps stemming from Canada's lack of a national ministry of education, hinders the country's ability to meet its lofty goals. Essentially, Canada is competing against itself as individual provinces and territories vie for increased international enrolment. Simon urges the federal government to develop a national marketing campaign that establishes a cohesive and holistic message to attract international students to Canada.

A Profile of International Students

A key component of attracting international students is to, first, understand who they are. Li et al. (2012) outline general characteristics of international students. They note that international students are literate in their first languages (L1), and most already have at least a beginner's level of English proficiency. Many international students have already commenced post-secondary studies in their home countries (Li et al., 2012; Murray & Christison, 2011b). While some are beginning undergraduate studies in Canada, other international students are continuing programs they started in their home countries or pursuing graduate studies. They may

return to their home countries after completing their academic studies, or they may choose to pursue immigration and stay in the host country. International students generally come from families with high socioeconomic status, and their costs are covered by their families or government-sponsored scholarships (Murray & Christison, 2011b). Curtin, Stewart, and Ostrove (2013) characterize international students as possessing talent, ambition, and commitment. On the other hand, Cheng and Fox (2008) acknowledge that not all international students complete educational sojourns of their own volition, but, rather, because of family pressure and external expectations. Therefore, institutions and researchers should not make assumptions about the particular characteristics and circumstances of individual students.

Murray and Christison (2011a) acknowledge differences among international students learning English in a host country. Some ELLs leave their home countries for the sole purpose of studying English for a short, intensive period. These students may have been awarded government-sponsored scholarships or are self-funded. Another group of ELLs have been conditionally accepted to high school or a post-secondary program in a host country, but they require initial English language support before they can begin their academic studies. Similarly, other ELLs study English and content courses concurrently in high school or post-secondary institutions. Considering the numerous contexts and conditions within which international students learn English, narrowing the scope of my research is necessary. My research interests are focused on international ELLs who must attend a language program to improve their English proficiency prior to beginning academic studies in Ontario institutions.

Cross-Cultural Transitions: Culture Shock, Acculturation, and the ABC Framework

Regardless of whether their first destination is a language program or post-secondary classroom, international students simultaneously experience cultural, social, emotional, and

academic adjustments when they transition from home to host country. Accordingly, my research is informed by theories of culture shock (Oberg, 1960), acculturation (Berry, 2006), and the Affect, Behaviour, Cognition (ABC) Framework (Ward et al., 2001), which hold that cross-cultural transitions represent a time of significant change and adjustment.

The theory of culture shock was first proposed by Oberg (1960) who argued that newcomers to countries, namely refugees and immigrants, experienced four chronological transition phases: the honeymoon stage characterized by initial feelings of excitement and euphoria; the crisis stage which brought about frustration, anxiety, and anger as they navigate a society that is foreign to them; the recovery stage in which individuals resolved their crises and learned about the new culture; and, finally, the adjustment stage in which individuals found enjoyment and functional competence within the host environment. Researchers have since criticized and, largely, rejected Oberg's generalized conceptualization of culture shock because of his implication that cross-cultural transitions are a necessarily negative and traumatic experience best understood and treated through a medical lens (Ward et al., 2001). Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, and Van Horn (2002) further critique Oberg's theory of culture shock because of its oversimplification of a complicated, dynamic, and individual process.

Subsequently, scholars developed the theory of acculturative stress as a replacement for and refinement of culture shock. Instead of generalizing cross-cultural transitions as negative, Berry's (2006) conception of acculturative stress recognizes that adjusting to another culture is a learning process, shaped by both individual and societal factors, with both positive and negative components. In their review of theoretical models of acculturation, Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, and Todman (2008) praise Berry's model for positioning newcomers as lacking the skills needed to thrive in their new environment rather than as passive victims of external forces. Acculturation

models recognize that individuals have the ability to adapt to their surroundings through preparation, skills acquisition, and problem resolution. Berry's notion of acculturation is not without its critics, however. Smith and Khawaja (2011), for instance, argue that since Berry's research is based on the experiences of immigrants and refugees, further research is needed to determine whether the model is applicable to international students.

Finally, theories of acculturative stress developed into the ABC Framework, which recognizes affect, behaviour, and cognition as significant factors in cross-cultural transitions. As leading theorists in this area, Ward et al. (2001) focus on how individuals develop skills and strategies to adjust to their new cultural environments. Zhou et al. (2008) explain the meaning of affect, saying a cross-cultural transition is a significant life change that leads to stress, making it necessary to develop appropriate coping strategies. In turn, the behaviour component of the framework involves learning about the host culture and developing competence in intercultural communication (Ward et al., 2001). Finally, cognition focuses on how an individual's sense of identity changes throughout the transition.

The ABC Framework acknowledges that intercultural transitions are a dynamic process affected by a multitude of interactive factors. Zhou et al. (2008) praise the model for being comprehensive and acknowledging that reactions to cross-cultural transitions change over time and are subject to both individual and situational factors. For instance, Ward et al. (2001) consider location, length of time, purpose of sojourn, amount of contact and intimacy with host nationals, status and power, and individual characteristics as key factors. While advancing understandings about the complexities of cross-cultural transitions, the ABC Framework is not without fault. Zhou et al. (2008) critique the ABC Framework for its lack of coherence in

reconciling affective, behavioural, and cognitive reactions with one another. They call for further research to study the interaction between psychological and sociocultural adjustments.

As mentioned, these theories of cross-cultural transitions were not formulated specifically for international students. In her study of five international students studying in China, Li (2015) explores how participants' desire to integrate into the host culture and the perceived status of their first languages impacted their sense of belonging in China. Further research is warranted to examine the unique experiences of international ELLs transitioning to new cultural and social surroundings while concurrently adapting to the academic pressures of higher education.

Second Language Acquisition

International students' English proficiency is a significant factor affecting their ability to adjust to a new academic environment. Ward et al. (2001) cite limited language proficiency as the most significant cause of academic problems among international ELLs. Researchers studying international ELLs' transition experiences should, thus, be conversant with major aspects of second language acquisition (SLA). Theories on SLA form a vast sub-section of the literature. A comprehensive overview of these theories is beyond the scope and purpose of this literature review, but what follows is a brief overview.

Hadaway, Vardell, and Young (2002) detail five distinct phases of SLA. First, the preproduction period represents a silent period that can last as briefly as a few hours to as long as several months. Next, learners in the early production phase, lasting approximately six months, concentrate on using basic language to meet their survival needs. Those in speech emergence, the third phase, speak in phrases or simple sentences to develop interpersonal communication skills. Then, learners enter the intermediate fluency stage where they demonstrate advanced comprehension skills. Finally, learners achieve academic content fluency. By the time they leave

their language programs to begin undergraduate or graduate programs, international ELLs should have attained academic content fluency, characterized by the abilities to use and understand academic language, complex forms, rhetorical functions, and critical thinking (Hadaway et al., 2002). Academic content fluency can take five-seven years of language study to reach (Cummins, Mirza, & Stille, 2012).

In order to achieve linguistic fluency and academic competency, Hadaway et al. (2002) argue that language learners must go beyond the structural components of language, at the sound, word, and sentence level. Rather, learners need to simultaneously manage and negotiate several features of communication, including topic, setting, participants, and tone. Importantly, Hadaway et al. (2002) caution that SLA does not follow a predictable or orderly pattern. Similar to the factors that affect international students' acculturation experiences, individual characteristics such as age and personality; affective factors such as self-esteem, anxiety, extroversion/introversion, and motivation; and external issues such as the classroom environment have a significant effect on SLA. In his review of the ideologies of second language education, Tollefson (2011) agrees with Hadaway et al. (2002) that SLA is affected by individual variables. Further, he extends studies on SLA by encouraging researchers to examine the social, rather than individual, aspects of language learning, including power relations and socioeconomic issues.

Much research on SLA focuses on beginning language learners. Many international ELLs, however, enter language programs at an intermediate or advanced level. They possess at least basic communicative competence, but require additional support to develop competence with academic language and skills (Li et al., 2012). Cummins (1979), an influential scholar in the field of SLA, differentiates between two types of language proficiency: BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) and CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency).

While BICS is the social language of everyday communication, international ELLs must also be proficient in CALP, the language used in academia, in order to be successful in university.

Murray and Christison (2014) envision BICS and CALP as two ends of a continuum, rather than being diametrically opposed. They argue that language learners' use of BICS can be applied to discipline-specific academic tasks since many language functions such as describing are relevant to both social and academic settings. Concurrently, Murray and Christison (2014) recognize that many academic and technical words are not typically used for communicative purposes.

Therefore, they advise language programs to place special emphasis on words like "assume, predict, theory, hypothesis" and "evaluate" in order for students to learn these words in context.

When studying the academic needs of international ELLs transitioning from ELPs to university courses, it is necessary to examine whether such language programs adequately prepare students for the rigors of academia by moving beyond BICS to develop and practice CALP.

Overview of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Programs

Unlike ESL programs that focus on social interaction and general reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, EAP is a language program designed to prepare international ELLs for the demands of post-secondary academic programs. For example, students learn to read academic texts, take notes, prepare reports, write essays, deliver seminars, scan and skim texts, and evaluate ideas (Fox et al., 2014). Referencing and citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, and using academic styles in writing are additional components of EAP (Dooley, 2010). Evans and Green (2007) recognize time as a constraining factor in EAP programs. International ELLs with advanced English proficiency often spend only one semester in ELPs in which they learn university-level language and academic skills for approximately twenty-five hours each week. Recalling Cummins' (1979) and Hadaway et al.'s (2002) description of academic content fluency

as taking five-seven years to master, the short duration of ELPs may not be enough time for students to learn academic language skills (Evans & Green, 2007). In order to cope with this restriction, course designers must be diligent in identifying and prioritizing students' needs.

Researchers critique EAP program delivery across institutions for being "patchworked" and "fragmented" (Fox et al., 2014; Hamp-Lyons, 2011). Fox et al. (2014) argue that, although EAP programs positively impact academic and social acculturation, they lack consistency in delivery. From my analysis of the scholarship, it seems that scholars disagree about the organizational structure of EAP programs. Murray and Christison (2011b) praise the freedom of EAP programs to set their own curricula according to students' needs. On the other hand, Li et al. (2012) critique EAP programs for adhering to fixed curricula that overlook the specific needs and contexts of their students. Thus, there appears to be a lack of consensus in understanding how EAP programs are designed and administered within institutions.

Fox et al. (2014) conducted a large-scale study in which 641 international students in 36 ELPs across 26 Canadian universities completed a questionnaire to examine their transitions from ESL or EAP programs to university. The study found that teaching general academic skills and strategies in language programs helps to increase students' academic engagement in university. However, the study neglects to clearly define "academic engagement," and it is unclear whether the skills and strategies the students found most useful to learn varies based on their academic disciplines. Cheng and Fox (2008) critique ELPs for focusing on general academic skills that are not discipline-specific. Indeed, international ELLs are often not solely focused on learning English. Rather, they are business, engineering, or science students, for example, who need to simultaneously develop language and academic skills to succeed in their

particular disciplines. With this in mind, more research is necessary to determine best practices for preparing international ELLs for specific academic disciplines.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Some scholars position ESP as a viable alternative and improvement to EAP (such as Fox et al., 2014; Hamp-Lyons, 2011). Fox et al. (2014) argue that EAP is too general and does not prepare international ELLs for the particular demands and contexts of specific academic disciplines. Similarly, Bakar (2015) holds that language demands vary across disciplines. For example, some disciplines require higher degrees of oral competency while others may focus more on writing. In order to be useful and practical, language programs, Richards (2001) reasons, should teach students the skills they will actually use in their academic programs.

Murray and Christison (2011b) identify English for Business and English for Engineering as two possibilities for ESP courses. Lightbown and Spada (2006) label such ESP offerings as "two for one" courses since students simultaneously pursue objectives related to both content and language. In order for this concurrent approach to be successful, collaboration between ESP course designers and discipline experts is essential (Cheng, Myles, & Curtis, 2004; Evans & Green, 2007; Murray & Christison, 2014). Through collaboration, ESP programs can better prepare international ELLs for the specific challenges they will encounter in their programs.

While integrated language and content courses may seem to best meet students' needs, there are some points of contention for program delivery. ESP programs must be highly adaptable and flexible to offer responsive programming based on current student enrolment (Richards, 2001). For example, the student population in a language program may be predominantly comprised of engineers one semester and business students the next. An additional challenge to offering ESP that I foresee is having students from different academic

disciplines in the same cohort. Furthermore, students' time in language programs is often very short, and programs regularly receive intakes of new students. Therefore, in order to consistently meet their students' needs, the burden is on language program administrators to constantly reassess and restructure their program curriculum and delivery. These challenges create financial and human resource difficulties that language programs struggle to overcome. As a result, it is most convenient for language programs to restrict their curricula to general academic language and skills that are applicable to everyone, but tailored to no one.

Lyster (2011) and Pica (2011) also critique integrated language and content programs for privileging content over language learning. Lyster (2011) contends that language learning often becomes relegated to a secondary position in favor of content in ESP programs. Another issue in ESP programs is staffing. Pica (2011) argues that language instructors are often unqualified to teach content, and content instructors are usually unqualified to teach language. Murray and Christison (2011b) further reflect on this conundrum, noting that just because a content instructor is fluent in a language does not mean that he/she can effectively teach it.

To combat this problem, Hansen (2000) suggests that language and content instructors co-teach integrated courses. This solution is not without complication, however. Some obstacles include fluctuating enrolment, scheduling conflicts, and lack of financial resources (Hansen, 2000; Murray & Christison, 2011b). Snow (2005) takes this critique a step further, analyzing how power operates in co-taught, integrated courses. She uses the analogy that content instructors are often the pilots of co-taught classes, while language instructors are the flight attendants. In other words, integrated classes tend to privilege content over language, leaving language instructors in assistant positions. They "help" the main instructor by offering add-on information as needed to support students' learning of content.

What remains, thus, is a tension between the potential for ESP programs to prepare international ELLs for their academic programs and obstacles related to program inflexibility, changing student enrolment, and staffing.

International Students' Readiness for University

Researchers recognize that international ELLs frequently struggle when transitioning from an ELP to university, reinforcing the need to initiate language program reform (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). Cheng and Fox (2008) acknowledge that not much is known about international students' academic acculturation experiences, although they agree with Smith and Khawaja (2011) that academic acculturation is a dynamic process in which cognitive, personal, social, and cultural factors interact.

Dooley (2010) interviewed thirteen international students who completed an EAP program in Australia to examine their experiences transitioning from a language program to university. The students were eligible to begin university studies upon completion of their EAP program so long as they met their institution's language proficiency requirements. After interviewing the participants twice, once when they completed the EAP program and again after their first semester in university, Dooley (2010) concluded that language proficiency is not a reliable indicator of one's potential for academic success. In other words, graduating from a language program does not necessarily mean that a student possesses the skills to succeed in academia. Bakar (2015) agrees that language proficiency provides only limited information about a student's actual readiness for university. Importantly, this finding does not mean that language proficiency is unrelated to academic success. In their discussion of academic acculturation, Smith and Khawaja (2011) argue that language difficulties can be a significant source of stress for international students, limiting their ability to adjust to a university's

environment and expectations. Nevertheless, one should not assume that graduating from an ELP indicates a students' readiness for university. In their research on international students' academic performances, Martirosyan, Hwang, and Wanjohi (2015) found that language proficiency test scores did not reliably predict academic success in university. Language proficiency may be a significant factor affecting academic transitions, but it is, evidently, not the only one.

To examine which academic skills international ELLs consider to be the most important, Cheng et al. (2004) collected surveys from 59 non-native English speaker graduate students and conducted follow-up interviews with 12 participants. The participants listed such skills as leading discussions, identifying main ideas, understanding subject-specific vocabulary, taking notes during a lecture, and understanding a text's purpose as the most valuable. Getting a different perspective on academic skills, Evans and Green (2007) interviewed university faculty who identified grammar, style, cohesion, and proofreading as major problem areas among international students. These studies, however, do not discuss if there is any relationship between what skills international students find the most important and/or difficult and what academic discipline they are enrolled in. My research sheds further light on the nature of this relationship.

When researchers do focus on discipline-specific language skills, they typically concentrate on the importance of international ELLs acquiring subject-specific vocabulary (Murray & Christison, 2011a, 2014; Richards, 2001; Snow, 2005). Murray and Christison (2014) distinguish between five types of vocabulary words: general words, high-frequency words, non-discipline-specific academic words, specialized discipline-specific words, and low-frequency words. In order to prepare international ELLs for their academic programs, ELPs must move beyond teaching high-frequency (Tier 1 vocabulary) or general academic (Tier 2 vocabulary) words to also include specialized and discipline-specific words (Tier 3 vocabulary) (Beck,

McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). Teaching international ELLs specialized academic vocabulary is closely aligned with the need for ELP curricula to look beyond BICS to develop learners' proficiency in CALP (Cummins, 1979). Richards (2001) notes that native speakers of English are able to recognize 17,000 vocabulary words. Within a single language course, it is not realistic for language learners to reach this level. Therefore, course designers should identify and select a sub-corpus of vocabulary that will best prepare students for their academic disciplines.

Finally, international ELLs must have a toolkit of learning strategies to apply to their academic programs. The Asian international students Bakar (2015) interviewed discussed having difficulty in their undergraduate and graduate university programs, in part, because of a lack of independent learning skills. Differences between Asian and Western learning cultures may account for this difficulty. Evans and Green (2007) surveyed 4932 undergraduate students in Hong Kong to examine the role of EAP in preparing them for university. Notably, these participants are not international students, but national Hong Kong students learning English. The students reported that they lacked strategies (such as looking up new vocabulary words in the dictionary or study skills) to use when they encountered difficulties in their courses. Therefore, the researchers conclude that language programs should go beyond language learning to help students develop and practice general learning and study skills. That way, students will be more self-sufficient and able to independently overcome the challenges of university.

Initiating Curriculum Reform in English Language Programs

At an institutional level, curricula operate to determine the content and structure of language programs (Richards, 2001). In *Designing Language Courses: A Guide for Teachers*, Graves (2000) offers a practical overview of curriculum development processes. She, first, invites course designers, who are often language instructors themselves, to reflect on their beliefs

about language. For instance, do instructors believe that language is primarily grammatical, or is meaning socially constructed? Beliefs about language, in turn, shape beliefs about language learning, making this reflective process a critical aspect of curriculum development. Graves further argues that course designers need to take into account the holistic, developmental, and unpredictable nature of language learning and be responsive towards students' needs and interests. Most importantly, she emphasizes that curricula must be written for a particular group of people in a particular place at a particular time. This view aligns with Murray and Christison's (2011b) vision of ELPs as being responsive to students' individual needs and goals.

Curriculum experts hold that the consideration of learners' needs is paramount to effective curriculum design. For example, Richards (2001) advises course designers to be aware of their learners' goals and motivations, reasoning that while teachers' objectives, in large part, determine what is brought to the course, learners' agendas determine what they take from the course. Graves (2000) reinforces that needs analysis is an ongoing process rather than a one-time, diagnostic activity. Educators must continuously reflect on the needs of their learners as courses progress in order to enact meaningful and responsive change. Graves (2000) outlines ten factors that affect students' needs: learner characteristics (age, gender, education, nationality, language, discipline), language proficiency, intercultural competence, interests, learning preferences (i.e. group vs. individual work), attitudes, goals and expectations, target context (consideration of when/where they will speak English), communicative needs, and language skills to be used (reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking). She cautions that needs analysis is subjective, making it crucial for course designers to reflect on their own beliefs and biases.

Of course, instructors and students are not the only groups to take into account when considering language program reform. Indeed, course designers have to appease various

stakeholders who may have competing interests. For instance, Graves (2000) identifies investors, government officials, and parents as key stakeholders outside of institutions' administrative structures. Often, Graves notes, language programs lack flexibility to reform because stakeholder demands outweigh students' needs. Richards (2001) agrees that educational reform is a highly political process. He argues that curricula are designed to support the agenda of whichever stakeholder holds the most power. As a result, curricula are not neutral documents, but are tools of both empowerment and marginalization, depending on whose interests are best served and represented. In order to cultivate a holistic and realistic understanding of how language programs operate, future research is well advised to include the viewpoints of various stakeholders, including external agencies, program administrators, instructors, and international ELLs.

Exploring International English Language Learners' Perspectives on Motivation and Investment in Language Learning

A thorough examination of the viewpoints of all stakeholders in internationalization is beyond the scope of my thesis. My primary objective is to better understand the perceptions and experiences of international ELLs who have transitioned from ELPs to academic programs. Learning more about the value that these students place on learning EAL will help further understandings of international ELLs' experiences studying in Canada.

Critiquing studies on international students for frequently positioning them as a homogenous group, Haque (2007) identifies motivation as a differentiating factor beyond country of origin or first language. Within my research context, the international ELLs have undergone the same general phenomenon of transitioning from an ELP to an academic program. However, their motivations for embarking on this journey of learning English and studying in Canada are uniquely their own.

Motivation for language learning, according to Tremblay and Gardner (1995), is dependent upon three factors: effort, desire, and attitude. Those motivated to learn EAL make efforts to learn because they desire to learn the language and have a positive attitude towards doing so. This explanation, however, does not explain where the desire and attitude to make an effort originates. To further explain motivation, Gardner and Lambert (1972), pioneers in the field, contrast instrumental and integrative motivation among language learners. In her influential book on the relationship between identity and language learning, Norton (2013) explains these terms. Those who are instrumentally motivated to learn English do so for pragmatic purposes such as finding a job or getting an education. In these cases, learning English is a means to an end. In contrast, those with integrative motivation want to learn English in order to become part of a community with those who speak the target language.

In their study on international ELLs' motivation, Lu and Berg (2008) surveyed 133 students taking intensive ESL classes in the United States. They found that instrumental motivation was higher among respondents compared to integrative motivation. Generally, the ESL student participants were motivated to learn English more so for the benefits (e.g. education, employment) they could reap from speaking English than a sense of personal interest in speaking the language or a desire to join a community of English-speakers.

While the participants in Lu and Berg's (2008) study chose to learn English in US post-secondary schools, the Spanish teenagers in Espinar Redondo and Ortega Martin's (2015) study on motivation were in their final year of compulsory EFL courses in secondary school. Reflecting on the value of learning English, many of the 51 participants in this study simultaneously experienced both instrumental and integrative motivation. On one hand, they recognized that speaking English could help them get a good job in the future. On the other hand,

they also wanted to travel and live in English-speaking countries in the future and befriend English speakers. Their motivations for learning English were rooted in both opportunity and community. Although these students were learning English in the classroom and speaking Spanish at home, many of them acknowledged the pervasive presence of English in their lives, from the movies they watched to the magazines they read to the songs they listened to. If these students did not learn English, they would not be able to access these aspects of popular culture, a notion previously discussed by Pennycook (2002).

The findings from Espinar Redondo and Ortega Martin's (2015) study on EFL students reveal more complex notions of motivation that complicate attempts to singularly categorize motivation as being either instrumental or integrative. Likewise, Haque (2007) supports a more dynamic view of motivation as involving many complex and interconnecting factors that sometimes overlap or conflict with one another. She uses the example of students who, on the surface, choose to study English for practical purposes, but who simultaneously problematize their learning by "critically locat[ing] their studies in English within a larger geopolitical context" (p. 96). This example aligns with neocolonialist theories that investigate the role of power in language learning and how learning EAL potentially contributes to the marginalization of international students within Western institutions (Majhanovich, 2014). Haque (2007) argues for ELPs to go beyond skills-based curricula to foster greater critical awareness among language learners about this aspect of the "hidden curriculum" within academia (p. 96). Also reflecting on ELP course design are Lu and Berg (2008) who assert that administrators need to prioritize their students' needs when designing instruction. Course designers, according to Lu and Berg, cannot understand their students' needs without, first, identifying their motivations.

In her seminal text, Norton Peirce (1995) complicates views on motivation and language learning. She critiques motivation theories for being incomplete, reasoning that motivation theories look at language learning from a psychological perspective and ignore how power, inequality, and identity influence language learning. In her view, studies on motivation problematically cast individuals as one-dimensional and existing outside of history. To account for individuals' social and historical identities, Norton Peirce proposes the notion of *investment*. Norton's (2013) investment theory holds that language learning is not just about language, but identity formation. While learning a language, individuals are "constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world," making change and contradiction vital aspects of investment (Norton, 2013, p. 50).

Norton Peirce (1995) situates her notion of investment within discussions of cultural capital as conceptualized by Bourdieu. She reasons that learners will be invested in language learning if they can gain access to a valuable resource that they could not previously attain. Similar to investing money in the stock market and expecting a greater payoff, language learners expect to profit from their investment. Individuals will invest in language learning if the target language will award them access to symbolic and material resources that will increase their own social power and cultural capital (Norton, 2013). Unlike instrumental motivation, which focuses on pragmatic purposes for language learning, investment extends ideas of language learning to consider learners' interactions with target language speakers and how these interactions ideologically impact learners' identities (Norton, 2013).

Exploring immigrant women's investment in learning English, Norton (2013) examines the relationship between language learning and constructions of self. For example, Martina, one of the women Norton studied, arrived in Canada with her husband and children unable to speak

English. Martina desired to learn English so that she could perform the many required duties involved with living in a new country such as securing a job and enrolling her children in school. Analyzing Martina's investment in English, Norton (2013) determined that her desire to learn English was tied to her identity as her family's primary caregiver. In the case of Eva, another immigrant woman, her investment in English was connected to a vision of who she could become. Eva came to Canada wanting the "same possibilities as Canadians" (Norton, 2013, p. 98). By learning English, Eva could pursue post-secondary education, find a job, and, ultimately, shed her conception of herself as an immigrant. In another study, Skilton-Sylvester (2002) also makes connections between immigrant women's investment in English and their identities as both mothers and professionals. In all of these cases, the women were not just motivated to learn English for some practical purpose; they were invested in language learning because of the ideas they held about who they were and, perhaps more importantly, who they could become.

Investment in language learning also extends from constructions of individual identity to constructions of community. In her study of Arab Muslim female ESL students in Saudi Arabia, Al Harthi (2014) found that participants' investments in English were connected to how they imagined English-speaking communities to be. Although they did not yet have involvement with English-speaking communities, the participants held an idealized vision of English-speakers as possessing freedom from social and cultural constraints. For Amal, learning English was a way to free herself from the social and cultural restrictions of being a Muslim female in Saudi Arabia. While Al Harthi (2014) could more clearly differentiate between motivation and investment, her study demonstrates how investment in English can be influenced by a desire to belong to a community whose values one upholds.

Learners' motivation and investment in learning English have important implications for international students studying in ELPs. While Lu and Berg (2008) argue that language curricula should be aligned with learners' motivations, Potowski (2007) focuses on considerations of students' investment in language learning. She holds that the goals of a language program must be designed to support learners' investment in the language. Otherwise, even if the program is well-organized, it is unlikely to meet students' expectations. Typically, ELPs integrate instruction on reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Norton (2013) discusses how students' investment in each of these skills may differ. For example, a student who wants to learn English to communicate with Canadians in social settings may be more invested in learning speaking skills rather than writing. Within the context of my study, learning more about the value that international ELLs place on learning English furthers understandings of their investment in language learning and how their investment is tied to their evolving senses of identity.

Drawing Conclusions from the Literature

Cross-cultural transitions are harbingers of significant change and adjustment for international students. My review of the scholarship indicates that transitioning from an ELP to an undergraduate or graduate program also carries major challenges for international students for whom English is not their first language (see also Cheng & Fox, 2008; Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011). Ostensibly designed to help prepare international ELLs for the linguistic and academic challenges of universities, scholars have critiqued ELPs for delivering overgeneralized curricula that overlook students' specific needs (see Fox et al., 2014; Hamp-Lyons, 2011). To prepare students for university, some researchers suggest that ELP curricula should be more closely aligned with the academic and language skills students will actually use in their disciplines (such as Cheng et al., 2004; Fox et al., 2014; Hamp-Lyons,

2011). In order to facilitate this, language programs would need to be restructured to emphasize teaching English for discipline-specific purposes as opposed to general academic purposes.

Zhou and Zhang (2014) highlight the absence of international students' voices within current research. Studies tend to lump international students together as a cohesive group, with their only differentiating factor being country of origin and first language. The generalizations continue within studies focused on international ELLs' transitions from language programs to university. Rarely do researchers link their analyses of students' experiences to the academic disciplines they are enrolled in. Thus, it is not known whether language programs are better tailored to some disciplines than others or how the transition experiences of business students, for example, compare to that of engineers. By examining international ELLs' perceptions of how well they feel their ELP prepared them for the academic challenges of their specific disciplines, my study sheds further light on this issue.

The second part of my research question focuses on exploring the personal values that international ELLs place on learning English. Typically, international students do not voluntarily elect to enrol in ELPs. Rather, their English language proficiency may be too low to begin their academic programs, so they are required to enrol in an ELP to further develop their language skills. Using Gardner and Lambert's (1972) theories of instrumental and integrative motivation, researchers have investigated language students' motivations for learning English (such as Espinar Redondo & Ortega Martin, 2015; Lu & Berg, 2008). Norton (2013) has extended research on motivation with her theory of *investment*, which takes into account the relationship between language learning and identity formation among female immigrants. The findings of my research extend Norton's language investment theory by exploring international ELLs' perceptions of learning English.

Employing theories of neocolonialism as my framework, I investigate international ELLs' perceptions of their sources of motivation and investment in learning English in relation to broader ideologies that inform and uphold the power of English. English language learners in previous studies have connected their desire to learn English with their constructions of identity (for example, Al Harthi, 2014; Norton, 2013; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002). These participants, on an implicit level, recognize that knowing English gives them the power of transformation. However, scholarship on motivation and investment in language learning does not indicate the degree to which international ELLs are aware of how the power of English as a *lingua franca* is ideologically constructed, rather than natural, and operates to marginalize outsiders who do not have access to it. Rather than focusing purely on the pragmatic function and effectiveness of ELPs, my research explores the extent to which international ELLs are aware of the ideologies of language learning, thus enriching understandings of international ELLs' perceptions of learning English and studying in Canada.

Chapter Three: Designing Research to Explore International English Language Learners' Perceptions

I undertook qualitative research to better understand international ELLs' experiences studying in Canadian universities. Because previous research in this area has, largely, focused on quantitative methodologies, not much is known about international ELLs' lived experiences in ELPs and academic programs (Curtin et al., 2013). By acknowledging the complexity of experience and variety of perspectives (Creswell, 2014), the use of qualitative methodologies provides a platform through which international ELLs can give voice to their experiences. Case study methodology provides a specific means through which to conduct this research.

Developing a Case Study

When I was an undergraduate education student, I remember being presented with case studies of various classroom-based scenarios. These case studies were often fictional accounts that provided just enough general details—a snapshot, really—for my classmates and me to dissect and discuss. Usually, they were open-ended to allow for various interpretations, and the details were removed from larger contexts. In addition to their use as teaching tools, Yin (2014) explains that case studies are also often used in medicine, social work, and law to maintain records. Scholars such as Stake (2003) and Yin (2014) recognize that many misunderstandings exist about case study research, particularly because the use of case studies as a learning and recordkeeping tool is in tension with its potential to be a sound research methodology.

Discussing the use of case studies in research, Flyvbjerg (2013) reflects on what he calls "the case study paradox" (p. 171). He notes the wide use of case studies within research across many fields, arguing that much of our collective knowledge about the world is a result of case study research. However, case studies often have a poor reputation within academia and are often

ignored as a credible research methodology. According to Flyvbjerg (2013), the low regard held for case studies is not an issue of merit, but is connected to a lack of clarity regarding what exactly constitutes a case study. Further, there is debate among scholars as to whether case study should be considered a methodology. For Stake (2003), case study is not a methodology, but a subject to study. For Merriam (1998), case study is an inquiry strategy, focused on process, context, and discovery. The goal of case study research, for Merriam, is to understand a situation and its meaning. Others, including Creswell (2013), Flyvbjerg (2013), and Yin (2014) recognize case study as not only a legitimate and credible methodology, but also the object of study and the final product of research. I ascribe to this view of case study to guide my research design, beginning with an exploration of case study as a methodology.

Case study research is typically intensive rather than extensive, according to Flyvbjerg (2013) and Yin (2014). Researchers select case study as a methodology when they want to study a social phenomenon in depth and focus on perspectives that are rooted in the complexities of dynamic, real-world contexts (Yin, 2014). Flyvbjerg (2013) praises case study research for its holistic approach and inclusion of rich details that allow researchers to learn about complex phenomena. Likewise, Stake (2003) identifies thick description, focused on the case's issues, contexts, and interpretations, as a defining characteristic of case studies. The "opportunity to learn" about a real-world issue is a central draw to case study research (Stake, 2003, p. 152). Case studies are best used to answer "how" or "why" questions because of their focus on thick description, although "what" questions are appropriate for case studies that are more exploratory and emergent in nature (Yin, 2014). When deciding whether to undertake a case study, researchers should remember that this approach is best used to investigate contemporary events when variables cannot be readily manipulated (Yin, 2014). Within case studies, the phenomenon

and the contexts within which they are situated are closely related and cannot be easily separated or distinguished (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014).

Like all methodologies, case studies have advantages and disadvantages. Those who use this methodology tend to value the ability to collect rich data within a flexible and emergent research design that is inclusive of context and process (Flyvbjerg, 2013; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). On the other hand, Flyvbjerg (2013) cautions that it can be difficult to draw generalizations from case studies when it is not known whether the case(s) represented are atypical or typical of larger populations. Since the research findings are rooted within the specific contexts of the case, the statistical significance of the findings is often unknown.

Nevertheless, case study methodology is appropriate for my investigation of international ELLs' perceptions of learning English in Ontario ELPs. Not only is internationalization a contemporary phenomenon within Canadian universities, but the use of case study presents an opportunity to learn how international ELLs perceive their own experiences. As the participants reflect on their experiences transitioning from ELPs to academic programs, their perceptions are likely informed by a variety of interacting contextual factors, including linguistic, cultural, social, economic, psychological, historical, geographic, and political. Case study research offers an avenue through which to learn from international ELLs' lived experiences in all their complexities. Although this study's findings cannot be generalized beyond the contexts of the case, I have clearly outlined the parameters of my case and documented the procedures I followed to enable future researchers to test the transferability of my findings to other ELP contexts.

While their approaches to case study research as a methodology may differ, scholars generally agree that defining the "case" to be studied is the researcher's most crucial task

(Flyvbjerg, 2013; Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2014). A topic is not a case. For example, it is not enough to say that my case is "international English language learners" or "English language programs." These are both subjects and topics, but they are not focused enough to represent a case. Yin (2014) acknowledges the open-endedness of framing a case, explaining that a case could focus on one person, a small group, a program, an event, or an organization. The options are seemingly limitless. The key, however, is to clearly define the parameters or boundaries of the case (Flyvbjerg, 2013; Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2014). According to Flyvbjerg (2013), setting boundaries for the unit of study is what makes a case a case study. Creswell (2012) agrees, defining a case study as "an in-depth exploration of a bounded system" (p. 465). Boundaries could be set according to time, place, or physical conditions. Setting boundaries for the case helps establish the scope of the study, particularly for data collection (Yin, 2014). In other words, boundaries help determine who or what are and are not part of the case. While boundaries are typically set during the research design phase, Yin (2014) cautions that these parameters need not be permanent. Indeed, he allows for the possibility that researchers may need to reconsider their boundaries once data collection is underway and they learn more about the phenomenon. This approach is in keeping with emergent and exploratory research designs.

To set the boundaries for my case, I have followed Thomas' (2011) advice that there are two parts to every case study: the subject (someone) and the object (something). In other words, case studies collect evidence of someone doing something. The "someone" of my case study is international ELLs who have graduated from an ELP in Ontario. These participants have all experienced the same phenomenon (something): they have all graduated from ELPs and are now enrolled in post-secondary academic programs in Ontario. Therefore, they are in the position to reflect back on their experiences learning English and transitioning to their particular

undergraduate or graduate program. My case study explores the perceptions of international ELLs to examine, first, how effectively they feel their ELPs prepared them for their academic disciplines and, second, what personal value they place on learning EAL.

ELPs focus on teaching general academic language skills to international ELLs; however, once they begin their academic programs, students need to use English for the specific purposes of their courses (Cheng and Fox, 2008). The language demands required of engineering students, for example, may be different from those required of business or science students, yet international ELLs receive the same initial language support regardless of discipline.

Additionally, undergraduate ELLs share language classes with graduate-level learners despite their programs having different expectations and demands. While comparing the perceptions of undergraduate and graduate-level international ELLs certainly warrants further study, the focus of my research is on academic discipline. Perhaps it is the case that ELPs, designed for everyone and tailored to no one, are better geared towards some academic disciplines than others.

Academic discipline, thus, becomes a major factor that could impact international ELLs' perceptions of learning English in Ontario ELPs. Therefore, it makes sense to break down my single case of international ELLs transitioning from ELPs to post-secondary programs into smaller subunits of analysis based on academic discipline. Such an approach makes my research design an embedded case study.

Thomas (2011) and Yin (2014) are careful to distinguish embedded single case studies from multiple case studies. A multiple case study focuses on replication and includes two or more distinct and contextually independent cases. For example, I might conduct a multiple case study to compare international ELLs' perceptions of their ELPs in Ontario and British Columbia. By contrast, as Thomas (2011) explains, an embedded—or *nested*—case study derives meaning

and integrity from the wholeness of the wider case. In other words, the case can be best understood as a whole by breaking down and analyzing its various parts. Using an embedded design, my main unit of analysis is international ELLs' perceptions of learning English in ELPs. However, drawing from Yin (20014), I have grouped or clustered my participants based on their academic programs (engineering, business, science) to create subunits of analysis that enable me to analyze how, if at all, perceptions of ELPs vary across disciplines. My analyses of these subunits help inform my overall analysis of the case. According to Thomas (2011) and Yin (2014), embedded case studies allow for more extensive analysis within a single case by capitalizing on opportunities to compare and contrast each subunit.

Researchers must also consider their intentions when designing case studies (Creswell, 2012). Depending on intention, single-case studies can be intrinsic or instrumental (Stake, 2003). For intrinsic case studies, the particularities of the case itself make it worthy of researcher attention. Perhaps the case is atypical or somehow significant in and of itself to warrant study. Here, researchers are interested in the case itself rather than the phenomenon or possible theory it represents. Conversely, researchers who design instrumental case studies are more interested in the phenomenon than the case (Stake, 2003). Although researchers following instrumental designs still value the contextual details and particularities of the individual case, their intention is to, ultimately, use the case to gain insight into a larger issue.

Based on my intention to better understand international ELLs' perceptions of learning English in Ontario ELPs, my case study is instrumental. My main interest is to explore larger issues related to international students and internationalization such as transitioning from an ELP to a post-secondary academic program and the value that international ELLs place on learning English. Therefore, my intent is consistent with the purpose of instrumental case studies: by

interviewing a group of international ELLs who have transitioned from an ELP to post-secondary programs, I can learn more about these phenomena through their experiences.

Stake (2003) argues that a case study should not "represent the world, but . . . represent the case" (p. 156). With this in mind, I recognize that, although I can learn more about issues related to internationalization through my case study, I cannot assume that my participants' perceptions and experiences represent those of other international ELLs from, for example, the same ELP, academic program, or country of origin. Yin (2014) reminds researchers that sample sizes in case studies are typically too small to be representative of larger populations. Despite having experience with the same phenomena, I respect that my participants will not necessarily share the same views, reactions, or experiences as each other. As such, my findings should not be generalized to populations beyond the contexts of this study. Not being able to generalize behooves the following question: If case study findings are limited to only the cases themselves, how can case study research further understandings of international ELLs' experiences in a meaningful and potentially useful way?

Yin (2014) advises case study researchers to focus on making analytical rather than statistical generalizations. Generalizations of the statistical variety focus on using data collected from a sample to make inferences about the larger population. For example, if I found that many of the participants in my case study reported having difficulty learning subject-specific vocabulary in their academic programs, a statistical generalization might assert that this problem could be extrapolated to a larger population. Yin (2014), however, critiques such generalizations, reasoning that case studies are not "sampling units" representative of larger populations (p. 40). Instead, he advises case study researchers to focus on analytical generalizations which he describes as the lessons learned from the study. These lessons could include insights on

theoretical concepts or overarching themes and principles that could be applicable beyond the immediate contexts of the case. When reflecting on the lessons learned from my case study, I focused on making analytical rather than statistical generalizations.

Because not much is known about international ELLs' perceptions of learning English in ELPs, my case study is best described as exploratory. Exploratory case studies are appropriate when the researcher seeks to investigate an issue about which little is known (Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2014). Of the question words *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*, my research questions are driven by the desire to know *what*. *What are international ELLs' perceptions of how well their ELPs prepared them for their academic programs? What personal value do they place on learning EAL?* Yin (2014) recognizes "what" as the question that drives exploratory research. Once international ELLs' perceptions are more understood, recommendations can be made about how, if necessary, to reform ELPs to better meet students' needs. Before the *how* can be addressed, the *what* is a crucial first line of inquiry. Exploratory research provides a means through which to conduct such preliminary studies that focus on listening to participants rather than presenting or testing the researcher's preconceived notions against them (Thomas, 2011).

My research questions focus on exploring international ELLs' perceptions. The participants have articulated their perceptions that I subsequently transcribed, coded, organized, analyzed, and sought to represent. I have undertaken this work with a constructivist's worldview. Typical within qualitative research, constructivists acknowledge that meaning is subjective and influenced by a variety of complex, interconnecting social, historical, cultural, and political factors (Creswell, 2014). I value that my participants' views represent their personal truths while acknowledging that various contextual factors may influence how they construct their perspectives and experiences. Further, I recognize the active role that I play as a researcher in

representing and, indeed, constructing the participants' perceptions throughout the case. Merriam (1998) argues that data cannot represent themselves. Indeed, I cannot simply capture the experiences of my participants as an objectively knowable truth. Rather, I transmit what they share through myself, thereby subjecting their perceptions to my own interpretations that are shaped, as I explained in chapter one, by the myriad social, cultural, political, and historical contexts in which I situate myself. Stake (2003) helpfully summarizes the conundrum researchers face: "Even when empathic and respectful of each person's realities, the researcher decides what the case's *own story* is, or at least what will be included in the report. Less will be reported than was learned" (p. 144). In the next section, I detail how I used semi-structured interviews and document analysis to learn about international ELLs' perceptions of learning English and then analyzed the data and reported the case's story in a respectful and valid manner.

Method: Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews provide participants a forum in which to share their perceptions of transitioning from ELPs to academic programs. Because perceptions are an internal construct rather than an externally visible action or behaviour, interviews are a justifiable and appropriate method for data collection in my qualitative case study (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). The richness of interview data enables researchers to acquire an in-depth understanding of the research topic through the voices of those experiencing the phenomenon. Interviews are best conducted with participants who feel comfortable and able to articulate their perceptions and reconstruct their experiences in detail for the researcher (Creswell, 2012).

Using interviews for data collection does have limitations. For one, interviews are typically conducted in a formal rather than natural setting. As such, participants may only provide information they think the researcher wants to hear, and their inability to recall or reflect

upon their experiences may result in the collection of inaccurate information (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). Further, the very act of speaking to a researcher may affect what information participants choose to divulge, limiting the researcher's ability to construct a complete and accurate rendering of the participants' lived experiences. Despite these potential limitations, semi-structured interviews remain a justifiable method of data collection for my research. Other methods of data collection such as observations or the use of physical artifacts would not grant me access to the internal insights of international ELLs and the meanings and values they ascribe to their experiences.

Participant Recruitment and Sampling

In December 2015, I visited two groups of students who were in their final semester in an Ontario ELP. I introduced myself and my research interests to them. Under no obligation, those who expressed interest in potentially participating in my research project provided me with their names and contact information. Once I acquired approval from Lakehead University's Research Ethics Board, I contacted these potential participants via email to invite them to my study. By this time, the students had graduated from their ELPs and had completed at least one semester of their undergraduate or graduate programs in Ontario. Therefore, they were in a position to reflect on their experiences transitioning from an ELP to an academic program. In my email, I provided information about my research project and invited them to share this invitation with other international ELLs who have graduated from ELPs before starting their academic programs. The use of snowball or referral sampling helped to broaden my recruitment efforts (Yin, 2014).

I emailed my invitation to 22 students who gave me their contact information during my class visits, and seven confirmed their interest and willingness to participate in this study. Two additional students were referred to me by other participants. These nine participants were

enrolled in engineering, business, and science programs, so I organized my subunits of analysis around these disciplines. The final composition of my embedded case study depended on which academic program each participant was enrolled in and could not be finalized until participant recruitment was underway. This decision is consistent with emergent research designs in which various aspects of the research process may need to be modified as the researcher learns more about the research problem and participants (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014).

To round out each group, I used my professional contacts to further recruit two of my former students and four ELP graduates with whom I was professionally acquainted. Email and the private messaging function of Facebook were my primary methods of communication during the recruitment process. In total, I interviewed 15 international ELLs, with five participants in each subunit. This sampling is relatively consistent with international enrolment trends within Canada (AUCC, 2014). The majority of my participants are enrolled in undergraduate programs; four participants are graduate students.

When selecting participants for qualitative studies, King and Horrocks (2010) advise researchers to prioritize diversity in sampling. Recruiting participants who can highlight "meaningful differences in experience" strengthen a study by representing the complexities of the phenomenon in question (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 29). Creswell (2013) suggests using purposeful maximal sampling to select participants who have varying perspectives on the research problem. While my participants underwent the same general phenomenon of transitioning from ELPs to post-secondary programs, their academic disciplines represent a major point of difference that could impact how well they feel their ELPs prepared them for post-secondary studies. Therefore, I purposefully selected participants in engineering, business, and various science programs to form three subunits of analysis within my case study.

Notably, Stake (2003) cautions against confusing variety with representativeness. Therefore, I take heed that, although my case study includes participants enrolled in a variety of programs, the participants cannot, and should not, be called on to speak for *all* ELP graduates enrolled in the same academic program.

Data Collection

When participants confirmed their interest, I sent them a follow-up email to schedule a time for us to meet for a one-on-one, semi-structured interview. Attached to this email was a letter of information about the study (see Appendix A) that included an overview of the study's objectives and details of how the data I collect from them would be used and what their rights as participants are. Giving special consideration to the fact that English is not the participants' native language, I invited them to contact me if they had any questions about this information.

Articulating the complexities of their perceptions in English can be a demanding task for ELLs who not only have to translate their abstract thoughts into language, but into a language that is not native to them (Seidman, 2013). To combat potential difficulties, I provided the participants with the interview questions beforehand (see Appendix B). That way, they had time to reflect on their experiences and think about their responses prior to meeting with me. This strategy is particularly beneficial when interviewing participants for whom English is an additional language. Notably, all of the participants were graduates of ELPs, so it was reasonable to assume that their oral English proficiency was strong enough for them to have a conversation with me about their experiences studying in Canada.

I met with most participants in a private room on a university campus. Two participants had already returned to their home countries, so I used Skype to conduct their interviews. Interviews were between 25 and 70 minutes in length. Before beginning each interview, I chatted

informally with each participant to establish rapport, and I explained that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions. I reiterated that the interview was not a test of their language skills, but an opportunity for them to share their experiences learning English and studying in Canada. I invited them to take their time to formulate their answers and to feel free to seek clarification over any words or questions of which they were unsure.

Research ethics may vary across countries, so I explained how participants are protected in Canadian research projects. After reviewing the information, I provided them with a hard copy of the Letter of Information, and I asked them to sign the Participant Consent form (Appendix C). Participants had the right to refuse to answer any questions, and they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Participants were invited to choose a pseudonym by which I would refer to them when collecting, storing, and reporting on my research. Most of the participants opted to use their given or self-chosen English name, but I have used pseudonyms to refer to those participants who requested anonymity.

With the participants' permission, I used my laptop to record each interview. To avoid leading participants during the interviews, I asked open-ended questions that allowed them to, as Creswell (2012) puts it, "best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings" (p. 218). King and Horrocks (2010) remind researchers that their most important role in the interview process is to *listen* to their participants. My priority was to offer a platform through which participants could voice their perceptions of their ELPs and experiences learning in Canada. Therefore, I used the interview guide as a resource to structure the interviews, but I was flexible and willing to take our conversations in different directions depending on what the participants shared. To encourage greater depth in participant

responses, I asked follow-up questions as warranted, as encouraged by King and Horrocks (2010). I also used clarifying prompts when participants had difficulty understanding a question.

After meeting with each participant, I listened to the audio-recording and transcribed the interview. The transcriptions are mostly verbatim with some minor revisions to facilitate readability. Following that, I emailed the transcript to each participant for member-checking. This process is part of a larger protocol to ensure the validity of my research. Member-checking gave participants the opportunity to verify that I accurately captured their responses and to add any clarifying information (Yin, 2014).

Data Analysis

After transcribing the interviews, I used both inductive and deductive processes to code and analyze the collected data. First, guided by Creswell (2014), I read through all of the interview transcripts to gain a sense of the general ideas shared by participants, making margin notes of significant points. Using an inductive process, I then compiled my margin notes to create a preliminary list of themes. Using this list, I hand-coded the data, identifying descriptive information about my participants and categorizing major overarching themes for analysis. After coding the data according to major themes, I engaged in deductive analysis by reviewing the data to look for both additional supporting and refuting evidence for each theme (Yin, 2014).

I then created a digital chart to organize and combine the quotes I highlighted under each theme as a way to visually represent my findings. I categorized my themes into three sections: background/contextual information about participants, themes related to my first research question, and themes related to my second research question. Further, I separated participant responses for each theme according to their subunit (engineering, business, science). I noted connections between these themes that enabled me to foster a richer understanding of

international ELLs' perceptions of learning English and studying in Canada. The first iteration of my chart was a whopping 70 pages, covering 47 individual themes. I then undertook the challenging task of narrowing down my themes to form my case and answer my research questions. Although I found it difficult to let go of much of the data I collected, Stake's (2005) recognition that "[l]ess will be reported than was learned" (p. 144) offered some comfort. Throughout this process, I consulted with my thesis supervisor for feedback and member-checking of codes. I also kept a research journal to track the steps I took, record developing insights, and reflect on my experiences as a budding researcher.

Yin (2014) advises that analyses of case studies should produce "rich and full" explanations or descriptions (p. 134). Since my case study is embedded, in that it includes international ELLs in engineering, business, and science programs, my analyses of the data gathered from interviews occurred in two stages in order to produce a final account that is both rich in depth and full in scope. Drawing from Yin (2014), I coded and categorized themes within each subunit to separately describe and analyze the perceptions of engineering, business, and science students on their ELPs. Then, I pooled the findings, noting similarities and differences across the disciplines, to produce a collective, larger unit of analysis from which overall conclusions could be drawn (Yin, 2014). This method of analysis allowed for connections to be made between international ELLs' perceptions of learning English in ELPs and the academic disciplines in which they are enrolled.

Using Document Analysis for Data Triangulation

One of the defining characteristics of case study research is analyses that are focused on rich and thick description of the case (Stake, 2003). To produce such a description, scholars advise case study researchers to draw on multiple methods of data collection and sources from

which to gather information (Stake, 2003; Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) cautions against using only one source of evidence in case study research. By interviewing 15 international ELLs, I was able to access multiple perspectives to explore whether participants' observations are shared by others or are unique to their own individual circumstances (Stake, 2003). The use of an embedded design that explores the perceptions of participants across three academic disciplines is another strategy of data triangulation.

Although the focus of my study is to learn more about international ELLs' perceptions of their ELPs, an outcome of my research is to make recommendations to university and language program administrators about reforms they could implement to better meet the needs of their students. These suggested reforms are drawn, primarily, from interview data. To inform these recommendations, several interview questions focused on having the participants reflect on what they learned in their ELPs. In order to strengthen and substantiate the feedback gathered from international ELLs, I also analyzed the curriculum documents of the language program that 14 of the 15 participants attended. Document analysis, thus, serves as a further means of data triangulation. Notably, I was able to access these curriculum documents through my professional association with this ELP. To protect the program's anonymity, I have not included identifying information or direct quotations in my analyses of these documents.

According to Yin (2014), document analysis is a useful method to corroborate data collected from interviews. For example, if the interview findings indicate that participants felt ill-prepared to give presentations in their university courses, I could analyze the extent to which presentation skills are included in the ELP curriculum. This ensures that the recommendations I make are situated within and informed by current ELP curricula. In the interviews, participants explained how well they feel their ELPs prepared them for the challenges of their academic

disciplines, including academic language proficiency and general and discipline-specific skills. When analyzing participants' views on this question, I again, refer to the curriculum documents to determine the extent to which these areas are addressed. Because my recommendations for program reform are primarily, and foremost, informed by the perceptions of my participants, the interview data determined the areas of the ELP curricula that I analyzed. Therefore, the use of document analysis as a method of data collection is part of my emergent research design.

Like all research methods, document analysis has both benefits and drawbacks. Yin (2014) acknowledges that documents are unchanging sources that researchers can access repeatedly without being disruptive. Analyzing documents is useful for making inferences about issues and acquiring direction for further research. Researchers should take heed, though, that documents are not objective artefacts that necessarily reveal the truth about an issue. Rather, as Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014) agree, documents may not accurately tell the whole story. Moreover, researchers must remember that documents were not written for the purpose of research. Indeed, Yin (2014) reminds researchers that documents are "written for some specific purpose and some specific audience *other than* those of the case study being done" (p. 108). The document's author aims to achieve a particular objective by communicating a particular message to the document's audience. Researchers should, therefore, go beyond taking a document at face value to analyze the contexts and conditions under which the document was produced and identify potential biases that the document's author(s) may hold.

I acknowledge that educational curricula are not neutral or objective documents. As previously discussed, Graves (2000) and Richards (2001) both recognize that ELP curricula are typically written for various stakeholders such as university administrators or program accreditors rather than for students. Additionally, the learning objectives stated in a curriculum

may not reliably indicate what individual instructors actually taught in their courses. Therefore, analyzing a curriculum document on its own is not enough to determine whether ELPs are preparing language learners for their academic programs. Hearing from ELP clients, international ELLs themselves, is an invaluable way to determine whether and how their needs are being met.

Dealing with Limitations

The purpose of my study is to explore international ELLs' perceptions of learning English in ELPs and studying in Canada. The potential limitations of this project are associated with researcher positionality and participant selection.

As an English language instructor working within Ontario ELPs, I pursued graduate studies in education, in part, to rigorously examine my growing critiques of post-secondary language support programs. Therefore, I do not enter this research project as an outsider without preconceived notions or biases. To maintain integrity and transparency, I have clearly stated how I position myself in relation to my research in the introductory chapter. When collecting data, it was important to not allow my own perceptions of ELPs to impact my interactions with participants, including the lines of questioning I pursued. In other words, I sought to avoid the verification bias in which researchers look for evidence to confirm their preconceived notions (Flyvbjerg, 2013). To avoid bias, I asked open-ended questions and invited participants to member check their transcribed interviews. As well, I included both supporting and contrary evidence when analyzing the data collected from interviews and curriculum documents, making analytical generalizations, and answering my research questions (Yin, 2014). To ensure the reliability of my research, I have clearly documented all procedures, instruments, and protocols used within this project (Yin, 2014).

One of my motivations to undertake this study was to add a few of the voices of international ELLs to the scholarship on internationalization in higher education. Notably, all voices represented in this study are male. Several females were invited to the study, but they either did not respond to the invitation or were unavailable due to exam and travel schedules. Whether their sex and/or gender influenced invited students' decisions to participate or not is unknown. Exploring the perceptions of female international ELLs is a goal for future research.

While my research is situated within neocolonialist theories that critique the privileging of English within education, my interviews were conducted in English. Likely, only participants who felt confident in their oral English skills volunteered to participate in the study. As a consequence, my research may not include the voices of international ELLs who have rich stories to share, but who do not feel confident or able to translate those stories into English. Therefore, I feel a sense of contradiction within my research. On one hand, I am critical of the privileged position that English holds as an international *lingua franca*. On the other hand, by conducting and reporting on my research in English, I am participating in the privileging of English within academia. This potentially, and problematically, sends the message to international ELLs that their voices can only be heard when they speak in English. To address this contradiction, I could have my thesis translated to communicate the findings in my participants' first languages. Additionally, future researchers might consider employing translators to interview international ELLs in their native languages.

In the next chapter, I introduce the participants who compose each of my three subunits and form the heart of this study. I then report on the major findings of my embedded case study, focusing on (a) participants' perceptions of how well they feel their ELPs prepared them for their academic disciplines and (b) the personal value they place on learning English.

Chapter Four: Learning from the Experiences of International English Language Learners

Three subunits—engineering, business, and science—formed the basis of my embedded case study, exploring international ELLs' perceptions of learning English after transitioning from ELPs to post-secondary programs. 15 international ELLs—five in each subunit—participated in this project.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the key findings from the semi-structured interviews I conducted with 15 international ELLs. First, I introduce the participants, allowing readers to get to know them on an individual level. Such details help to contextualize the study's findings and differentiate participants' individual characteristics beyond that of academic discipline or country of origin. While the majority of participants wished to be referred to by their given or chosen English names, when requested, pseudonyms have been used to protect participant anonymity. From there, I divide the findings into two sections to address both of my research questions. When appropriate, I separate the findings by subunit to determine whether and/or how academic discipline (engineering, business, science) impacts participants' perceptions. I also make connections between participant responses and the curriculum documents from the ELP that the vast majority of participants attended.

Engineering: Leo, Jack, Pablo, Tom, and Sean. Leo, Tom, and Sean are from China, and their parents pay their tuition fees. Both Leo and Tom attended Canadian high schools before beginning their undergraduate degrees in Ontario. Sean completed his undergraduate degree in China and is currently pursuing a master's degree in electrical engineering. Jack and Pablo are from Brazil and are sponsored by the country's Science without Borders program. They will stay in Canada for 18 months before returning to Brazil to finish their undergraduate degrees.

With the exception of Leo, these participants spent one thirteen-week semester in an ELP, which they were required to attend because of their language proficiency test scores. Leo spent three semesters in an ELP, including two semesters in the program's advanced level. Although these participants did not voluntarily elect to enrol in an ELP, they generally acknowledged their need for the program and appreciated the learning experience.

Business: Abdul, Marvin, Ahmed, Austin, and Ali. Three participants, Abdul, Ahmed, and Ali, are from Saudi Arabia, and they all received government-sponsored scholarships for their undergraduate programs. Both Abdul and Ali studied English in other Canadian provinces before arriving in Ontario to complete their ELP and begin post-secondary programs. The other two participants, Marvin and Austin, are in graduate programs. Marvin completed his undergraduate degree jointly in China and the United Kingdom and then spent two years working in Shanghai as a financial analyst. Prior to arriving in Ontario, Austin completed his undergraduate degree in China before moving to Florida to study hospitality and work at Disney World. Marvin is paying his tuition himself while Austin splits costs with his parents.

Marvin, Ahmed, and Austin were in an ELP for one semester. While Ahmed completed the full 13-week semester, Marvin and Austin were placed in an eight-week summer intensive program. Abdul spent two semesters in the ELP, and Ali was enrolled in the ELP for three semesters, beginning at the intermediate level. Marvin is the only participant in the study who voluntarily chose to study English in an ELP before beginning his academic program.

Science: Italo, Jason, Walter, Clesio, and John. Each participant is enrolled in a different branch of science: geology (Italo), computer science (Jason), biology (Walter), physics (Clesio), and forestry (John). Italo, Walter, and Clesio are from Brazil while Jason and John are from China. Each participant attended university in their home countries prior to continuing their

post-secondary education in Ontario. John is a graduate student, and the others are in undergraduate programs. Like the Brazilian engineering participants, the science students from Brazil are also part of Science without Borders. Their time in Canada is limited to 18 months at which point they must return to their home countries to complete their university programs. At the time of the interviews, Italo and Clesio had already returned to Brazil.

Jason completed his undergraduate degree in China and pays his own tuition in Canada. John began an undergraduate forestry program in China, which he intends to finish in Canada. All participants were required to attend an ELP because of their language proficiency test scores. Italo and Clesio spent two semesters in an ELP while the others only stayed for one semester.

Appendix D provides a chart that summarizes key biographical details about each participant.

Making connections across the subunits. Participants within each subunit reported varying circumstances that led them to study EAL in Ontario, including prior post-secondary experience, scholarship opportunities, and family support. Their paths after completing an ELP also diverged. Some students began undergraduate programs, others continued the programs they started in their home countries, and others pursued graduate studies. Additionally, the sojourns of the Brazilian participants were limited to 18 months while others intended to stay in Canada for several years to finish their degrees or possibly look for work. These differing circumstances combine to make each participant's perceptions unique and varied.

Across the subunits, almost all participants reported having extensive experience learning English in their home countries. Only Ali and Abdul arrived in Canada with almost no English skills. All participants expressed dissatisfaction, though, with learning English in their home countries. Their learning was typically limited to basic grammar, vocabulary, and language

proficiency test preparation; they did not have opportunities to engage in authentic spoken or written communication in English. Most participants agreed that they did not possess the linguistic capabilities to begin their post-secondary programs when they arrived in Ontario. Only Austin felt confident with his academic language skills because he had taken a two-year academic English course in China. Overall, even though enrolling in an ELP was mandatory for all of the participants, except for Marvin, they acknowledged their need to improve their language skills and appreciated the opportunity to study in an ELP.

With the exception of Italo, who completed a language program at an Ontario college, all participants attended the same ELP in a medium-sized Ontario university, although they were enrolled in the program at different times, in different classes, and with different teachers. The program was recently accredited by Languages Canada, an organization which governs language education. This ELP program is divided into five levels, based on students' proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Levels one through three are for beginning-intermediate students and focus on building basic language skills and introducing academic study skills. Levels four and five are for advanced students and focus on preparing ELLs for university. Notably, students in level five, which all of my participants completed, have the opportunity to take an undergraduate course while they are in the ELP. Most of my participants did not take an academic class while in level five, instead focusing full-time on learning English.

Each participant graciously shared his perceptions of learning English and studying in Canada, providing invaluable insights that enabled me to answer my research questions. In the next sections, I detail the major findings of this study.

Findings for Research Question 1: What are international ELLs' perceptions of how well English language programs prepared them for their academic disciplines?

In their interviews, participants paid considerable attention to the roles their ELPs played in helping to prepare them for the demands of post-secondary education in Canada. From the data collected from these international ELLs, the following topics emerged as significant: (a) transitioning from an ELP to an academic program; (b) reflections on the prospect of English for Specific Purposes programs, which teach language and academic content concurrently; and (c) feelings of being at a disadvantage to domestic students even after completing an ELP. As part of my case study design, references to ELP curricula are made when applicable to substantiate participant responses.

(a) Transitioning from an ELP to an academic program. Although they recognized that ELPs simultaneously serve several functions, including assisting with social and cultural integration, all participants agreed that the primary purpose of such programs is to prepare international students for the demands of post-secondary education in Canada. This view is reflected in the curriculum documents from the ELP that 14 of the 15 participants attended. The documents state that the purpose of the language program is to prepare students to succeed at university by improving necessary academic English skills. Notably, these documents do not align learning objectives with specific academic disciplines, but focus on building general language and academic skills that are ideally applicable across disciplines. However, it is unclear what process the curriculum designers undertook, and which parties they consulted, to identify which skills are actually necessary for success and whether these skills differ for engineering, business, or science students, for example.

During the interviews, I asked participants to describe what they had to do in their undergraduate and graduate programs. This question helped determine the extent to which academic discipline might impact the academic and language skills students need to learn in their ELPs to be adequately prepared for the demands of their programs. Additionally, now that participants had all completed at least one semester of their academic programs, they were able to reflect on the extent to which their ELP authentically prepared them for the actual language and academic skills that are necessary in their courses.

Engineering. Participants commented on the importance of possessing strong mathematics skills to succeed in their civil, mechanical, and electrical engineering programs. Jack argued that having limited English skills would not impede his ability to complete his engineering assignments because they focus mostly on math, and, as he says, "numbers are the same everywhere." In his master's program, Sean agreed that math skills are paramount, although the demands of his program may change as he progresses with his studies. He also listed knowledge of specialized computer software and the ability to conduct labs and complete projects as required skills. He gave the example of working in a team to design a machine, conduct simulations, collect data, and deliver a presentation of their findings as a typical engineering project. The ELP curriculum does not prepare students to use specialized software or focus on math skills, but such a project also requires an integration of several general language and academic skills, including teamwork, public speaking, and summarizing key points. All of these skills are included as objectives in the ELP curriculum, enabling international ELLs to apply these learned skills to new situations.

Leo, however, felt a disconnect between the writing tasks he practiced in the ELP and the writing skills he required to complete lab assignments in engineering. He noted that the writing

tasks in the ELP were more personal and focused on developing and defending an opinion. In contrast, his lab reports required him to analyze and synthesize collected data:

I think the language school only provides something like right or false answers. They give you questions, and you choose right or false then write your supports. But in the university, you have to write lab reports, and the data is already on there. The truth is there. So, you have to get closer to the truth. Not to prove something. As you can see, it's two different ways to express things. The writing is totally different. Writing lab reports is hard.

Sean felt a similar sense of disconnect between the tasks he completed at the ELP and his engineering courses. Describing his transition to university, Sean said,

First, I thought it was a little bit hard because what we learned in the ELP, most of them are focusing on English, the grammar or the writing or reading. When we came to the campus, all this is, for me, about mathematics and mechanical knowledge. . . . From the ELP to campus, it's a hard time to change my mind.

Unlike Sean, Pablo did not experience difficulties shifting his mind from studying English to engineering. He reported feeling "very well" prepared for his electrical engineering program.

Similarly, Jack felt his transition from the ELP to civil engineering was seamless:

I felt prepared. When I finished the course, I made a trip to Cuba. But there was just Canadians there. I just spoke English there, so I could see that I was prepared because I could speak. I could listen to everything they were telling me and understand. So I think I was prepared.

Interestingly, Jack based his readiness for university on his increased confidence to interact socially with Canadians. Such informal interactions would likely rely on basic

interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) rather than the cognitive academic language that Jack would need to use in his program (CALP) (Cummins, 1979). He went on to further explain his readiness to begin studying engineering in Canada:

Because I am in the fourth year in Brazil, I know how a university works. Maybe for the first-year students, it's going to be more complicated. But all the university structure was okay for me because I was used to the structure.

For Jack, the similarities he perceived between Canadian and Brazilian education systems helped to ease his transition to university. The ELP was not his only source of academic preparation; four years of university experience acquired in Brazil helped prepare him to study in Canada.

Tom shared a similar perspective to Jack, noting that his prior educational experiences eased his transition to university: "In China, we studied the skills in university in high school, especially math, physics, and chemistry. The physics and math we learn now is our grade 10 or 11 skills." Beyond what they learned at the ELP, participants' prior education and the similarities between the structure of their academic programs in their home countries and in Canada influenced the ease with which they began academic studies in Canada.

Business. Like the engineering students, several participants in this subunit acknowledged the need for strong math skills to succeed in their program. Ahmed, who began his undergraduate program immediately after graduating from high school in Toronto, noted that his first-year assignments were mostly math-based. He anticipated using the reading, writing, and speaking skills he learned in the ELP in upper-year business courses, though. His transition to university may have also been eased because he completed secondary school in Ontario. For his part, Abdul began his post-secondary education in Ontario as a biology student in university. Because of scholarship complications, he later transferred to a college leadership program. He

noted that his courses required knowledge of math, science, and statistics, although he also needed strong communication skills to express his knowledge via written reports and reflections.

Indeed, the participants within this subunit generally acknowledged that their programs required strong language skills, including identifying main ideas in lectures, taking notes, writing cohesive paragraphs, and delivering presentations, all of which are included as objectives in the ELP curriculum. In addition to learning writing skills at the ELP, Ali and Ahmed noted that they took a business-writing course in their first year of academic studies. This course is designed not just for international students, but for all first-year business students, indicating program awareness of the importance of offering discipline-specific support to all incoming students.

Compared to the engineering participants, the participants within this subunit reported having greater difficulties transitioning from the ELP to their respective business programs. Abdul felt that he had not received enough practice in the ELP to feel confident writing and delivering presentations in his program: "It's not enough. [My instructor] just gave us one essay and presentation. It's not enough. . . . We have to get students more, more educated. Knowing how to go to the academic program. Give him everything that we have." He also stated a need for ELPs to go beyond five-paragraph essays when teaching writing, saying, "We wrote essays, but not everything is essays in a college or university."

When I asked what the ELP could have done differently to prepare him to study business, Abdul asserted that he did not blame the program itself. Rather, he stated, "English is a language, not a course." In this powerfully succinct statement, Abdul recognized that learning academic English in a short period is not a feasible or realistic expectation. Indeed, Cummins et al. (2012) assert that academic content fluency can take up to seven years to develop, signalling the need to provide international ELLs with more extensive sources of language support.

Like Abdul, Ahmed and Austin also felt overwhelmed when they started their programs. Ahmed shared, "I started university, and my listening wasn't that good. After three or four weeks, I just remembered everything. The beginning was difficult for me, but then I survived." Notably, Ahmed's difficulties were concentrated at the beginning of the semester. As he adjusted to the structure and expectations of his courses, his concerns eased. Likewise, Austin worried that his English skills would not be initially strong enough to succeed in a competitive program:

I feel kind of like, before I entered my MBA program, I was kind of lost. . . . I felt under pressure because I think, for English itself, it's kind of different. What you're learning in university is quite technical. English skills are just one aspect of the requirements. In university, you have to learn all kinds of listening, analysis, and all the skills that are based on your English skills. English skills are fundamental things. So I was thinking whether I could perform well in an English program in the academic year.

When considering the role of English in his graduate program, Austin's thoughts seem to reveal a conundrum. He said that English is just one aspect of business. In other words, he requires skills outside reading, writing, listening, and speaking to succeed. However, in the next sentence, he acknowledged that English is also the medium through which he has to demonstrate other academic skills such as analysis. In other words, analytical skills may not be an explicit language skill, but students have to make their analytical skills visible to others by using verbal or written English.

Ali had a different experience compared to his counterparts. While the other business students seemed to gain confidence after initial feelings of doubt as they progressed in their programs, Ali felt his confidence waver later in the semester. When I asked him whether he felt prepared to begin his academic program, he replied, "At the beginning, yes. But when I went

deeper, sometime, I said to myself, why didn't I learn English so good? I need more English." His appreciation for the ELP deepened in hindsight as he came to realize the intense language demands of his program.

Overall, the business students seem to have experienced greater challenges transitioning from the ELP to their academic programs compared to the other subunits, in part, because of their programs' advanced language proficiency expectations.

Science. Although these participants were enrolled in various branches of science (geology, computer science, biology, physics, and forestry), they reported a common need for strong listening and note-taking skills and writing skills to complete papers, reports, and labs. In this way, they acknowledged the need to have strong general communication skills in addition to specialized math and science skills. The ELP curriculum does address the lecture-related skills participants mentioned, including listening for main ideas and taking notes. Writing, including essays, summarizing, paraphrasing, and referencing, is also a major focus of the ELP curriculum. However, the focus of the ELP writing tasks is on persuasive, argumentative, and analytical five-paragraph essays rather than on scientific reports and labs, indicating the potential for a gap to exist between the specific writing skills ELLs practice in the language program and the output they are expected to produce in their academic programs.

A couple of the participants also discussed the need to develop discipline-specific skills to succeed in their programs. For example, Jason needed to be adept at specific programming languages such as C++ and Object Oriented Programming in computer science. He did not have difficulty with this discipline-specific requirement, though, because the languages are the same in Chinese. Therefore, he did not expect or need the ELP to prepare him for the specific demands of his discipline.

Overall, the science participants reported feeling at least somewhat prepared to begin their academic programs after graduating from ELPs. However, they acknowledged that they could have learned more in their language program to feel more prepared. Italo summarized his feelings simply, saying, "We did learn some stuff, but it wasn't enough." In hindsight, Clesio wished that he could have spent more time improving his English skills in the ELP:

Even improving a lot in the ELP, I felt some hard moments in my physics course. I felt I wasn't prepared after finishing my fifth level because I just learned English in six months. That was hard for me, but I could read better in English, and that was good. If I couldn't understand what the professor was saying, I could go home and study. . . . I knew I was prepared to have that experience at the university, but I also felt that I could stay in the ELP for more months to get better. But I couldn't.

A common theme is that, in hindsight, participants seem to appreciate their time in the ELP more once they understand the actual language demands of their programs.

Walter's reflections on his transition from the language program to university highlight that ELP students have varying destinations after they graduate from the program. He said, "Maybe if I had started in the first semester, I would be more prepared. But I took courses from the third and fourth year. It was more difficult." Indeed, not all international ELLs begin first-year programs alongside domestic students who are also adjusting to the expectations of post-secondary education. This point reinforces the need for ELP educators to consider not only the academic disciplines of their students, but the year level they will enter to tailor instruction to students' specific needs. Indeed, several participants in this study are in master's programs, yet they receive the same language support as undergraduate students entering their first year of university.

Making connections between subunits. When reflecting on the skills required for their academic programs, some participants' responses supported Bakar's (2015) view that language expectations vary across disciplines. Participants in both engineering and business agreed that engineering courses required students to have strong mathematics skills while business students required more advanced communication skills. Tom, an electrical engineering student, believed that business students would have a more difficult time transitioning from the ELP to their academic program because of higher language demands. He explained,

If I studied business, I would write papers. I think this is more difficult for them. For engineering, we don't need too much English skills. We just need to use our skills to solve the question. . . . We don't need to use grammar.

His sentiments were echoed by Ahmed, a business student: "[The ELP] helped me a lot to study business, but I think if someone would like to go to engineering, they don't need language like business. Engineering is about mathematics. . . . For business, psychology, these courses, language is more important." In contrast to this statement, Cummins (1979) holds that all disciplines require academic language proficiency, although the specific requirements may vary.

Participants in both business and science acknowledged the importance of having advanced proficiency in English to succeed in their respective programs. In addition to discipline-specific skills needed to write business reports, complete math assignments, or code computer programs, for example, they also needed general communication skills to work in groups, complete projects, and present their ideas through both written and oral communication. These findings indicate that academic discipline does impact the language demands that are placed on international ELLs, with business and science students reporting the need for more advanced language skills than engineering students who focus primarily on math. This

information, then, begs the question of why international ELLs are put into the same ELP classes when their academic programs have differing linguistic demands.

For international ELLs, the transition from an ELP to post-secondary studies is, of course, much more complex than merely the academic program in which they are enrolled. Indeed, the participants in each of the three subunits did not share a single, definitive transition experience. While academic discipline did affect the language and academic skills that students required to succeed, other factors, such as length of stay in Canada, future plans, undergraduate or graduate program level, year of study, previous experiences in post-secondary education, and similarities between the structure and content of students' programs in their home countries and Canada significantly impacted students' perceptions of their readiness to study in Canada.

(b) Participant reactions to the prospect of English for Specific Purposes. To prepare international ELLs for the demands of their particular programs, some scholars suggest replacing general language programs with ESP courses that are tailored towards building discipline-specific academic and language skills (see Fox et al., 2014; Hamp-Lyons, 2011). Within the engineering, business, and science subunits, participants expressed varying attitudes towards the prospect of ESP. Some participants recognized that their disciplines required them to complete particular tasks, such as conducting experiments or writing business proposals, neither of which would be relevant to students in other disciplines. Ideally, they would have liked their ELPs to focus on the skills they would go on to use in their post-secondary programs. Notably, domestic high school graduates are also unlikely to possess discipline-specific skills when they enter university, underscoring the higher demands placed on incoming international students.

Tom, an undergraduate engineering student, called for ELPs to separate international students according to academic discipline. He suggested,

I think it could be separate because the students who choose the ELP already know which program they will take in the future. I think ELPs should separate the students. Like engineering students, they are in one class. They will learn some basic English skills. At the end of the course, they need to learn something about engineering skills like how to write a report.

Leo, a mechanical engineering student, also expressed a desire for ELPs to offer discipline-specific support. He explained,

After I had finished the ELP, I almost forgot what I learned in high school. For engineering students or math students, they should take some classes or the language school should provide some classes for mathematics or physics. . . . For example, in a lab report, the first time using software such as Autodesk to draw in 3D or graph is really hard. We never used this in high school in China.

A desire for ESP was also apparent among business students. Ahmed, for instance, shared, "I think the ELP should ask the students, 'What is your program?' If you're in business, they can focus on reading and listening. If you're in engineering, they can give you some mathematics vocabulary. That would help a lot." Among the science participants, only John discussed the potential benefits of ESP, suggesting that ELPs "should put the students whose major is the same in a class."

Participants in all subunits reported discipline-specific vocabulary as a significant challenge in their academic programs. Indeed, Moran-Green (2016) recognizes a strong correlation between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension. Leo, Jack, and Sean, engineering students, said they were not taught discipline-specific vocabulary in their ELP. Similarly, business students Marvin, Ali, and Ahmed felt that their lack of discipline-specific vocabulary

caused difficulty when they began their academic courses. Upon graduating from the ELP and beginning his business course, Ahmed reflected, "In the management course, there are many new vocabulary words for me, I was like, 'Did I even learn English?'"

It appears, then, that the ELPs these students attended did not place much emphasis on developing Tier 3 vocabulary (specialized and discipline-specific words) (Beck et al., 2002). In contrast, Pablo appreciated learning general academic words in his ELP. Such Tier 2 vocabulary would be applicable across disciplines, making it easier for language instructors to integrate these words in their mixed-discipline classes. Within the science subunit, only John remembered learning forestry-specific vocabulary in his ELP, including the names of Canadian trees.

Despite being in an ELP that focused on general academic English, several participants praised the ELP and, specifically, their instructors for offering discipline-specific support. In particular, students appreciated the feature of the ELP in which university professors delivered guest lectures in an auditorium, offering students a preview of authentic course material. Jack, an engineering student, explained, "They bring some professors to show how a university class is. It's a good thing. . . . Maybe [I want] more of that because I just had two. There was one engineering and one business professor." While students in engineering and business benefited from having a professor from their discipline deliver a lecture, science students did not receive the same benefit. John, a forestry student, believed that business and engineering students had an advantage because they were offered more discipline-specific support such as the guest lectures. He recalled, "I didn't get a forestry lecture. So, if you studied business and engineering, it's better in ELP because they will offer a lot of lectures for these students."

Additionally, participants praised their instructors for differentiating instruction to offer some degree of discipline-specific support. Pablo explained, "One of my professors [in the ELP]

always gives us papers with different areas. There was business, there was engineering, there was environmental science." Sean also felt that his ELP classes incorporated activities to prepare students for their academic disciplines:

Before we came to the campus, they had already gave us some engineering knowledge.

Even though it's a little bit of knowledge because they are education professors, but I am really happy to learn about this kind of knowledge before I go to campus.

When I asked Sean to explain how his ELP instructor incorporated engineering content into the curriculum, he described a class project in which students worked in multi-disciplinary groups to design an ideal building. They were required to consider various aspects of building design, including "the civil knowledge and the mechanical knowledge" as well as business-related and financial aspects. The integrated elements of the project appealed to students from various disciplines, allowing individuals to focus their participation according to their field of study.

Other students did not recall receiving any discipline-specific support in their ELPs. Instead, they learned English for general academic purposes. Jack, for one, held that ESP was unnecessary for most international ELLs, explaining, "If you're going to university, you have to have a background in math and physics, so I think the focus is more on English there." Having attended university in Brazil for several years, Jack already felt confident with civil engineering content and wanted to focus on improving general communication skills in the ELP.

Reflecting on the practicality of designing and implementing ESP programs, Abdul and Austin, both business students, acknowledged the constraints that ELP administrators face that limit the feasibility of offering discipline-specific support. Austin conceded, "It's okay to be general. You cannot satisfy all the students because they're not from the same background. Their

majors differ, so it's better to be general." Abdul sympathetically detailed the challenges he foresees ELP educators having in attempts to meet students' program-specific needs:

It's hard for them to focus on one program because there's many different majors. Which one do you focus on? This major has different vocabulary; this one has different academic skills. Everyone is different. It's hard for the [ELP] to focus on one major. For me, they give us the common skills for academics. You can see this word here and here. They teach what the words mean, and where you're going to find it, and how you're going to use it. . . . I don't think this is the time to focus on one major. If we want to study nursing or engineering, you will go to those classes. Then they need those teachers, need time, another plan, need more students. If there's no students, why bring the teacher? It's hard, I think.

Abdul demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the challenges ELP administrators face related to staffing qualified instructors to teach discipline-specific classes (Pica, 2011) as well as the difficulty of being responsive to students' needs when the composition of cohorts changes each semester (Richards, 2001).

Considering participants' contrasting responses related to the discipline-specific support their ELPs provided, it is clear that students' experiences in ELPs vary, supporting Fox et al.'s (2014) and Hamp-Lyons' (2011) critiques that ELPs lack consistency in delivery across programs. Interestingly, 14 of the 15 participants in this study attended the same ELP, suggesting that program fragmentation exists not only across institutions, but within them as well. When analyzing the curriculum documents of the ELP that almost all participants attended, there is only minimal reference to teaching discipline-specific skills. In the final level, students are supposed to practice language and academic skills in situations similar to what they will

encounter in their academic programs. However, it is left up to individual instructors to determine what these authentic situations would be and what specific skills to focus instruction on. The lack of integration and cooperation between academic units and ELPs places the onus on English language instructors to prepare students for their individual programs. The participants in this study reported receiving varying levels of discipline-specific support in their ELPs.

(c) Whose line is it anyway?: International ELLs' feelings of inferiority. As the curriculum documents outline, the primary purpose of ELPs is to prepare international ELLs for university. The idea, then, is that ELP graduates will be equipped to learn alongside domestic students in mainstream programs. In their interviews, several participants reflected on their experiences in academic programs by comparing themselves to domestic students.

Leo positioned domestic students as an ideal that he wished to emulate or catch up to: "I have to improve my English. Improve my levels, so I can be like local people speaking or reading. So I don't feel behind the local people." Contemplating what academic success means to him, he further explained, "I think academic success is reading, writing, listening, and speaking like local people. That's academic success. So that everybody starts at the same line. So nobody is left behind." Leo's wish for everybody to start "at the same line" offers a powerful metaphor for the hierarchical divide between domestic and international students in Western institutions. Domestic students are positioned as ahead or above international students who struggle to catch up to an imagined starting line.

The feeling of being behind domestic students in their post-secondary courses was evident among several other participants. For instance, Ahmed commented,

When I study with Canadians, they will be better than me. They will have better opportunities. It's easier for them than for me. I think the presentation class, for them, will

be easier than for us. They can get marks easier than us because it's their first language.

But it's not an excuse. You can read a lot and improve yourself. You can be like them.

Like Leo, Ahmed perceives domestic students as academically superior to international students.

As native speakers of English, domestic students represent a quality of "nativeness" that international students constantly strive towards, but never reach.

Even after graduating from their ELPs, participants acknowledged that their language skills, which they perceived as being inferior to domestic students', impeded their ability to succeed at the same level as their domestic counterparts. Needing more time to process information and formulate their thoughts in English was a key challenge. Austin reported feeling like a "layman" in his classes; he went on to compare how the thought process of domestic students differs from international ELLs:

[F]irst-language users do not have to translate. They can quickly organize their thinking and come out with words. There's not reflection time before thinking and words. As international students, we have to use time to translate, and it's time-consuming.

Austin's point focuses on the need for international ELLs to have more time for language *output*. Extending this point, John expressed the need for international ELLs to have more time for language *input*. He said, "My English is not very good, so when I'm reading some Power Points, I'm reading and the Canadian students are finished. I say, 'No, no!' In the class, I often take pictures of the Power Points to go back and read it again." Later, John reflected on his perception of academic success, saying he will feel successful when he can learn "with the Canadian students." John's desire to overcome feelings of inferiority and reach the same level as domestic students recalls Leo's use of a line metaphor to represent his hope to catch up to domestic students and start "at the same line."

Sean also felt he was at a disadvantage compared to Canadian students in his courses. He recalled encountering many new vocabulary words in lectures that he had to learn before he could understand new course content. While he used a dictionary, he said, "It cost a lot of time. Maybe others finish one project in one week. For me, two weeks or three weeks." Like Sean, Leo reflected on the difficulty of expressing content knowledge through an additional language:

I think the local people spend a lot of time on the research part, but, for international students, we spend a lot of time on the language part. When I read a lab report, it's easy for local people to do some research on the web, like YouTube. They make much more specific conclusions. For us, our writing is much simpler, so we do not make the teacher or professor confused.

In Leo's view, domestic students do not have language difficulties, so they can spend more time developing the content of their assignments. In contrast, international students focus more on the linguistic aspects of their coursework and are limited to simpler modes of expression that may not fully express the complexity of their thinking.

The above quotes reflect an uncomplicated view of domestic students as being successful and untroubled by the challenges of university. However, two participants recognized that domestic students also experience academic challenges. Sean described having difficulty conducting experiments and working in teams due, in part, to his lack of familiarity with these expectations. He acknowledged, though, that the challenges international students experience adjusting to university-level expectations may be shared by domestic students, saying, "It's a little bit difficult, not only for us, but also for the Canadian people."

Bakar (2015) and Dooley (2010) argue that language proficiency does not reliably indicate a student's potential for academic success or readiness for university. By this token, just

because domestic students, theoretically, have more advanced English skills than international students does not necessarily mean that they will be more ready for or successful in university.

Abdul recognized that academic language, which Cummins (1979) identifies as cognitive academic language proficiency or CALP, places different demands on speakers than the basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) used in everyday, social exchanges. Adjusting one's language from BICS to CALP is a challenge that international students and domestic students alike must undertake. Abdul reflected on this shared challenge:

Even people who are Canadian or are American, they speak in the street and the public, but they don't know how to speak in an academic way. With the professor, they say *hey*. It's a professor, don't say *hey*. [The ELP] teaches us how to talk with professors. How to email. This is a polite word to use.

Perhaps, then, international ELLs who enrol in language programs have an advantage over domestic students who may not have had concentrated and focused preparation on how to communicate academically. It is curious that only international ELLs are expected to enrol in a preparatory program to build university skills when domestic students would likely benefit from such an opportunity as well. Despite graduating from an ELP designed to prepare international ELLs for the demands of university, many participants still felt that they were at a disadvantage compared to their domestic classmates.

Findings for Research Question 2: What personal value do international ELLs place on learning English as an additional language?

When considering the personal value they placed on learning English, participant responses revealed a deep sense of investment in English. The following themes emerged as significant: (a) motivating factors for learning English; (b) going beyond motivation to

investment in language learning; (c) becoming a better person by learning English; and (d) shifting identities and worldviews.

(a) On the surface: Participant motivations for learning English. In their interviews, participants elucidated their reasons for wanting to learn and improve their English skills in Ontario ELPs. On the surface, some participants seemed to be primarily instrumentally motivated to learn English for purely pragmatic purposes (see Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Jack, Pablo, Ali, Italo, and Jason characterized English as a universal, global, and international language spoken by major countries worldwide. Similarly, Leo and Ahmed recognized the status that English occupies as the world's "first language." Notably, these participants appear to uncritically accept the dominant position of English as a *lingua franca* in their responses. They used words like "have to," "need," and "must" to explain that learning English was not so much a choice for them as it was a necessity for their futures.

Marvin summarized the importance of knowing English in a globalized world, saying, "Without English, I'm blind and deaf." Explaining their practical reasons for learning English, participants focused on their desires to access information, continue their education and work within academia, and secure employment in their home countries. Not having access to English would leave them in a state of lack or deprivation, unable to meet their goals for the future.

Several participants explained that they needed to know English in order to access information. Austin discussed the restrictions that the Chinese government imposes to limit access to online platforms such as Google, YouTube, and social media. Traveling to North America and learning English represented an opportunity to become a more informed citizen, cognizant of global and international matters. Likewise, Pablo, Marvin, and Walter wanted to learn English to stay up-to-date on topics ranging from sports to world news. Their rationales for

learning English support Pennycooks' (2002) and Phillipson's (2003) arguments that learning English grants individuals access to otherwise closed domains.

Whether attending university in Canada or in their home countries, participants further recognized English as the language of academia. Pablo and Italo noted that many of the course materials used in their programs in Brazil are in English, making it necessary for them to be proficient in English even when Portuguese is the official language of instruction. Marvin, Walter, and Clesio intend to pursue careers in academia. Considering that English is the *lingua franca* of science, they acknowledged the need to learn English to publish papers in respected academic journals and participate in academic conferences in the future. In order to join and participate in academic communities and contribute to the advancement of their fields of study, these participants felt that they would have to conduct and disseminate their work in English.

Securing a job in their home countries was another major motivating factor for participants to learn English. A number of participants discussed how knowing English would be a necessity in their future careers: "I really need to know English to work as an engineer" (Pablo), "I think English is a must to get a better chance for your career" (Austin), and "[E]ven here in Brazil, when you're working in big companies, they ask for English" (Italo). Jack and Pablo additionally stated that knowing English would give candidates a significant advantage over others during hiring processes.

When I asked participants to describe their reasons for wanting to learn English, their initial responses focused on surface-level instrumental motivations. Broadly, they wanted to access information, pursue academics, and find a job. Learning English allowed participants to reach their goals; it served as a means to an end. As my conversations with these international ELLs continued, though, their responses revealed how learning English has impacted both their

senses of self and their relationships with others. These findings suggest that learning English is not just about simple pragmatic motivations but a more personal journey of identity formation.

(b) Going deeper: From motivation to investment in English language learning.

Previous studies on language learners' investment in English has, largely, focused on the experiences of immigrants (Norton, 2013; Norton Peirce, 1995). As a point of differentiation, my study examines the perceptions of international ELLs who come to Canada for the specific purpose of studying in post-secondary institutions. Their projected time in Canada ranges from 18 months to several years. With the exception of Tom whose parents want to leave China, none of the participants I interviewed have definitive plans to immigrate to Canada, although Sean, Jason, and John are open to the possibility of staying in Canada for employment purposes. Because they do not intend to permanently integrate into Western, English-speaking communities, the potential exists that these international students may not have as strong a sense of investment in learning English compared to the participants in Norton's (2013) study.

Although their time learning English in Canada was temporary, participant responses, nevertheless, indicated a strong sense of investment in English. Their visions of who they are and, more importantly, the potential selves they envisioned becoming impacted their investment in English. Regarding their goals to find a job in their home countries, Jason and Walter went beyond instrumental motivation to consider how learning English would help them become respected professionals in their fields. Walter stated, "I cannot work as a good professional and not know English." Recalling the connection Norton (2013) makes between language learning and identity (re)formation, Walter's investment in English is closely connected to his vision of what it means to be a professional in the workplace. For Walter, being fluent in English implies that he will be competent, successful, and respected in his workplace regardless of his job-

specific skills. Fluency in English is not, then, just another skill that candidates can list on their resume, but one that is value-laden and associated with other characteristics that symbolically label employees as *professional*. Similarly, Jason mused, "[Knowing English] can help you to be more professional than others." Here, Jason positions fluency in English as a differentiating factor that will identify him as being better than his competitors. This sentiment can, again, be connected to Norton's (2013) theory of investment when, inspired by Bourdieu, she argues that a desire to increase one's social power and cultural capital impacts investment in language learning. Walter, too, expressed a desire to be *better* than others and identified English as the differentiating factor:

When you don't live in an English-language country, it is a very intelligent investment if you use some of your money to learn English. . . . It doesn't matter what job you have. If you have English, it can be very helpful. You are going to be differentiated from the other employees.

(c) Becoming a better person. The idea that learning English makes individuals *better* was a common theme across the subunits of this case. While Walter and Jason's initial comments used "better" in a competitive sense, other responses indicated a more abstract belief that learning English would help them become better people: "When I learned English, I like myself better" (Ahmed), "I like to know that I am improving myself, not only about jobs or career, but myself as a better person" (Walter), and "I feel really proud to learn English" (Abdul). These comments implicitly uphold English as the language of status and power, suggesting that, because English is seen as a *better* language than others throughout the world, individuals, too, can become *better* by speaking English. By learning English, participants appear to believe that some of the status and power that English holds will transfer to them.

Austin recalled the feeling of gaining status over his peers in China when he demonstrated superior skills in English:

I think I had a talent for learning English, not afraid of expressing myself in class.

Reading a whole passage of a text for the lecture and memorize and recite the vocabulary.

My student peers cast their eyes, looking upon you. I appreciate that kind of feeling.

Like Austin, Sean recognized that English has status over other languages. Using bamboo as a metaphor, he explained,

I think learning English is just like a panda with bamboo. The pandas like bamboo, eating bamboo. Also, they can eat other things, other food. But the most important is bamboo. I think [English] is important. It's nutrition. It's for my life. It's nutrition to use English.

Interestingly, bamboo actually provide pandas with very little nutrition. However, in his comparison, Sean positions English as a language that is symbolically more "nutritious" than other languages. In other words, learning English awards its speakers with greater material and symbolic advantages compared to other languages. Therefore, for Sean, learning English is a means to significantly improve his life.

In their efforts to become better people, participants did not just focus inwards on the benefits learning English could provide them as individuals. Rather, many of them expressed a keen sense of responsibility towards others that learning English could help them fulfill. Al Harthi's (2014) study of Arab Muslim female ESL students in Saudi Arabia established a connection between learners' investment in English and their desire to belong to imagined English-speaking communities. In contrast, the participants in my study of international ELLs

demonstrated a sense of investment in English that originated from a sense of duty towards the communities to which they felt they already belonged in their home countries.

Abdul, Ali, and Walter expressed a desire to use their English skills to help their families once they returned home. Abdul said, "Before I go home, I have to learn how to speak, how to write, because I want to teach my brother. I want to teach my sister. I want to teach my baby when he gets older." Like Abdul, Ali recognized the opportunity to learn English in Canada as a privilege, and he wanted to share the benefits he gained with his loved ones in concrete ways: "In my country, I have my friends or my uncle. He doesn't speak English, but he has his own company. If he wants to contact other people, he always asks me or his son to come and contact them." Similarly, Walter anticipated future opportunities where he could use his English skills to help his family and friends. He shared, "My brother works with tourism, but he doesn't know English, so I could help him in some way. Or if a friend needs to read an article about something, and it's in English. I can help them in different ways."

While some of the participants paid their own tuition fees in Canada, many participants, including all of the Brazilian Science without Borders students, received government-funded scholarships. Some of these participants expressed deep gratitude for the opportunity their governments had awarded them. Concurrently, they reflected on the sense of duty they felt to "pay it forward" to their countries. Walter explained,

The government invested in us. . . . When you use public services, I think we should give back to society because they are paying. Not just me, my mom, my dad, but everybody is paying to let me stay in Canada now. I think in some way, I should give this back. I will give back because I'll return to Brazil a much better person. I'll help to build a better society in Brazil.

In this statement, Walter's appreciation to the Brazilian government is connected to a sense of responsibility to become a better person, not for his own gains, but for the betterment of his country. He sees beyond himself to recognize the impact he can have on a larger community.

Clesio expressed similar appreciation to the people funding his time in Canada:

I wasn't being funded with my money. It was the Brazilians'. We say it's the government, but actually the government doesn't give us money. Actually, it's the people. I tried hard to learn so that I could help people after all. Make their money worth it.

Underlying these sentiments is a need for participants to feel *worthy* of learning English. These participants felt obliged to prove that they were worthy of the expenses to travel to Canada, learn English, and study their disciplines by returning home as citizens better equipped to make a difference. For instance, Jack, a Science without Borders student, plans to demonstrate his appreciation by being "a good worker and a good person." In contrast to immigrants who learn English to join imagined English-speaking communities, the international ELLs in this study expressed a desire to use their English skills to directly improve the lives of their friends and families and confirm their allegiance and commitment to their home countries.

(d) Shifting identities and worldviews. When considering how learning English in Canada affected their identities, participants had varying responses. A few participants viewed their identities as static, unchanged by their time in Canada. Jack, for instance, intends to only stay in Canada for 18 months. He saw his sojourn as more of a travel opportunity than a life-changing, personal experience, imagining that he will return to Brazil as the same person as when he left:

I don't think [coming to Canada] makes a lot of changes. I think it's fantastic. I can go to another country. I can stay with my Canadian friends and friends from other countries.

And speak with them. And talk about everything. That's an amazing thing. But I don't think how I identify myself changed a lot.

Sean agreed with Jack's sentiments, saying simply, "I'm still the same person."

Sean and Jack felt that their time in Canada awarded them social, cultural, and academic experiences, but they saw their core identities as static and essential. They reflected on their time in Canada as an enjoyable travel experience. While a body of literature has considered how travel impacts identity, my analyses focus on the experiences of international students pursuing higher education in a host country, not those of casual travellers. Unlike Sean and Jack, other participants acknowledged that although their sojourns to Canada were temporary, the changes to their identities were lasting and profound. Clesio was one of two participants who had already returned to his home country when I interviewed him. He connected language learning to dynamic constructions of culture and identity, noting a shifting in his sense of self when he spoke English: "Sometimes I feel that when I'm talking in English, I'm not so Brazilian." This statement implies a sense of contradiction that Clesio finds difficult to reconcile; speaking English requires him to re-evaluate his sense of self, a theme discussed by Norton (2013). He went on to share the difficulties he has experienced trying to readjust to life in Brazil:

I changed so much after my experience. My mind is like, the Clesio who went to Canada is not the Clesio who went back to Brazil. It's like *Lord of the Rings* when the hobbits go back home. They don't feel home. It's very different.

Scholars recognize the initial transition from home to host country as a period of adjustment in which sojourners have to adapt and acculturate to their new surroundings (Berry, 2006; Ward et al., 2001). Clesio identified the subsequent move from host country back to home country as

another significant period of transition, requiring individuals to renegotiate their new identities with their old surroundings.

As participants' constructions of themselves evolved while they learned English in Canada, so too did their perceptions of the world. For some, the opportunity to learn English in Canada resulted in a broadening of perspective that challenged the insularity they experienced in their home countries. Learning English in Canada helped some participants better understand people whom they perceived as different from themselves. For example, Clesio reflected,

In Canada, I learned how to respect more people and respect their ideas and respect their comfort zones. . . . I learned more about women's rights. In Brazil here, it's not so common to have gay rights, for example. Or trans[gender] people. In Canada, I could learn more about that and see that those people are humans too.

Learning English in Canada helped Clesio challenge the preconceived notions he held about others. As his beliefs evolved, he felt his sense of the world, and his position within it, expand. He said, "Now I can say after learning English, it's not just opening a window for you. It's actually opening a door. I can say that your world is way bigger right now."

The idea of an expanding worldview was also evident in Tom, Austin, and Ali's interviews: "I think the other reason for my parents to let me go to Canada is for me to look around, to explore. Don't just stay at home. You need to open your mind" (Tom), "It's like a rebirth for me. . . . It gives me a window to get to know the world outside China" (Austin), and "When you learn other cultures and languages, it makes you grow. As you grow, it makes you wiser" (Ali). During their time in the ELP, these students also had opportunities to interact with and learn from individuals from other countries and cultures. Leo treasured the lessons he learned from his international classmates:

To communicate with people from Brazil or Saudi Arabia or other places, I realized the world is huge. . . . Sometimes it's a culture shock, but we can explain something and they understand. They can understand your culture, and you can understand their culture. It's amazing to learn things you never heard of before.

Like Leo, Marvin learned to expand his worldviews to consider others' perspectives while enrolled in the ELP: "I know that people with different cultures and education backgrounds have different perspectives on the same object. I learned the importance of shifting views and standing on others' angles of view." These participants appreciated that they were not just learning English or engineering or business or science in Canada. They went beyond the structural components of language learning to begin to reconsider their understandings of the world (Freire, 2005).

Summarizing International English Language Learners' Perceptions

In order to learn more about international ELLs' lived experiences studying in Canada, I sought to answer two research questions. First, I explored international ELLs' perceptions of how well their ELPs prepared them for their academic disciplines. Initially, I anticipated that the collected data would focus on practical matters related to language, academic, and discipline-specific skills. Indeed, some of the findings related to this question were practical. For instance, participants indicated that they felt at least somewhat prepared to begin their academic studies after completing their ELP. Because of varying language expectations across academic units, students' disciplines did have an impact on their transitions from ELPs to post-secondary studies with business and science students reporting greater challenges adjusting to the demands of post-secondary education compared to engineering students. Across all subunits, participants noted that their ELPs focused mostly on developing general language and academic skills, and there was sometimes a gap between the learning situations they encountered in the ELP and the actual

tasks they were required to complete in their undergraduate and graduate programs, particularly with writing. Although the ELP played an important role in preparing international ELLs for university, other factors such as prior education, length of stay in Canada, course level, future plans, and similarities in academic programs between the home and host countries also impacted students' readiness for university. This finding underscores that multiple interacting contexts dynamically shape international ELLs' perceptions of learning English and studying in Canada.

Beyond the practical findings, a number of participants reported that even after graduating from an ELP, they felt that they were academically inferior to the domestic students in their programs. They positioned domestic, native speakers of English as an ideal to emulate, upholding a problematic hierarchy that privileges domestic students over international students. This finding hints at the ideologies that insidiously underscore internationalization. The neocolonialist implications of this hierarchy will be further explored in the next chapter and situated within the larger context of deficit approaches to internationalization in Canada.

My second research question focused on the personal value that international ELLs place on learning EAL. Overall, participants associated strong personal values with learning English. Going beyond pragmatic motivation, they were deeply invested in learning English for myriad reasons, including to become better people, fulfill responsibilities to their communities, and expand their worldviews. Although a minority of participants felt that their core identities remained static, others demonstrated critical understandings that language learning is not just about reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Rather, learning English has implications for individuals' senses of status, power, opportunity, and position in the world.

Interestingly, although they recognized English as an international language through which information is shared and business is conducted on a global scale, none of the participants

questioned how the English language has risen to this dominant position. They felt that English would help them to become *more* or *better*, but they did not critically interrogate their beliefs or situate them in broader ideological contexts. Rather, participants seemed to accept the power English possesses as an ideologically neutral, natural, and inevitable fact. Indeed, absent from participant responses is a consideration of the social, cultural, political, and historical factors that have elevated the status and power of English over that of other languages (Canagarajah, 2005; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 1999). In the next chapter, I will situate participants' investment in English within neocolonialist theories, complicating the connection they establish between learning English and becoming a better person. I will also discuss how neocolonialism implicitly operates to shape individuals' notions of identity and self-esteem.

Chapter Five: Reflections on Lessons Learned

In his overview of case study methodology, Yin (2014) cautions against making statistical generalizations in case study research, in part, because of small sample sizes. Instead, he invites case study researchers to focus on making analytical generalizations that reflect on the lessons learned from the study. With this in mind, this discussion of my study's major findings focuses on the lessons I learned from the international ELLs who participated in this project.

Some of the findings I explored in the previous chapter focus on how ELPs practically function to prepare international ELLs for specific academic disciplines. I noted that academic discipline does impact students' experiences transitioning from ELPs to academic programs, but numerous other factors combine to make each student's experiences learning English and studying in Canada unique. Likewise, in their research on first-year domestic students studying in an English-medium university in Hong Kong, Evans and Morrison (2011) found that their participants did not share a definitive first-year experience. The findings from my first research question, which focused on international ELLs' perceptions of how well their ELPs prepared them for their academic disciplines, have implications for future ELP reform. Drawing from these findings, I make recommendations in the concluding chapter of this thesis, suggesting ways that ELPs could better meet the needs of international ELLs across varying academic disciplines.

These practical suggestions for ELP reform demonstrate the potential for productive outcomes to result from my research. However, I do not wish to focus on the work that ELPs do on an academic or practical level in this discussion. When asking participants about the personal value that learning English holds for them, I was struck by the notion, shared by several participants, that learning English made them feel *better*. In particular, the following quotations stood out: "When I learned English, I like myself better" (Ahmed) and "I like to know that I am

improving myself, not only about jobs or career, but myself as a better person" (Walter). Similarly, Austin described how learning English gave him status over his peers in China, a feeling that he valued. Perhaps, then, the most theoretically significant finding from my research is that learning English in Canada made international ELLs feel that they, in their own words, were becoming *better*. Learning English *expanded* their senses of self, enabling them to become *more* than what they felt they were when speaking their native languages. Recalling Sean's striking description of English being a "nutritious" language, as these international ELLs consumed English, they digested the benefits of this language and became invested with feelings of newfound status and power. They imagined possibilities of returning to their home countries more able to contribute positively to the lives of their families, friends, co-nationals, and, ultimately, themselves.

However, participants' feelings of becoming *better* did not extend to their experiences studying alongside domestic students in Canada. Even after graduating from ELPs, a number of participants felt that they were at a deficit to their domestic classmates in terms of their ability to succeed academically in Canada. For example, Leo felt that he was *behind* the domestic students in his class because of his more limited English proficiency, and John hoped he could improve his skills to eventually learn "with the Canadian students." Ahmed also idealized domestic students, saying he wanted to "be like them."

These international ELLs simultaneously felt both superior *and* inferior, better *and* worse, more *and* less, and ahead *and* behind while learning English in Canada, depending on whether they compared themselves to individuals in their home countries who did not speak English or to domestic students who spoke English as a native language. Their constructions of identity and self-worth were based on the value they assigned themselves in relation to others.

This finding supports Norton's (2013) explanation that language learners speak from multiple positions, and their identities, shaped by unequal power relations, are constantly in flux.

Many of my participants perceived domestic native-English speakers as having greater status in university classrooms, in part, because of their superior ability to access symbolic resources (such as higher grades). For instance, Ahmed felt that domestic students would have "better opportunities" to receive high grades for their presentations because English was their first language. In contrast, international ELLs have to translate their thoughts into an additional language, and the language barrier may impact their ability to express, and make visible, the full depths of their understanding. Leo captured this difficulty, explaining that he felt domestic students spent more time developing the content of their research whereas international students had to focus on expressing their ideas using comprehensible language. As a result, even after completing an ELP, designed to prepare international ELLs to study alongside domestic students, participants felt that they did not have the same opportunities to succeed as their English-speaking classmates, resulting in feelings of inferiority.

The international ELLs in my study share a defining characteristic that distinguishes their experiences from those of immigrant language learners. With the exception of Tom, whose parents want to immigrate with him to Canada, none of the participants in my study have definitive plans to permanently leave their countries to stay in Canada. Whereas immigrants' investments in learning English are often connected to a desire to integrate into imagined English-speaking communities (see Al Harthi, 2014; Norton, 2013), most of the international ELLs in this study plan to return to communities within which they already feel a sense of belonging. Reflecting on the future impact that English will have on their lives, participants postulated how speaking English will enable them to both *better* their communities and *be better*

than their co-nationals. In this way, participants acknowledged that English proficiency will grant them status over others in their home countries who do not have access to English at all. What differs is whether they plan to use their newfound status and power for collective social advancement or individual gain.

Abdul, Ali, and Walter envisioned using their English skills to benefit their micro-communities in their home countries. Abdul wants to teach his siblings and son English to advance their opportunities in life. Similarly, Ali can use his English skills to help his uncle run his company in Saudi Arabia, and Walter sees the potential to help his brother with his job or his friends with their schoolwork. Simultaneously, Walter imagines the broader impact his English skills can have on his country. He wants to repay Brazil for allowing him to study English in Canada by using his engineering skills to improve his country, a sentiment shared by Jack. Clesio also wants to help make his country better to prove that the money the government spent on his scholarship was "worth it." These participants see beyond themselves to recognize how they can use their English skills to positively impact others.

Concurrently, other participants recognized a need to position themselves competitively in their countries. Learning English was a mark of their superiority, particularly in the professional sphere. Pablo, Austin, and Italo believe that English will improve their career prospects, and Jack and Pablo note that speaking English gives them an advantage over other candidates when applying for jobs. In this way, learning English in Canada grants international students access to future material resources (Bourdieu, 1991), including higher wages.

These findings reinforce Norton's (2013) call to consider time and space when analyzing language learners' investment in the target language. When the international ELLs were learning in an English-medium Canadian classroom, they felt they were inferior and entered higher

education at a deficit to domestic students. In contrast, when they imagined their possibilities for the future back in their home countries, they envisioned being in high status positions, able to better acquire material resources for themselves and help others. Norton (2013) explains that, "learners who may be marginalized in one site may be highly valued in another" (p. 2).

Curiously, the use of the passive voice in this statement renders the actors who are doing the marginalizing and/or valuing of language learners invisible. My findings suggest that whether international ELLs feel they occupy a position of marginalization or value is not simply a matter of external forces acting upon and defining them, although I am not refuting the existence and operation of such structures. Rather, I propose that international ELLs' perceptions and constructions of their own identities are unconsciously shaped by an internalization of neocolonialist ideologies that affects how they variably position themselves in relation to native- and non-English speakers.

Situating International English Language Learners' Perceptions within Neocolonialism

In my introductory chapter, I employed neocolonialism as my theoretical framework to critique Western universities' internationalization initiatives. Neocolonialism holds that imbalances of power continue to exist even after colonized countries have achieved geographic and political independence (Chilisa, 2005; Rudunka & van Aarde, 2007). I explained that education is one avenue through which colonizers continue to dominate the colonized, not through force or physical oppression, but through institutional structure and ideology (Chilisa, 2005; Slemon, 1994). From there, I identified the neocolonial underpinnings of internationalization initiatives that uphold Western forms of education as superior to those offered in students' home countries in order to profit economically from international students.

Importantly, as mentioned in my findings chapter, none of the participants indicated an awareness of neocolonial theories in their interviews. Many, including Jack, Pablo, Ali, Italo, Jason, Leo, and Ahmed, did recognize the power and status that English holds as the world's dominant, universal, global, international, and "first" language. However, they did not interrogate the social, political, cultural, or historical forces through which the English language rose to such dominance (see Canagarajah, 2005; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 1999). In sum, they recognized that English carries power and status, but did not deepen their analyses to consider why this is so. Instead, they spoke matter-of-factly about English's dominant position, accepting it for what it is (or appeared to be).

Guo and Beckett (2007), however, caution that the superior status of English is not natural or inevitable, but a product of the spread of Western capitalism. Rejecting the idea of being *post* colonial, Phillipson (2003) succinctly states that the British empire has been replaced by the "empire of English" (p. 1). As such, the global spread of English operates as a neocolonial force, rendering those who do not have access to the language as lacking or inferior to those who claim ownership over it. On the surface, ELPs perform a benevolent function of helping international students gain access to English. However, scholars such as Guo (2013) and Luke and Dooley (2001) recognize how ELPs function to re-colonize international students by reasserting the superiority of English and assimilating minorities into the structures of Western education. I argue, though, that neocolonialism does not just operate on an institutional level. Indeed, many of the international ELLs who participated in my study demonstrated an internalization of neocolonialist ideologies that, although not consciously recognized, had real effects on their constructions of identity and self-esteem. In this way, neocolonialist ideologies

operate in subtle, yet insidious ways. Among other scholars, Fanon (2004) and Wa Thiong'o (1986) consider how colonization functions on a mental level.

Weedon (1997), a feminist and poststructuralist scholar, argues that language is "the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity is constructed" (p. 21). Norton (2013), influenced by Weedon, contends that identity is relative, rather than fixed or unitary, and individuals engage in "identity construction and negotiation" every time they use the target language (p. 4). In his interview, Clesio captured how communicating in English prompted him to re-negotiate his identity: "Sometimes I feel that when I'm talking in English, I'm not so Brazilian." Building on Weedon's (1997) notion of subjectivity, Clesio felt his sense of self shift depending on whether he was speaking English or Portuguese. Notably, Clesio was able to offer a unique perspective on shifting identities because he was one of two participants who had already returned home at the time of his interview. The other participants could only speculate about how their identities might shift when they leave Canada.

Only two participants viewed their identities as unchanging or static regardless of their language learning experiences. Jack ("I don't think how I identify myself changed a lot") and Sean ("I'm still the same person") viewed their sojourns as an extended vacation that awarded them enjoyable social, cultural, and academic experiences. They did not have the same investment in English as other participants who viewed English as relevant to their lives in their home countries and necessary for improving their futures. For other participants, learning English impacted their senses of themselves and their worldviews; they knew they would return home as changed people. For instance, Tom felt his time in Canada had opened his mind while Austin went so far as to liken his sojourn to a "rebirth."

Earlier, I speculated that the most significant finding from this study is the notion that learning English helps international ELLs feel *better* about themselves. In my belief, this demonstrates that, on an implicit level, many of these participants recognize the varying symbolic values that different languages have (Bourdieu, 1991). Their first languages, which participants universally agree hold great personal value to them, do not have the same symbolic value that English holds internationally. By learning English, they were able to join the "empire of English" that Phillipson (2003) refers to and gain access to the symbolic and material resources that other English speakers enjoy. They internalized the ideological message of neocolonialism that purports that English is a *better* language, believing that learning English was, thus, their path to personal betterment.

Returning to Norton's (2013) definition of identity as relational, learning English did not always make participants feel better about themselves. As discussed, another major finding from this study is that several international ELLs felt that they were at a disadvantage to the domestic students in their courses. They believed their potential for academic success was limited by their inferior language skills. In contrast, many participants were confident that they would occupy superior positions when they returned to their home countries. Because they had learned English, participants would be able to secure employment, pursue advanced academic studies, and help better others' lives. To account for participants' varying feelings of inferiority and superiority when speaking English, I propose that participants' constructions of identity go beyond positionality across time and space, as Norton suggests (2013). In addition to time and space, I argue that participants' internalization of neocolonialism impacts their conceptions of self in regards to whether they implicitly position themselves as colonized or colonizer.

When studying in Canada alongside domestic students, international ELLs position themselves, perhaps unconsciously, as products of Western neocolonialism. Many participants aspired to raise themselves up to the level of domestic students in their university courses, but they encountered difficulties because of their more limited language proficiency or unfamiliarity with Western education structures. To combat their feelings of inferiority, participants unanimously agreed that they need to keep improving their English skills. As Ali said, "I need more English." Even if their English skills improved, though, participants recognized that they would never truly be equal to native English speakers. Italo conceded, "It's always going to be hard for us because it's not our mother tongue." Pablo, too, recognized an impassable divide between native English speakers and ELLs, saying, "I always say to my Canadian friends, 'You are lucky because you speak English as a native language.'" Believing in the superiority of the English language and, in particular, the superiority of native English speakers leaves these international ELLs perpetually feeling, on some level, inferior to their domestic classmates.

In contrast, when they return to their home countries, participants will have access to a highly desirable symbolic resource—English—that others do not. No longer will they compare themselves to native English speakers, but to their non-English-speaking family and friends. When competing for jobs, for example, Pablo, Austin, Italo, and Jack imagine that their English skills will make them superior candidates. In addition, when envisioning their future selves, participants position themselves as agents of neocolonialism, helping to spread the empire of English to their home countries. For example, Abdul will teach his siblings and son English, even going so far as to imagine running his own ELP. On a broader level, Walter, Jack, and Clesio commit to using the skills they gained in Canada to make their own countries better. Their

conceptions of themselves as better people who claim the agency to make their home countries better are connected to an internalized belief in the superiority of English on the world stage.

Norton's (2013) work with female immigrant language learners shows how individuals' identities are constructed in relation to others across time and space. She argues that identity and investment in language learning are inextricably connected. My research with international ELLs demonstrates the transferability of Norton's findings to a different population of language learners: international students who are completing sojourns in Canada ranging from 18 months to several years. Depending on whether they compared themselves to their English-speaking classmates in Canada or to their non-English-speaking friends and family in their home countries, participants felt inferior and superior to others, respectively. I believe, though, that time and spaces were not the only factors affecting my participants' self-esteem and constructions of self. Extending Norton's (2013) findings, I argue that international ELLs' constructions of identity and investment in learning English are also shaped by an implicit internalization of neocolonialist ideologies that uphold English as *the* superior language and, by extension, English speakers as superior people.

As mentioned, researchers recognize how ELPs ideologically function to re-colonize international ELLs by upholding English as a superior language and assimilating newcomers into Western institutions (Guo, 2013; Luke & Dooley, 2001). For those international students whose English language proficiency is deemed too low to begin university in Canada, ELPs are their first point of entry into Canadian higher education. Therefore, language programs represent a site that has significant potential to shape students' first impressions of Canadian societies, cultures, and academic structures.

Rather than acquiescing to the status quo, Morgan and Ramanathan (2005) suggest ways for ELP educators to re-imagine language programs, focusing on the development of critical literacies. In the final section of this discussion, I advocate for the use of critical pedagogies in ELPs as a means to reform language programs and encourage international ELLs to become more aware of the ideologies of language learning.

Implementing Critical Pedagogies in English Language Programs

Within both educational theory and practice, the word "critical" is often used without much discussion of what it specifically means. Pennycook (1999) warns practitioners that critical approaches to teaching are not just a matter of critical thinking. He differentiates the two, noting that critical thinkers have a questioning attitude, but their questions are not rooted in cultural, social, historical, or political contexts. On the other hand, one of the foundational principles of critical pedagogies is that learning, and language learning in particular, is not a neutral endeavour but inextricably entwined with politics, society, race, economics, religion, and culture (Canagarajah, 2005; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 1999). Critical pedagogues hold that educational settings are constructed by and reproduce ideologies that, left unexamined and unchallenged, perpetuate inequality (Luke, 2004). With this in mind, these educators go beyond communicative or structural approaches to language learning to actively challenge oppressive discourses within and beyond the classroom (Morgan, 2009).

Critical pedagogies are often organized around problem-posing dialogues between and among students and teachers (Freire, 2005; Morgan, 2009). Luke (2004) compares this model with Socratic methods that engage both teachers and students in dialogic questioning and critiques of the "truth" by recognizing and interrogating the various contexts within which reality and knowledge are socially constructed. The role of the teacher is to be a facilitator and

encourage students to actively construct their own knowledge (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2014). As a result, students learn to be skeptical about ideas posed as truths and to suggest their own reinterpretations of the world (Abednia & Izadinia, 2013). Notably, Auerbach and Burgess (1985) and Derince (2011) stress that the goal of engaging in problem-posing dialogues is not for students to solve complex problems, but to imagine other worldviews and interpretations.

Using a critical theory framework, Pessoa and Freitas (2012) argue that language learning is not merely knowledge transmission, but a social and political act. They hold that language programs should promote social justice, challenge hegemony, fight inequality, and foster opportunities for identity negotiation and construction. In their case study, Pessoa and Freitas (2012) offer suggestions on enacting critical pedagogies. Reasoning that language instructors have a duty to help their students become aware of and challenge societal oppression, the teacher-researchers centered their language course around critical themes such as racism, gender, identity, and sexuality. Instead of limiting learning to worksheets or comprehension questions, the students had opportunities to voice their own perceptions and experiences with critical issues with the goal being to progress from discussion to social advocacy.

Cautious of power relations between instructors and students, Pessoa and Freitas (2012) advise instructors to refrain from dominating discussions with their own views. Instead, instructors should ask open-ended questions and encourage students to reflect on their positions, opinions, and identities. The teacher-researchers suggest having students collaboratively choose course themes to make their learning as personally relevant as possible.

While theorists provide suggestions for implementing critical pedagogies, practitioners should not follow a one-size-fits-all approach. Rather, critical pedagogies should be situated within localized contexts (Akbari, 2008; Crookes, 2010). Akbari (2008) advises teachers to

choose content from the students' local culture to situate critical practices within their lived experiences. This suggestion aligns with the overarching call for ELPs to better recognize the specific needs of international ELLs when designing and implementing language program curricula. At first, participating in critical pedagogies will likely be challenging and unfamiliar to international students, particularly those who are accustomed to learning through memorization or deferring to the instructor's authority in their home cultures. Moreover, depending on the personal dynamics between students, they may feel uncomfortable delving into such personal and sensitive topics. Therefore, I caution instructors against undertaking too much too soon with their students. Developing a safe learning environment based on mutual respect is paramount.

Norton and Toohey (2004) summarize the tenants of critical language teaching as commitments to equality, justice, and social transformation. They argue that language learning is not about benign communication but how learners "understand themselves, their social surroundings, their histories, and their possibilities for the future" (p. 1). Rather than focusing exclusively on helping students fit into Western institutions, ELP educators could implement critical pedagogies to help make explicit the nefarious ideologies that may be implicitly shaping their students' identities. These approaches could, then, help students re-examine their investment in English and re-claim their constructions of self. A critical classroom can work to de-construct and re-construct meaning, helping international ELLs reflect on both the value that English holds in the world and the value they assign themselves when they speak English.

My discussion focused on how international ELLs' constructions of identity and investment in English are connected to their internalization of neocolonialist ideologies that uphold the superiority of English. In order to reform language education, I advocate for ELP educators to implement critical pedagogies as opposed to focusing mainly on the structural or

communicative aspects of additional language learning. Doing so can encourage students to not take the superiority of English for granted and to actively reconstruct their own identities. In my final chapter, I return to the original objectives of my research, summarizing key findings and providing recommendations to improve ELP programs. I conclude by commenting on the future of internationalization in Canadian higher education.

Chapter Six: Going Beyond in Internationalization: Recommendations and Conclusions

When I first envisioned the research I would undertake for my thesis, I imagined that I would focus on learning more about international ELLs' academic experiences in ELPs. I would make my mark on the scholarship surrounding English language learning and internationalization in higher education by suggesting recommendations to improve language program curricula. In my (naive and idealized) mind, the process would be straightforward; A would lead to B would lead to C. Before I knew it, I would have a finished thesis that was of practical use to ELP administrators and educators.

As I began my research, the journey I embarked upon was much messier, more difficult, and more personally transformative than I had anticipated—in the most wonderful way. On some days, I felt like I could change the world while on others, I questioned if I had anything of value to say. As a novice researcher, I embraced the messiness and uncertainty of research, for this space sparks learning and growth. The critical pedagogue, Freire (2005), challenges educators to *go beyond* the word to examine the world. I am grateful for the opportunity my participants provided me to go beyond my initial expectations to reach greater depths of understanding about their experiences learning English and studying in Canada. Collectively, they were the compass that guided me on this journey.

Previous research has, largely, omitted the individual voices of international students, instead grouping them based on country of origin or first language (Zhou & Zhang, 2014). My study is significant in that it highlights the voices of 15 international ELLs as they reflect on their individual experiences learning English and pursuing post-secondary studies in Canada. As a result of these participants sharing their personal perceptions in one-on-one semi-structured interviews, I have been able to *go beyond* examining international ELLs' academic experiences

transitioning from ELPs to academic programs to also consider notions of identity and investment in English. Additionally, I have suggested how these participants' constructions of self have been subtly, but powerfully, influenced by neocolonialist ideologies that uphold the superiority of English. Using neocolonialism as a theoretical framework, my study is also significant in that it extends Norton's (2013) theory of investment in language learning from immigrants to international students. As a result of going deeper within my research, the findings of this study are relevant not only to ELP educators, but to anyone involved with internationalization initiatives in higher education.

Summary of Findings

Two questions shaped the focus of my research. The first question explored the practical functions that ELPs serve in preparing international ELLs for specific academic disciplines. The second question delved into participants' constructions of identity and investment in learning English. Below, I summarize the key findings for each of these questions.

1. What are international English language learners' perceptions of how well English language programs prepared them for their academic disciplines?

Across the subunits (engineering, business, and science), participants reported feeling at least somewhat prepared to study in Canadian post-secondary programs after graduating from an ELP. Academic discipline did have an effect on participants' transitions to university. Business and science students reported having greater difficulty in their programs because of higher language expectations compared to engineering students whose programs were more math-oriented. In addition to academic discipline, several other contextual factors impacted participants' transition experiences, including, but not limited to, length of stay in Canada, future plans, source of funding, undergraduate or graduate program level, year of study, previous

experiences in post-secondary education, and similarities between the structure and content of students' programs in their home countries and Canada.

Although some students recognized the administrative difficulties of offering English for Specific Purposes courses, students agreed that, ideally, the language and academic skills they learn in ELPs should be connected to the skills they actually use in their academic programs. Participants reported receiving varying levels of discipline-specific support in their ELPs, suggesting inconsistency and fragmentation in program delivery. They also noted a gap between the writing tasks they practiced in their ELP (five-paragraph essays) and the actual writing tasks of their programs (labs, reports, business proposals, etc.). Participants who had previous post-secondary experience were more accepting of learning general rather than discipline-specific skills in their ELP, reasoning that they were already comfortable with the academic content and skills required in their programs. In all subunits, a lack of discipline-specific vocabulary was the greatest difficulty international ELLs encountered in their programs. Despite graduating from ELPs, many participants felt a sense of inferiority when comparing themselves to the domestic, native-English speaking students in their courses. They hoped to "catch up" to their domestic classmates, so they could start "at the same line" and not "feel behind" or "below" their classmates.

2. What personal value do international English language learners place on learning English as an additional language?

Several participants reported being instrumentally motivated to learn English, which they considered to be a universal, global, and international language. Learning English allowed them to access information, continue their education, and secure future employment. Most participants also displayed a strong sense of personal investment in learning English which was impacted by

their visions of who they are and who they could become in the future. Learning English made participants feel that they were becoming *better*, both in the competitive sense when comparing themselves to non-English speakers in their home countries and the personal sense of being a better person who is more able to help others. While most participants recognized their sense of themselves as being dynamically in flux as their worldviews expanded, two participants felt that their identities remained the same while learning English and living in Canada. Participants implicitly recognized, and took for granted, the greater symbolic value that English holds compared to their first languages. However, they did not critically interrogate the social, political, cultural, or historical conditions in which English rose to superiority. I suggest that participants' internalization of neocolonialist ideologies affected their constructions of identity and self-esteem, explaining their belief that learning English would help make them *better*.

With the exception of two participants, the international ELLs I interviewed were in the process of completing their undergraduate and graduate programs in Ontario. I recommend for future research to longitudinally explore how language learners' investment in English and constructions of identity evolve after they return to their home countries.

While theories of neocolonialism guided my work, future research could go beyond identifying the neocolonial operations of English language programs to work towards deconstructing, destabilizing, and, ultimately, decolonizing English language teaching and learning. Recognizing the profound complexity of decolonization, Kumaravadivelu (2003) advocates for language programs to adopt policies, programs, methods, and materials that decentre Western authority and encourage language learners "to claim ownership of the English language learning and teaching enterprise" (p. 540). Much possibility exists for future research to

explore the decolonization of English language programs for international ELLs studying in Western colleges and universities.

The findings of my current study, nevertheless, have significant implications for educators and administrators working towards internationalizing Canadian higher education. In the next sections, I provide recommendations, on a smaller scale, for ELP reform and, on a larger scale, for changing the course of internationalization initiatives in order to better respect and meet the varied needs of international ELLs.

Suggestions for Reforming Canadian English Language Programs

ELPs are a point of convergence for international ELLs on varied journeys. Although they had in common a brief stop in an ELP, the participants I interviewed each had their own unique "before" and "after." Before they entered their ELP, some participants had been in Canadian high schools; others had studied the same undergraduate programs in their home countries; others had no previous experience with higher education; some had travelled, studied, or worked at home or abroad; and yet others had already graduated from undergraduate programs and were now pursuing graduate studies. After they graduated from their ELPs, participants, again, had varying destinations aside from different academic disciplines. The Science without Borders students would stay in Canada for 18 months before returning to Brazil. Other participants intended to finish their degrees and remain at the same university for several years. Other participants wanted to finish their undergraduate degrees then go to another Canadian university for graduate studies. While some entertained the option of looking for work in Canada, others planned to return home to continue their education or find employment. Only one participant planned to stay in Canada long-term because his family wants to immigrate here.

Despite being on such different journeys, the life paths of these individuals briefly merged within their ELPs.

With this in mind, ELP educators should, foremost, recognize that their students are more than just English language learners. They come to Canada with varying identities, backgrounds, strengths, and needs. As such, instructors should take care to differentiate instruction in order to be responsive to individual students' needs. In the previous chapter, I suggested incorporating critical pedagogies into language instruction to help encourage language learners to become aware of the political, social, economic, and cultural implications of learning English (Canagarajah, 2005; Norton & Toohey, 2004). When situated within and tailored towards students' local realities, critical pedagogies can help students challenge oppression and promote social justice (Pessoa & Freitas, 2012). Therefore, I advocate for ELP educators to actively engage their students in critical pedagogies to move beyond structural approaches to language learning and respect their students as whole people.

I also see greater potential for ELP administrators to consult with the academic units on their campuses as opposed to operating in isolation. Those designing ELP curricula should meet with deans, chairs, or professors from a variety of disciplines to determine the kinds of skills that international ELLs will actually need in their programs. The curriculum documents from the ELP that 14 of my participants attended alludes to the importance of developing discipline-specific skills, stating that, in the final level of the program, students should practice skills in situations that are similar to those they will encounter in their academic programs. However, the documents neglect to elaborate on what those specific skills or situations might be, leaving individual teachers to determine these for themselves.

Ten of my participants only spent one semester in their ELPs, and many of them wished they could have had more time to develop their language proficiency before beginning post-secondary programs. Evans and Green (2007) also critique language programs for being too short, especially considering that academic content fluency takes five - seven years to develop (Cummins, 1979). Therefore, I recognize the need for university administrators to expand ELPs to offer enhanced support to international ELLs. Additional support could take on a variety of forms, including re-structuring advanced language classes to include discipline-specific academic articles and participation in on-campus lectures, creating tutoring programs that provide individualized assistance, or designing non-credit English courses for students to take throughout their academic programs. Learning English is not something that students start and end in one semester. As Abdul thoughtfully noted, "English is a language, not a course."

Looking Towards the Future in Internationalization

Even after they graduated from ELPs, many of the participants in my study felt that they entered their post-secondary programs at a deficit compared to native-English-speaking domestic students. Reflecting on the differences between domestic and international students' academic achievement, Kelly and Moogan (2012) acknowledge that institutions typically follow a deficit model of education in their internationalization initiatives. The deficit model holds that international students come to Western universities lacking the skills to succeed, so it is necessary for them to adjust and adapt to meet the requirements of the institution's systems. International students have to change to fit the system while the system remains static.

Recall, however, the AUCC's (2014) definition of internationalization: "institutional efforts to integrate an international, global, and/or intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of universities" (p. 3). The deficit model actually functions in

direct contrast to the overriding purpose of internationalization. Internationalization, by this definition, is not just about bringing more bodies into the university; it is about reciprocal learning, growth, and development. Urban and Bierlein Palmer (2014) agree that having a certain number of international students on Canadian campuses does not translate to internationalization.

Universities cannot achieve true internationalization if they demand international students totally replace their language and knowledge systems with dominant Western forms. This is not internationalization, but assimilation. Yes, international students will, undoubtedly, need to adjust in myriad ways to their new environment, but, by positioning them as deficient or inferior, universities miss out on a tremendous opportunity for their own curricular advancement and community diversification. Furthermore, "deficit" is not a neutral term. Indeed, the very act of defining a group as deficient privileges the in-group's superiority. I caution that universities upholding a deficit approach for integrating international students into academia are not actually achieving internationalization, but are more focused on reaping economic profits by having new recruits fit into an already established mould.

Resisting the deficit model, Kelly and Moogan (2012) challenge institutions to do away with the notion that international students are problems that need fixing. Rather, they encourage institutions to adopt a reflective approach to education by critiquing their own assumptions and constructing more inclusive global pedagogies that are collaborative and culturally responsive. Patel and Lynch (2013) favor the term *glocalization* over internationalization. They advocate for culturally diverse communities to use dialogue and negotiation to cultivate a mutually respectful third culture that builds on each other's strengths. Applying this concept to higher education, I recommend that institutions work towards internationalizing their curricula by establishing a task force, comprised of the senior administrator who oversees the academic plan, representatives

from the institution's international and academic departments, and international students. This task force could be responsible for replacing deficit approaches to internationalization with strength-based pedagogies that value students' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and better recognize the varied knowledge forms, skills, and talents of international students.

In a recent letter, Judy Bates, the president of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) (2016), advocates that universities should not exploit international students as a source of revenue. She advises universities to consider international recruitment as a long-term commitment in terms of providing needed services and resources to help international students before, during, and after their time studying in Ontario. While this letter recognizes the need to remedy current approaches to internationalization in higher education, there is much work to be done to put theory into practice and recommendations into action. As participants in my thesis research, 15 international ELLs have given voice to their perceptions of learning English and studying in Canada. As they work towards internationalization, university administrators should not lose sight of the individuals who are at the heart of this initiative.

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Appendix A: Letter of Information

Dear Potential Participant,

As you may remember, I visited your English classroom in December 2015 to introduce myself and my upcoming research project to you. By now, I imagine that you are almost finished your first semester of academic studies. Congratulations!

I am writing to invite you to participate in my research on international English language learners' experiences in English language programs (ELPs). This study is part of my Master's thesis research at Lakehead University. The tentative title of my thesis is "Internationalization in Canadian Universities: Exploring International English Language Learners' Perceptions of English Language Programs." The purpose of my study is to better understand what international students think of their ELPs. You will have the opportunity to share your feelings about how well your ELP prepared you for the academic challenges of your university courses and what learning English as an additional language means to you. By sharing your experiences, you can provide helpful feedback on how to improve ELPs to best meet the needs of international students.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you would like to be a participant, you will have an opportunity to reflect on your experiences transitioning from an ELP to university. Your commitment in this project would involve meeting with me for approximately one hour for an interview. We will choose a date, time, and location that are convenient for you. I can email you a list of questions if you would like to think about your answers before we meet in person.

As a research participant, your identity is protected. I will not use your real name at any time in the research process without your permission, including any presentations or publications that may follow this project. If you wish, you may choose another name (pseudonym) that I will use to refer to you. That way, anything you share with me will remain anonymous and confidential. There is no foreseeable risk or harm to you to be involved in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. During the interview, you have the right to decline to answer any questions you are not comfortable with.

With your consent, interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. After your interview, I will email you the transcript, so you can check it for accuracy. All data will be securely stored in a password-protected folder on my laptop. My supervisor and I will be the only individuals with access to this data, and the files will be deleted in five years. Throughout the research process, I will follow strict ethical guidelines to protect your anonymity. The findings of my research will be made available to you via email upon your request. The completed thesis will be available at the Education Library at Lakehead University.

This study has been approved by the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions or would like more information about my research, please do not hesitate to contact me, Melissa Burton, via email (mblanch1@lakeheadu.ca). You may also direct your questions to my faculty supervisor, Dr. Gerald Walton (gwalton@lakeheadu.ca).

If you have any questions related to the ethics of the research and would like to speak to someone outside of the research team, please contact Sue Wright at the Research Ethics Board (phone: (807) 343-8283; email: research@lakeheadu.ca).

If you are interested in participating in this project, please respond to this email. Finally, if you know any other international students who have completed an English Language Program and might be interested in this project, please feel free to forward this email to them.

Thank you,

Melissa Burton
Master of Education Student, Faculty of Education
Lakehead University

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Introductory Questions

1. What country are you from?
2. What languages do you speak?
3. How would you rate your English skills when you arrived in Canada? After you graduated from the ELP?
4. What academic program are you currently taking?
5. Why did you decide to study in Canada?
6. How long do you plan to stay in Canada?

Questions on Learning English

1. When did you start learning English? Why did you want to learn English?
2. What do you use English for in your life? What do you think you'll use it for in the future?
3. How important is knowing English to you? Why?
4. How has learning English affected how you identify yourself?

Questions on English Language Programs

1. What do you think is the purpose of ELPs?
2. Why did you enrol in an ELP before beginning your academic program?
3. How many semesters were you enrolled in an ELP? What level(s) were you placed in?
4. What did you learn in the ELP?
5. What would you change about the ELP to improve it?

Questions on Transitioning to a Post-Secondary Academic Program

1. How did you feel when you left the ELP to begin your academic program?

2. What challenges did you experience in the first semester of your academic program?
How did what you learn in the ELP help you cope with these challenges?
3. What do you do in your university courses? What language skills (e.g. reading, writing, listening, speaking) do you use? How well did the ELP help teach you these skills?
4. Are there any special language or academic skills that you need to succeed in your specific program (e.g. discipline-specific vocabulary, critical thinking)? How well did the ELP help teach you these skills?
5. What is your definition of academic success?

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Please review the following ethical considerations of participating in the research project, *Internationalization in Canadian Universities: Exploring International English Language Learners' Perceptions of English Language Programs*.

- My participation is voluntary. No judgments will be made about me if I decline to participate.
- I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
- I have the right to decline to answer any interview questions.
- Involvement in this research project will not pose any risks to me.
- All information gathered about me will be kept confidential. My identity will be protected (anonymity) in any publications through use of a pseudonym of my choosing.
- My interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. I will be emailed the transcript when it is ready, so I can check it for accuracy.
- All data will be securely stored in a password-protected folder on the researcher's laptop. Only the research team will have access to this data, and it will be deleted in five years.
- The findings and analysis of this project will be made available to me via email at my request upon completion of the project.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Melissa Burton (mblanch1@lakeheadu.ca) or Dr. Gerald Walton, Faculty Supervisor (gwalton@lakeheadu.ca). In addition, specific details related to respectful research and ethical conduct can be discussed at any time with Melissa Burton, Dr. Gerald Walton, or Sue Wright, at the Office of Research Services (807-343-8283).

My signature below indicates that I have read and understood this form and the accompanying letter of information. I agree to participate in the study, *Internationalization in Canadian Universities: Exploring International English Language Learners' Perceptions of English Language Programs*. I understand my rights as a participant in this study, as well as the potential benefits my participation provides.

Name (please print): _____

Participant Signature	Date
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Email: _____

Telephone Number: _____

<input type="checkbox"/>	Please check this box if you want to receive the results of this study. Results will be emailed to you.
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Appendix D: Participant Information

Participant	Home Country	Academic Program	Semesters in ELP	Previous Education	Tuition Payment	Future Plans
Engineering						
Leo	China	Mechanical Engineering	3	Completed grade 12 in Ontario	Parents	Work in China
Jack	Brazil	Civil Engineering	1	Completing undergraduate degree in Brazil	Science without Borders	Return home to finish degree
Pablo	Brazil	Electrical Engineering	1	Completing undergraduate degree in Brazil	Science without Borders	Return to Brazil to complete thesis
Tom	China	Electrical Engineering	1	Completed grade 12 in Ontario	Parents	Pursue graduate studies, possibly in Canada; parents want to immigrate to Canada
Sean	China	Master of Electrical Engineering	1	Completed undergraduate degree in China	Parents	Find a job, possibly in Canada
Business						
Abdul	Saudi Arabia	Leadership for Healthcare Professionals	2	Completed nursing certificate in Saudi Arabia	Government scholarship	Finish Bachelor of Nursing in Saudi Arabia
Marvin	China	Master of Economics	1	Completed undergraduate degree in China and United Kingdom	Own money	Complete PhD in Canada
Ahmed	Saudi Arabia	Business	1	Completed high school in Saudi Arabia	Government scholarship	Pursue graduate studies, unsure where
Austin	China	Master of Business Admin.	1	Completed undergraduate degree in China; studied in United States	Shares tuition costs with his parents	Find a job in China or pursue further education
Ali	Saudi Arabia	Business	3	Enlisted in military in Saudi Arabia	Government scholarship	Return to Saudi Arabia after finishing Bachelor's degree
Science						
Italo	Brazil	Geology	2	Completing undergraduate degree in Brazil	Science without Borders	Finish degree in Brazil
Jason	China	Master of Computer Science	1	Completed undergraduate degree in China	Own money	Finish master's degree and possibly look for work in Canada

Walter	Brazil	Biology	1	Completing undergraduate degree in Brazil	Science without Borders	Return to Brazil to finish degree and pursue graduate education
Clesio	Brazil	Physics	2	Completing undergraduate degree in Brazil	Science without Borders	Pursue graduate studies in Canada, return to Brazil
John	China	Forestry Management	1	Started undergraduate forestry program in China	Parents	Find a job in Canada or China