

**STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS, TEACHING METHODOLOGY AND  
SATISFACTION WITH ADULT ENGLISH AS  
A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN THE THUNDER BAY AREA**

**BY**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS  
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	i
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Statement of the Problem	
Purpose of the Study and Significance	
II. LITERATURE REVIEW . . . . .	5
Second Language Acquisition Theories:	
Acculturation Model	7
Accommodation Theory	10
Discourse Theory	14
The Monitor Model	15
Nelson et al.'s Model	21
Age and SLA	24
ESL Teaching Methodologies:	
Grammar-Translation Approach	27
Audio-Lingual Approach	30
Situational Approach	33
Communicative Approach	35
Theoretical Framework of the Study	40
III. DESIGN OF THE STUDY . . . . .	42
Objectives	42
Expectations	44

Methodology	45
Participants	46
Instruments	47
Analysis	50
IV. RESULTS . . . . .	51
Characteristics of Adult ESL Programs	
in Thunder Bay	51
Characteristics of ESL Teachers	55
Background Information	55
Teacher Attitudes and Practice	56
Teacher Attitudes	56
Teaching Practice	59
Standard for Success of the ESL Programs	62
Characteristics of ESL Students	64
Background Information	64
Predictors of Achievement	73
Confidence Level, Classroom Behaviour	
and Achievement	74
Student Feelings in Class and Achievement	75
Attitude towards Life in Original	
Countries and Achievement	76
Age and Achievement	77
Classroom Participation and Achievement	79
Classroom Participation and Student	
Feelings in Class	82

	Origin and Achievement	82
V.	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	84
	Level of Education and Achievement	84
	Attitude, Motivation and Achievement	87
	Confidence and Achievement	88
	Age and Achievement	90
	Positive Student Feelings and Achievement	91
	Student Attitude toward Life in Their	
	Original Countries and Achievement	92
	Classroom Participation and Achievement	93
	Listening to the Teacher and	
	Improvement in Listening	94
	Expressing Oneself Freely	
	and Improvement in Speaking	96
	Following Teacher Instructions	
	and Improvement in Reading	97
	Responding to Questions Voluntarily	
	and Improvement in Writing	98
	Origin and Achievement	100
	Summary and Conclusions	101
VI.	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	108
VII.	APPENDIXES	
	Teacher Questionnaire	
	Student Questionnaire	

LIST OF TABLES

		page
Table 1	Determinants of Successful and Unsuccessful Learning . . . . .	12
Table 2	Characteristics of ESL Teaching Methodologies	39
Table 3	ESL Teachers' Ranking of Teaching Role aspects . . . . .	57
Table 4	Teachers' Ranking of Student Abilities in English Language . . . .	58
Table 5	The Distribution of Time Spent in Class . . . .	60
Table 6	Frequency of Teaching Activities . . . . .	61
Table 7	Teachers' Assessment of Student Success . . . .	61
Table 8	Teachers' Ranking of Student Improvement . . .	62
Table 9	The Ethnic Composition of Student Participants . . . . .	65
Table 10	Student Perception of Improvement in English	68
Table 11	Summary of Students' Opinion on Some Classroom Activities . . . . .	69
Table 12	Popularity of Classroom Activities . . . . .	70
Table 13	Reported Student Behavior in Class . . . . .	71
Table 14	ESL Students' Reported Feelings in Class. . . .	72
Table 15	Reported SLA Achievement for Younger Group . .	78
Table 16	Reported SLA Achievement for Elder Group . . .	79

LIST OF FIGURES

	page
Figure 1. A model of Adult Second Language Performance . . . . .	18
Figure 2. An Adult Second Language Acquisition Model .	23
Figure 3. Chief Expectations of the Study . . . . .	35

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research suggests that adult ESL programs are quite successful. Most students have positive attitudes towards English study and share positive feelings in class. They take an active part in classroom activities and have made progress in their English acquisition.

The research was conducted among 94 adult ESL students and their ESL teachers in the Thunder Bay Area. Most of the participants are immigrants from Europe, Asia and South America. They are presently studying in adult ESL programs provided in schools, an adult education centre and a college.

A questionnaire survey was used to gather information for this correlational study. The expectations were that student achievement is related to their education, age, pre-course English proficiency, origin, classroom behaviours, feelings in class, motivation, confidence or anxiety level.

Results indicate that higher pre-course English proficiency, younger age, low anxiety level, active participation and positive feelings in class are closely related to higher achievement level. Students who had high education levels tend to have higher pre-course English proficiency and motivation levels, and spend more time in ESL class. No significant differences are found between different origins in motivation, attitude, classroom behaviour and achievement.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a second language (TESL) is an important issue in Ontario second language teaching. Every year, thousands of people enroll in ESL (English as a Second Language) and ESD (English Skills Development) courses in Ontario schools. According to the Ontario ESL/ESD Curriculum Guideline (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989, 1977), the goals of the program are:

- (a) to assist in the integration of young people newly arrived from other parts of the world by providing them with the opportunity to acquire the basic language skills fundamental to their continuing education;
- (b) to help students gain the knowledge and attitudes that will help them in active participation in Canadian society, so that they can develop and maintain confidence and a sense of self-worth and "develop moral and aesthetic sensitivity necessary for a complete and responsible life" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1977, p.1).

The Ministry of Education also emphasizes that to achieve the latter goals, an environment that respects and values

those people's linguistic and cultural traditions is needed.

The goals of the ESL program are defined explicitly in the provincial curriculum guideline for elementary and secondary schools. However, there is no written curriculum guideline for adult ESL programs.

#### Statement of the Problem

Adult ESL programs have been set up and implemented in Ontario for many years. Although there is no curriculum guideline to guide the implementation, the general purpose is assumed to be consistent with the provincial ESL curriculum guidelines issued by the Ministry of Ontario for elementary and secondary schools in the province. Adult ESL programs in Thunder Bay are supposed to be an example of the province-wide programs. However, no study has been made which examines the objectives of representative Adult ESL Programs (such as those in Thunder Bay) that guide them in practice and how these objectives are implemented in classrooms.

#### Purpose of the Study and Its Significance

The purpose of this investigation is to find out how representative adult ESL programs are implemented. Specifically, this study will examine the teaching methods employed by Thunder Bay ESL teachers in adult programs, the

student success perceived by both teachers and students, and the factors that influence the perceived student success. Because it is assumed that the main aims of adult ESL instruction are similar to those set by the Ontario Ministry of Education: to promote student learning and to develop a sense of self-worth and confidence, the present study will also survey ESL students' attitudes, motivation and confidence level in relation to the programs, and examine their relationships with student achievement. It is expected that ESL students' attitudes towards the English language and their own culture, their motivation, confidence level and social-economic status will relate to their rate of English acquisition.

The ESL teaching approaches currently in use fall into two broad categories: mechanical and communicative. A further expectation of this study is that the communicative approach to ESL teaching will be more successful in assisting student language acquisition and the development of self-worth and confidence.

The present study will provide data which, it is hoped, may be used to make constructive suggestions and assist ESL teachers and administrators in decision-making about teaching practice and professional development in this field throughout Ontario. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the study will

have direct implications for the theoretical underpinnings of adult ESL instruction, specifically with reference to the mechanical and communicative models.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This review section is organized into two parts:

(i) second language acquisition theory, (ii) ESL teaching methodologies, to reflect the facts that most studies in these two areas have been done separately and independently.

### Second Language Acquisition Theories

Second language acquisition is a very complicated process involving the learning of phonology, lexis, grammar, morphosyntax and pragmatic knowledge both in natural and tutorial setting (Ellis, 1985). Several second language acquisition models have been developed in an effort to describe this complicated process and the factors that influence the rate and extent of second language acquisition (SLA).

Five SLA theories will be reviewed here: the Acculturation Model, the Accommodation Theory, the Discourse Theory, the Monitor Model and the Adult SLA Model (Nelson et al., 1984).

The Acculturation Model explores SLA in relation to the second language (L2) learners' personal and ingroup's

assimilation level and status in the target language society. Ingroup here refers to the cultural group to which the L2 learners belong. The Accommodation Theory focuses upon the relationship between SLA and the learner's attitude towards their ingroup and the target language society. Both the Acculturation Model and Accommodation Theory connect second language proficiency with the learners' affective domain. Because of this, they are quite important in later SLA theories. Discourse Theory describes the way a learner acquires a second language. It proposes that the best way to learn a second language is through natural communication, and this argument sets the theoretical foundation for the communicative approach in ESL teaching.

The Monitor Model splits SLA into two components: acquisition of language knowledge (conscious language learning) and acquisition of language skill (subconscious language acquisition). It explores the functions of both components, the way each component is developed and the factors that influence SLA. The Monitor Model will provide the basic framework for the present investigation.

The Adult SLA Model deals with factors that influence adult learners' second language acquisition.

Each model will be described in some detail below.

### The Acculturation Model

Developed by Schumann (1978), this model explores the relationship between language acquisition and a series of social and psychological effects on second language learners. Acculturation is defined as "adapting to a new culture", which, according to Schumann, is essential to the L2 learner's language proficiency. Schumann explains that when people enter a new environment, the differences between their own culture and the culture in the new environment create social and psychological distance. These differences decide the degree of their acculturation, and the degree of their acculturation influences the rate and extent of their second language acquisition.

Social distance refers to the extent that the L2 learners' ingroup fails to integrate with the target language group. Schumann states that social distance is determined by the contact and relationship between the learners' group and the target language group and their attitude toward each other. The relationship and attitudes are decided by the following factors:

- (a) whether the two groups are socially equal;
- (b) whether the two groups both want the L2 language group to assimilate, share social facilities and have



- positive attitudes toward each other;
- (c) whether the L2 group is small and cohesive;
  - (d) whether the two groups' cultures are congruent and how long the L2 group will stay in the target language group area.

All these factors form an external norm which constantly influences the L2 learners' personal attitudes and motivation in second language acquisition.

Psychological distance refers to the degree the L2 learners intend to acculturate with the target language group. It forms the internal norm which controls them through the whole process of their SLA. Psychological distance is determined by affective factors such as learners' motivations, ego boundaries or defensiveness, and language and "culture shock" they experience.

According to Schumann, social distance is primary to the learners' language acquisition, whereas psychological distance becomes effective when social distance is less salient. Both social and psychological distance can control the amount of contact learners have with the target language and the level of input they receive in natural or tutorial settings. Input here refers to the target language addressed to L2 learners by native speakers or other L2 learners. The existence of social and cultural distance contributes to the inability on

the L2 learners' part to achieve a native-like competence in the second language.

In Ontario, as elsewhere, opportunities are provided to everyone with basic skills to function in this multicultural society. Most new immigrants, however, lack of the basic English language skills to understand others or make themselves understood. The language problem has caused many difficulties in their daily lives and made it difficult for them even to find a job. They realize that if they want to pursue their dreams, become a part of this society and have a better life, they must learn English as quickly as possible. The motivation formed under such external norm eventually brings them to ESL courses readily provided for them throughout the province.

The ESL students come into school with different personal experiences and difficulties. Some of them even have not recovered from the language or culture shock. School's responsibilities, therefore, are not only to help them learn the basic language skills, but also try to reduce their social and psychological distance to the fullest extent so that they are able to gain a positive attitude, confidence and self-esteem which may promote higher achievement in their English acquisition. The school environment, then, becomes very important because what ESL students experience here might

shape or change the external and internal norms that bind them.

Teacher attitudes and teaching methodologies contribute a great deal to the formation of the school environment. ESL teachers should respect students' cultures and traditions, treat them equally and give them help and encouragement. In this way, they convey to ESL students the idea that the target language group has a positive attitude towards the newcomers and desires to help them to assimilate and integrate with the target society. In addition, if ESL students feel comfortable, relaxed and happy at school, and what they learn helps them to survive the culture shock, and to understand and adapt to the new culture and environment, they may have more positive motivation and receive more input. In this context, therefore, teacher attitudes and teaching methodologies are important external factors that affect students' English language acquisition in the school environment.

#### Accommodation Theory

In contrast to Schumann's theory that social distance is the primary determinant of second language proficiency, Giles and Burne (1982) argue that L2 proficiency is determined by the learners' level of motivation, which reflects how they

define themselves in ethnic terms. This assumption underpins the Accommodation Theory.

According to Giles, L2 acquisition is dependant on

- (a) how learners identify themselves with their own ethnic ingroup;
- (b) the kind of comparison the learners make between their ingroup and the target language group;
- (c) the learners' perception of their ingroup's status in relation to the target language group;
- (d) whether the learners think that their ingroup is related (which suggests a soft and open ingroup boundary) to or separated (which suggests a hard and closed ingroup boundary) from the target language group culturally and linguistically;
- (e) whether the learners feel their status in the ingroup is satisfactory or not.

Ellis (1985, p.257) summarized the factors listed above and developed a table (See Table 1) to show the favourable and unfavourable factors that affect L2 acquisition. It shows that L2 learners' weak identification with their ingroup and favourable or no comparison between their ingroup and the target language group can result in high motivation and L2 proficiency level. In addition, when they perceive their ingroup's ethno-linguistic importance as low, their perception

of group boundaries being soft and open, or interrelated to the target language group, and when they consider their status in ingroup to be satisfactory, they are also likely to have high motivation and a high level of L2 proficiency.

Table 1.  
Determinants of Successful  
and Unsuccessful Learning

Key variables	A high motivation, high level of proficiency	B low motivation, low level of proficiency
1 identification with ingroup	weak identification	strong identification
2 inter-ethnic comparison	makes favourable or no comparison, i.e. ingroup not seen as inferior	makes negative comparison, i.e. ingroup seen as inferior
3 perception of ethno-linguistic vitality	low perception	high perception
4 perception of ingroup boundaries	soft and open	hard and closed
5 Identification with other social categories	strong identification - satisfactory ingroup status	weak identification - inadequate ingroup status

(Ellis, 1985, p.257)

The Accommodation Theory connects second language acquisition with L2 learners' personal relationships and

attitudes towards both their own ingroup and the target language group. It also takes L2 learners' ingroup socioeconomic status as one of the factors that affect their second language acquisition.

While the pressure from the new environment forces new immigrants to learn English in order to survive, the government's immigration policies are generally encouraging. The Ontario government has established various programs to help new immigrants in their daily lives and with their English, so that they can adjust themselves to this new environment and improve their socioeconomic situation. The multiculturalist policies emphasize the equality of all ethnic groups and encourage people of different origins to maintain their own cultural heritages. These external factors have positive effect on student motivation by helping ESL students develop perceptions of low ethno linguistic vitality, soft and open ingroup boundaries and equal status of their ingroups in this society.

Adult ESL students' personal factors such as present socioeconomic status, education, employment and attitude towards Canadian and their own cultures can also affect their motivation in ESL learning. It is important that they take pride in their own culture and appreciate other cultures as well. This will also help ESL students to develop a

perception of soft and open ingroup boundaries, which in turn may have positive effect on student motivation. If ESL teachers initiate some classroom activities or establish a positive atmosphere that achieves this purpose, they might promote a positive change in their students' motivation.

### Discourse Theory

Instead of attempting to explain the factors that influence second language proficiency, Hatch's Discourse Theory describes the way L2 learners learn. Hatch (1978) focuses on the communicative aspect of a language and explores the processes of both first language and second language acquisition. She draws a parallel between them and explains that at least in informal settings, both first and second language learners develop their language proficiency in similar ways. When they participate in natural communication, their needs and desires to 'accomplish actions' or to communicate highly motivates them to learn. So language acquisition is considered to be contingent upon learning how to communicate.

The order in which L2 learners learn grammar is usually consistent with the order of frequencies in which grammatical structures occur in natural communication. They learn grammar

by analyzing the commonly occurring formulae (sentence patterns) and then turning them into their own second language components. In this way, Hatch argues, language instruction should follow a natural route - to learn in real communication, or in a setting as close to a real life situation as possible.

Hatch also found that, in natural communication, native speakers try to adjust their speech in order to negotiate meaning with non-native speakers. The kind of adjusted conversational strategies provided as input may influence the rate and process of second language acquisition.

The Discourse Theory focuses on SLA in natural communicative settings. It provides a theoretical foundation for the communicative teaching approach recommended to ESL teachers in Ontario (The Ministry of Education, 1989). The essence of this approach is the facilitation of learning a second language by communicating in a culturally significant context.

#### The Monitor Model

The Monitor Model developed by Krashen (1982) has received considerable attention. Krashen incorporated several previous SLA theories and listed five hypotheses in his model:



i) the acquisition learning hypothesis; ii) the natural order hypothesis; iii) the Monitor hypothesis; iv) the input hypothesis and v) the affective filter hypothesis. Each hypothesis will be discussed briefly.

### Acquisition Learning Hypothesis

Krashen differentiates learning into two kinds: subconscious and conscious. He uses the term 'language acquisition' to refer to subconscious learning by which the learner picks up a second language through participating in natural communication. In this learning situation the focus is on meaning. 'Acquired' knowledge consists of subconscious L2 rules. The learner acquires them the same way that children acquire their first language - through informal, implicit learning. 'Language learning' is used to refer to conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing its explicit, formal linguistic rules and being able to talk about them.

'Learned' knowledge consists of metalingual knowledge. It is gained through formal and conscious study. It is not responsible for fluency. Krashen hypothesizes that 'acquired' and 'learned' knowledge are stored separately in the left hemisphere of the brain. 'Acquired' knowledge is located in the language areas, available for automatic processing, whereas 'learned' knowledge, metalinguistic in nature and

available only for controlled processing, is not necessarily stored in the language areas.

### Natural Order Hypothesis

Krashen states that language learners 'acquire' grammatical structures in a predictable order. When learners are engaged in a natural communication task, they usually follow the standard order. But if the task involves the use of metalinguistic knowledge, the learners will use a different order.

### The Monitor Hypothesis

Krashen indicates that 'language acquisition' leads to accurate and spontaneous use of a language. L2 learners use 'acquired' competence to generate speech. However, 'language learning' has a very limited function in language performance. The 'learned' knowledge can only function as a Monitor device used by the L2 learners to edit their language performance by acting upon or modifying speech either before or after speech is made. This process is illustrated in Figure 1:

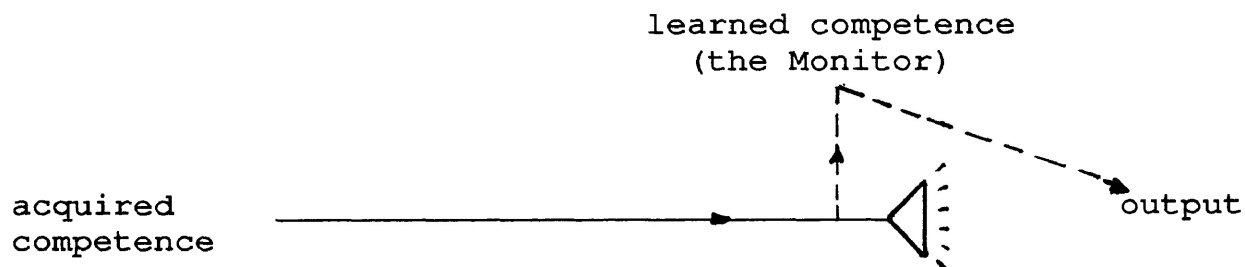


Figure 1. A model of adult second language performance (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p.30)

### The Input Hypothesis

After addressing the importance of language acquisition, Krashen states in the input hypothesis that 'language acquisition' takes place when input is a little beyond the learner's level of competence. The input that brings about 'acquisition' should be understandable to the learner and focus on message but not form. He also points out that the learner's aptitude is only related to 'learning' of conscious knowledge and performance in tests on conscious knowledge. 'Language acquisition' is affected by the learner's attitudes towards the target language and the community that speaks the language.

### The Affective Hypothesis

Krashen incorporates in this hypothesis the affective filter theory proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977). According

to them, L2 learners' affective filter acts like a mental block. It controls the amount of input they contact with and then take in. The strength of the affective filter is determined by the learners' motivation, self-confidence and anxiety state. When the learners have high motivation, high self-confidence and low anxiety, their filter is low and lets in greater amounts of input. In contrast, when the learners have low motivation, low self-confidence and high anxiety, and when they are in a tense situation or on thin defenses, their filter is high and lets in little input. Because the amount of comprehensible input and the strength of the affective filter vary from person to person, the rate and extent of their 'acquisition' also vary accordingly.

Age can also affect 'learning', 'acquisition' and the state of one's affective filter. The strength of a L2 learner's affective filter is likely to increase with age, especially after puberty. To this assumption Brown (1980) gives a convincing explanation: young L2 learners are less culturally bound than adults. They are more socio-culturally resilient. They can get over culture shock and culture stress and adapt to the new culture more easily and quickly and therefore have lower filters, whereas adults, being deeply rooted in their own culture, suffer more severe culture shock.

This can easily lead to feelings of estrangement and hostility towards the target language culture. It is more difficult for them to 'acculturate' or 'accommodate', so they are more likely to have a higher affective filter.

Krashen's Monitor Model is taken as the basic theoretical framework for this investigation. It predicts that some instructional approaches (the communicative approach, for example) will develop better student communicative competence. The key is that the emphasis is on 'acquiring' subconscious rules through natural, creative, student-based communication rather than on 'learning' to be conscious of formal language knowledge through teacher instruction and student memorization. Moreover, the input is usually comprehensible to students and it focuses on giving and receiving messages. The Monitor Model also describes SLA on the basis of individual differences. Besides the motivation factor proposed in the Accommodation Theory, this model takes the L2 learners' confidence level and anxiety status as important factors that affect the amount of input and 'acquisition'. Krashen's Monitor Model gives a rather complete explanation of how SLA takes place.

Nelson Et Al.'s Adult SLA Model

In this model, teaching methodology is considered to have an effect on the rate and success of second language acquisition. Many studies exist on the effect of formal instruction on learners' second language proficiency. Although mixed results have been obtained, they generally support the hypothesis that instruction aids the rate and success of SLA (Ellis, 1985). Long (1983) summarized these results and claims that formal instruction provides help to both children and adults of any language proficiency level in both acquisition-rich or acquisition-poor environments. It can provide aids not only to the conscious learning of language knowledge, but also to the subconscious acquisition of language skills.

While examining the role of formal instruction, Krashen points out:

The value of second language class, then, lies not only in the grammar instruction, but in the 'teacher talk', the comprehensible input. It can be an efficient place to achieve at least the intermediate levels rapidly, as long as the focus is on providing input for acquisition (1982, p.59).

Krashen explains that many L2 learners seem to have

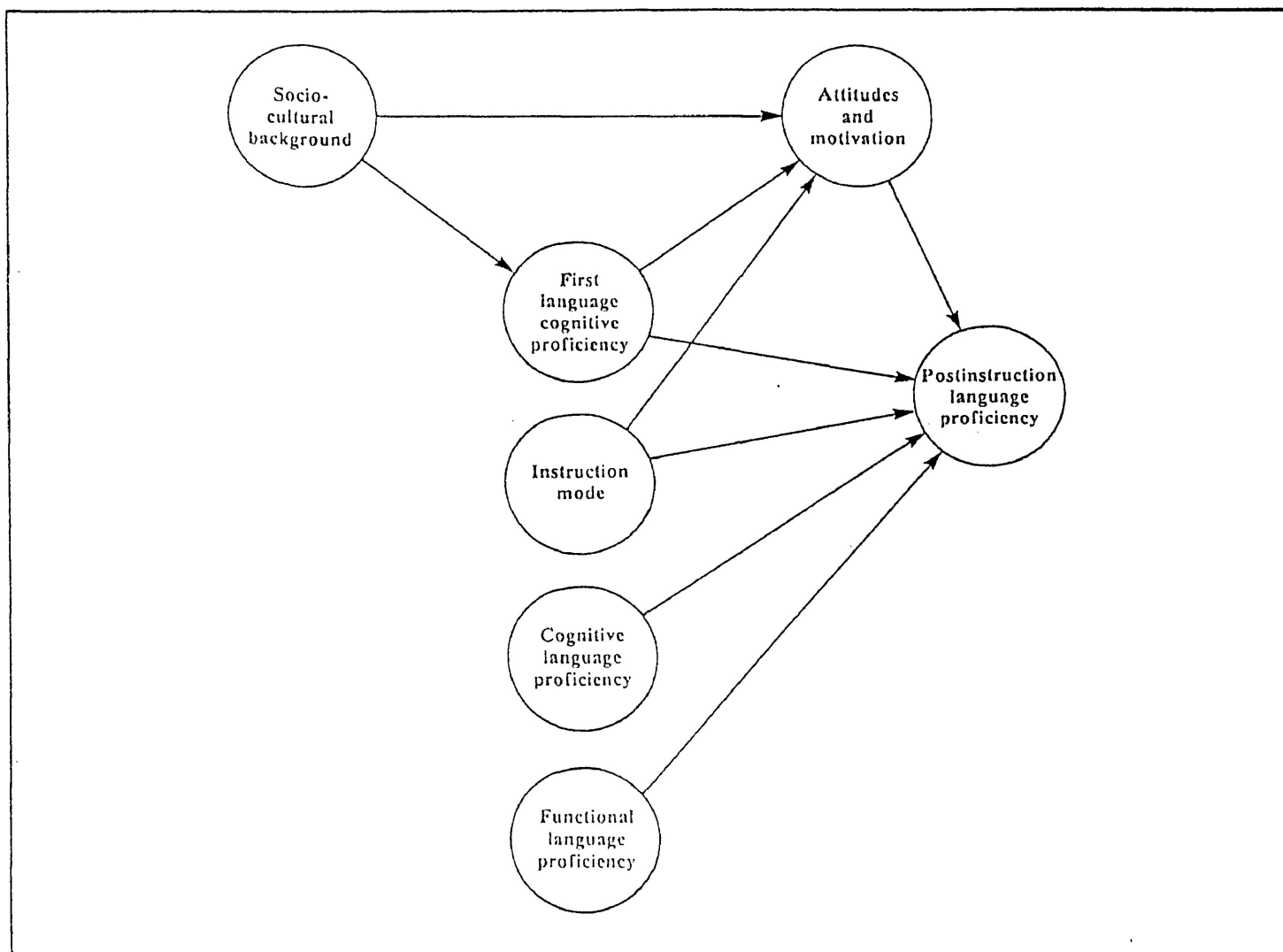
experience only in 'exposure-type' environments in a natural setting. They might not receive necessary or comprehensible input to assist in upgrading their L2 level. In classrooms, however, environments are more likely to be an 'intake-type', which more or less meet the conditions for 'language acquisition'. It is the kind of environment and input that enhances 'language acquisition', but not formal instruction in linguistic rules.

In an evaluative study on ESL student teachers, Nelson et al. (1983) developed a model of adult second language acquisition in classrooms which takes into account L2 learners' first language cognitive proficiency, pre-instruction L2 proficiency and instructional mode. Their model is illustrated in Figure 2. According to them, the L2 learners' socio-cultural background, first language cognitive proficiency and teacher instruction mode can affect the learners' attitudes and motivation. At the same time the learners' attitudes, motivation, first language proficiency, teacher instruction mode and their pre-instruction cognitive and functional language proficiency will decide their post instruction language proficiency.

ESL students' first language cognitive proficiency, their pre-instruction English proficiency and teacher instruction mode referred in this model are all very important components

in this study.

Figure 2. An Adult SLA Model  
(Nelson et al., 1984, p.30)



ESL students' first language cognitive proficiency levels and their pre-instruction English levels are often indicated by the education they have received. Students with higher



education usually have higher first language cognitive proficiency. They are more likely to have higher pre-instruction English proficiency as well, because English as a foreign language course has been in secondary school or university curricula in many countries in the world. According to Nelson's model, these students have better chance to achieve higher success in English study than students with poor education, who tend to have poor first language cognitive proficiency or poor pre-instruction English proficiency.

Teacher instruction mode can not only influence ESL students' attitudes and motivation to learn English, but also directly affect student English acquisition. Different ESL teaching methodologies and their effects on student success will be discussed later in this chapter.

#### Age and SLA

Many studies also examine the correlations between age, length of learning and gained language proficiency. Cazden et al. (1975) found that L2 learners, regardless of whether they are children, adolescents or adults, go through the same stages. They appear to process linguistic data in the same way. Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978) found that adolescent learners (12 - 15 year-olds) progress most rapidly in

morphology and syntax. Adults (15 years and older) range next, while children (6 - 10 years) are slower than both above groups. Teenagers appear to have better language learning capacity and better performance than other age groups. When L2 learners pass that stage, their performance begins to decline. The progress in second language acquisition tends to get slower as the age increases. Snow's study also indicates that there is no significant difference in the learning of pronunciation between different age groups.

Ellis (1985) has summarized the research on age and language proficiency thus:

1. Starting age does not affect the route of SLA. Although there may be differences in the acquisition order, these are not the result of age.
2. Starting age affects the rate of learning. Where grammar and vocabulary are concerned, adolescent learners do better than either children or adults, when the length of exposure is held constant. Where pronunciation is concerned there is no appreciable difference.
3. Both number of years' exposure and starting age affect the level of success. The number of year's exposure contributes greatly to the overall communicative fluency of the learners, but starting age determines the levels of accuracy achieved, particularly in pronunciation (p.106).

### Student Participants' Age level

It should be noted that the participants in the proposed investigation are adult ESL students in Thunder Bay. Their ages range from 15 - 65 years. They can be divided into young adult and elder adult groups.

Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978) studied the relationship between age and SLA and found that the teenagers are at the peak of language learning capacities and have the ability to comprehend language as a formal system. Rosansky (1975) studied learners at different age levels and stated that teenage L2 learners can think flexibly and become increasingly de-centred from themselves. They have strong meta-awareness and are able to recognize differences and similarities between their own mother tongue and the target language. The young adult group, in particular, can not only learn a second language like a child, but also can supplement this process by conscious study. They are likely to hold strong social and cultural attitudes towards their ingroups and the target language group.

### **ESL Teaching Methodologies**

Although many ESL teaching methods have been developed

in this century, two general styles appear to differentiate ESL teachers' approaches - the mechanical and the communicative (Ramirez & Stromquist, 1978). Teaching methods or strategies can be placed into three general categories according to their different emphases on skill development. These categories are: grammar-translation approach (emphasizing reading and writing), audio-lingual/situational approach (emphasizing listening and speaking) and communicative approach (emphasizing listening, speaking, reading and writing). The first two categories are consistent with Ramirez and Stromquist's mechanical style, while the third category is consistent with their communicative style. Each category will be described and discussed in the following section.

#### Grammar-Translation Approach

Solidly rooted in the teaching of Greek and Latin, this method has dominated the teaching of ESL for the past century (Elson, 1983). The aim is to develop student's intelligence and reading competence (Zhang, J. 1986; Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989). Its supporters argue that once students have learned the grammatical rules, they can use the rules as a guide to practical communication and make the transition to

speaking and understanding in real life communication (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989). It takes 'functionalism' as its psychological theory, which stresses the importance of empirical, rational thought and the capability of the human mind. Its diachronic or historical linguistic theory deals with the development of languages. Those linguists assume that there is some form of universal grammar to be found by analyzing the languages of the world.

The grammar-translation approach places grammar and the written form of the target language as the primary model and mode for learning the spoken language. Printed literary texts, usually of a classical nature, are used as the central focus (Elson, 1983). Grammar is taught deductively and systematically. It is used as an aid to reading comprehension. Memorization of grammatical rules and isolated vocabulary is stressed. The student's mother tongue is often used as the language of instruction (Elson, 1983; Zhang, J., 1986). Written and oral translation, used extensively in class, is virtually the only means of comprehension and drill exercises (Brown, 1980). Little or no attention is paid to pronunciation.

The grammar-translation approach emphasizes conscious study of language knowledge. It can help students gain insight into different language systems and develop a sense

of universal properties through comparison and contrast. However, by emphasizing the system of the target language, this approach neglects the communicative functions of the language. Long, elaborate explanations of the intricate rules create a dull classroom atmosphere. Students are trained to respond only to the written form of the language (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989).

Judged by Krashen's Monitor Model (1982), this approach only deals with 'learned competence', which can sometimes be used by the learner to modify his speech. However, the more important aspect leading directly to speaking - 'acquired competence' - is neglected, because the system of grammar instruction does not necessarily agree with the order the learner learns in natural communication. There is little input for 'acquisition' and little aural-oral practice. Students lack motivation to communicate their own ideas. As a result, students trained by this approach are usually not good in listening and speaking.

Having been used for hundreds of years, the grammar-translation approach is still used today in various forms. For example, some oral practice is added, but the main focus is still on reading, translating and memorizing grammatical rules (Brown, 1983). It is especially the case for English as a foreign language in third world countries where fluent

English speakers and modern teaching facilities are not readily available.

### Audio-Lingual/Situational Approach

#### Audio-Lingual Approach

The aim of this approach is to train students to become fluent speakers and efficient listeners (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989). This approach came into being at a time when the U.S. was developing intensive language programmes to train people for working overseas during and after World War II (Elson, 1983; Zhang, Z. 1987). This approach is based on Pavlov, Skinner and Thorndike's behavioural orientations to learning, which describe human behaviour in terms of relationships between stimulus-response connections (S - R) and reinforcement. Acquisition of a language is considered to be a process of habit formation. The correct language behaviour is established by repeated reinforcement. Therefore, the teacher's role in the classroom is to 'stimulate' desired 'responses' from the language learner and to reinforce correct responses.

The structuralist theory that sentence pattern study is the key to language learning laid the linguistic foundation for this approach (Brown, 1980; Elson, 1983). The structural

linguists believe that language is speech and a set of habits. It is what native speakers say out of habit, not what someone thinks they ought to say. Languages are different from one another. They describe and analyze recurring superficial phenomena of a language and summarize them into sentence patterns without consideration of their possible usages and meanings in different contexts.

In classrooms based on this approach, teachers endeavour to teach the language, but not facts about the language. Learning adheres to the order of first language acquisition: listening, speaking, reading and then writing (Elson, 1983). Teachers usually present the language in dialogue form first to create a context for vocabulary study. After aural-oral practice, pattern drills are provided as the core of language study in contrast to different structures in ESL students' mother tongues (Rivers, 1983). Great attention is paid to pronunciation, intonation and the prevention of student errors. Language laboratories are often used to achieve the purpose. Students, especially those at the introductory level, are encouraged to memorize dialogues provided by the teacher. It is hoped that they would use or generalize the materials by analogy to parallel forms and functions to cope with a number of conversational needs in practical situations. There is little grammatical explanation, and the student's



mother tongue is rarely used in class (Brown, 1980), even though there is an emphasis on those patterns where the mother tongue and target language differ (for classes of homogeneous mother tongue speakers). Students learn grammar unconsciously through practice of substitution, expansion or conversion of a sentence pattern (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989). Choral response is a frequent phenomenon in class, which provides every student with more opportunities to produce response (Elson, 1983). Quick and correct responses are reinforced immediately.

In this way, students are trained to automatically speak the 'real native language' in 'real' situations without referring to their mother tongue. Reading is taught systematically from what students have practised aurally and orally to texts of different levels of difficulty until students can understand any given materials (Rivers, 1983). Writing at the introductory stage is only considered to be a means of support for the practice of the spoken language.

The audio-lingual approach is favoured for dealing with large classes. However, repetitive mimicry and memorization are boring. They do not encourage intellectual development and language learning in a free and creative way. Materials for structured situations and rigid mimicry provide students with insufficient preparation for spontaneous expression.

Their ability to express themselves is limited to the set phrases they have practised. Lack of grammatical explanation can frustrate students and prolong the learning process. With its emphasis on oral communication, this approach restricts student development in reading and writing competencies.

### Situational Approach

The situational approach was developed to integrate language study with students' everyday needs. The aim is to develop student ability to communicate in set situations (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989). Similar to the audio-lingual approach, the situational approach focuses on the formation of right language habits. It emphasizes listening and speaking skills. Imitation, memorization of dialogues and sentence pattern drills are used as a means to promote language learning. However, instead of teaching out of context, which is the common characteristic of all previous approaches, teachers employing this approach provide the language model in a set situation and then give students opportunities to practice by acting out 'real' situation (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989). Teaching materials, mainly typical dialogues, are organized in terms of different themes, such as travel, family, asking for directions, and so on. Pattern drills and vocabulary study are closely related

to a theme (Zhang, Z. 1987).

The situational approach uses set situations for practice. Vocabulary and language patterns are taught in context. However, grammar instruction is limited to a minimum. Students may find it difficult to adapt what they have memorized to varied contexts in real communication.

According to Ellis (1985), audio-lingual and situational approaches, like the grammar-translation approach, only emphasize the linguistic form of the language. Mechanical exercises are used to develop students' awareness of 'learned' knowledge and some expressions that can only be used in certain contexts. The acquisition of listening and speaking competence that results from teaching may not be immediate. Students need more practice in natural communication to internalize what they have learned. As a result, students lack 'learned competence' from explicit instruction. They are able to communicate in some circumstances, but they sometimes cannot edit their speech appropriately according to different situations. Since students taught by these two approaches mimic and memorize materials given to them, their own feelings and needs may differ from what they are taught to say. They may lack motivation and desire to accomplish their own actions or express their own ideas in class. This may more or less prevent them from receiving input and internalising what they

have practised as well.

### Communicative Approach

The communicative approach was developed in the 1970s, based upon the view that language is a system of human communication. The aim of this approach is to promote student development of communicative competence, which is defined by Hymes and Gumperz (1972) as "what a speaker needs to know to communicate efficiently in culturally significant settings" (p.vii). Hymes argues that linguists should move away from their almost exclusive concern with the properties of language as a formal grammatical system, and focus their research on the identification of "rules of appropriateness" - the rules, patterns, purposes, consequences of language use and account of their interrelation (Hymes, 1974). Linguistic or grammatical competence is only part of Hymes' theory of communicative competence. The emphasis is on "the importance of context in determining appropriate patterns of behaviour, both linguistic and extralinguistic" (Rivers, 1983).

In the communicative classroom, teachers sometimes, but not always, teach grammar. All learning is done in context and focuses on the use of the language in a culturally acceptable way. According to Allen and Howard (1981),

"language is viewed as an integral part of the learners' personal and social development" (p.536). Curriculum is designed in the form of "units of activity" to involve students in active participation of teaching/learning activities that resemble real life situations. Students learn different functions of the target language and are encouraged to use all the linguistic knowledge they have to communicate as a member of a particular socio-cultural group, or to meet the demands of a certain situation. Authentic materials are taken from the world outside of the classrooms and materials relevant to students' lives are used in class. By using such materials, students become aware of what they wish to communicate and need to learn (Elson, 1983) . Teachers do not act as authorities, nor do they provide models. But rather, they set up activities and give feedback. They are there to assist their students to express their own ideas, act as resource persons and as interdependent participants. Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are all emphasized and united in various activities such as problem solving, role playing, discussion, giving or receiving real information. In this way, students are motivated to take an active part in classroom activities and communicate their own feelings and experiences in functional language (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989).

The merits of the communicative approach lie in its emphasis on the structural, conversational and social aspects of language. It is learner-centred (Elson, 1983). Creative communication in activities is personally meaningful and authentic to students (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989). However, this approach is very demanding in efforts from both teachers and students. Teachers without special training may find it difficult to organize available materials in order to meet the needs of their students (Guglielmino & Burrichter, 1987). Students may find it difficult to use a new language creatively at the beginning.

In a communicative classroom, the focus is on providing input for acquisition. Students are motivated to express their own ideas and feelings, using the Monitor device ('learned' knowledge) to edit their own speech. By means of practice under teacher direction, they can quickly internalize what they have learned and turn acquisition from teaching to real 'acquired' competence that generates free and spontaneous communication in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Their motivation to accomplish their own actions leads them to receive target language input more easily than other less motivated L2 learners. Although the original formulation of the communicative approach did not necessarily focus on creating a lower affective filter or providing comprehensible

input for students' language acquisition, the practice of this teaching approach has produced such effects. Students taught with this method are more likely to have better communicative competence than students taught in grammar-translation, audio-lingual or situational approaches, as far as the environment variable is held constant.

The characteristics of all the teaching approaches discussed above are summarized in table 2. According to this table, the goal of the grammar-translation approach is to develop students' ability to read and write. The teacher acts as an authority and students do what the teacher says. Grammar exercises, translation, memorizing texts are characteristic activities of this approach. Students' mother tongue is used in explanation and exercises. The grammar-translation approach provides explanation of grammatical rules, allows comparison between languages, and develops students' reading and writing skills. However, little emphasis is put on the development of speaking and listening skills and the language used in class and practice is often artificial.

The goal of the audio-lingual approach is to develop automatic production of language patterns, whereas the goal of the situational approach is to develop students' ability

Table 2. Teaching Methods

Characteristics	Grammar-Translation	Audio-lingual	Situational	Communicative
Goals	Ability to read and write	Automatic production of language patterns	Ability to communicate in set situations	Meaningful communication
Role of teacher	Acts as an authority	Provides models	Provides models	Sets up activities, gives feedback, acts as a resource
Role of student	Does what the teacher says	Mimics the teacher	Mimics the teacher	Engages in creative, meaningful communication
Characteristic activities	Grammar exercises, translation	Mimicking and memorizing drills and dialogues	Memorizing dialogues	Problem solving, role playing, transmitting and receiving real information
Skills emphasized	Writing, reading	Speaking, listening	Speaking, listening	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
Positive features	Provides explanations of grammatical rules; allows comparison between languages; develops students' reading and writing skills	Provides practice in language patterns; stresses fluency; promotes good pronunciation	Provides practice for set situations; teaches vocabulary and language patterns in context	Highlights structural, conversational, and social aspects of language; is creative, meaningful, and authentic
Negative features	No speaking and listening; language often artificial	Boring; not creative	Limited to set situations; not creative	Demanding

( Ministry of Education, 1989, p.4 )



to communicate in set situations. In either audio-lingual or situational classrooms, the teacher provides models without talking about grammar rules. Students mimic the teacher and memorize drills and dialogues. Speaking and listening are emphasized and the students' mother tongue is not allowed. Both audio-lingual and situational approaches provide practice in language patterns and stress fluency, but student creativity is limited and the classes are usually boring.

The goal of the communicative approach is to facilitate L2 learning in meaningful communication. Teachers usually set up activities, give feedback, act as resource persons. Students engage in creative, meaningful communication. Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are all emphasized and the students' mother tongue can be used in class. The communicative approach highlights structural, conversational and social aspects of language. The use of language is meaningful, creative and authentic. However, it demands great efforts from both teachers and students.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

In this review, factors influencing second language proficiency have been identified. They are: social and psychological distance between the L2 learner's group and the

target language group (Shumann's Acculturation Model), the motivation Level that is affected by the L2 learners' perception of their own group and the target language group (Accommodation Theory), the learners' motivation, self-confidence, age and anxiety state (Krashen's Monitor Model), and L2 learners' socio-cultural background, attitude toward the target language, first language cognitive proficiency, previous L2 proficiency and instruction mode (Nelson's Adult SLA Model).

In terms of the learning process, Hatch's Discourse Theory points out the similarity between the first and second language acquisition processes and recommends SLA in real communication settings. Krashen's acquisition learning and monitor hypotheses support Hatch's argument by stating that L2 learners usually use knowledge acquired subconsciously in natural communication to generate accurate and spontaneous speech.

The Discourse Theory and the Monitor Model not only imply that the communicative approach to ESL teaching/learning is more effective than grammar-translation and audio-lingual and situational approaches, but are taken as the theoretical framework for this study. The factors that affect SLA are considered in the design of this study described in the following section.

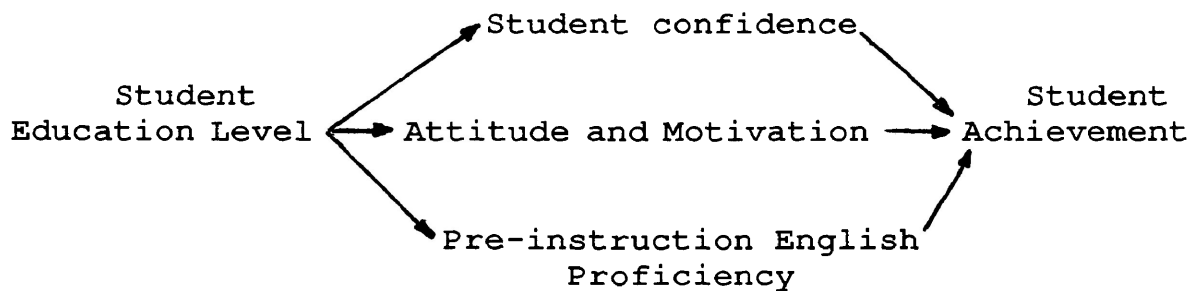
### III. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

#### Objectives

The chief purpose of this study is: (a) to evaluate the effects of ESL students' background, attitudes and motivation on their English acquisition, and (b) to describe the ESL teaching methods employed by ESL teachers in adult ESL programs in Thunder Bay. Student educational level, their attitudes towards English study and their own cultures, motivation, confidence and pre-instruction English proficiency levels will be related to success in English acquisition. These factors will be assessed by ascertaining the perceptions of the adult ESL student themselves.

Figure 3 illustrates the chief expectations underlying this study:

Figure 3. Chief Expectations of the Study



It is expected that the student level of education will influence their confidence, attitudes, motivation and success in second language acquisition. In turn, students' confidence, attitudes, motivation and pre-instruction English proficiency are expected to affect the level of their achievement in English acquisition. In other words, ESL student success in English acquisition is expected to be dependent on their confidence, attitudes and motivation and the level of pre-instruction English proficiency. The design of this study is correlational and the limits of this method, particularly as it relates to establishing causal relations, are recognized.

Student level of education is considered to be an independent variable in relation to dependent variables of student confidence, attitudes, motivation, pre-instruction English proficiency and success.

It is acknowledged that the external factors such as government policies and support, general expectation of the society to conform with the main culture, etc., can affect ESL students' motivation and attitude towards English study and achievement. However, these are not the major concerns of this study and therefore not listed in the design of the study.

Other factors such as student socioeconomic status, their acculturation level, perceptions of their own ingroup cultures and status in relation to that of other ethnic groups can influence their own confidence, attitudes, motivation and then further affect their success in English acquisition as well. They are considered to be part of the context in which this study takes place.

### **Expectations**

It is anticipated that:

- #1. Higher student education, motivation, confidence levels and higher pre-instruction English proficiency will relate to higher student success in English acquisition (Consistent with the work of Nelson et al.);
- #2. Positive attitude towards English study, low anxiety level and positive feelings in class will relate to higher student achievement (Following from Krashen's Monitor Model);
- #3. Communicative teaching approach will relate to active student participation in class, and reported active participation in meaningful teaching/learning activities

will relate to higher achievement in English acquisition (Consistent with the theory of the communicative teaching approach);

- #4. Age, rather than national origin, will relate to student achievement in English acquisition (Following Ellis, Snow & Hoefnagel-Hohle's theories about age and SLA).

### **Methodology**

It is assumed that the objectives of the adult ESL programs in Ontario are consistent with the objectives set in the provincial ESL curriculum guideline for elementary and secondary schools by the Ontario Ministry of Education. It is also assumed that Adult ESL Programs in Thunder Bay are typical of provincial-wide implementation. This study is confined to an examination of Thunder Bay adult ESL students' attitudes towards ESL learning and the program, their SES status, motivation and confidence in relation to the achievement perceived by themselves. The teaching methods employed by their teachers are also assessed.

After the study was approved by the Lakehead Board of Education and Confederation College, the researcher sent four copies of a teacher questionnaire and thirty student

questionnaires to the Director of ESL Programs at Confederation College, and eight teacher questionnaires and fifty student questionnaires to Redwood Adult Education Centre. Questionnaires were distributed and collected from the teachers. When the ESL teachers received questionnaires both for themselves and their students, they filled out their own teacher questionnaires and distributed student questionnaires in class. Some teachers allowed time for their students to complete the questionnaires in class; some asked their students to take questionnaires home. Then the ESL teachers gathered and sealed student questionnaires with their own teacher questionnaires, which were returned to the researcher by administrators at each location.

### **Participants**

Participants of this study are 94 adult ESL students and 8 ESL teachers in the Thunder Bay area. 68 ESL students and 5 ESL teachers are from the Redwood Adult Education Centre, Queen Elizabeth School and Gron Morgan High School under the Lakehead Board of Education. Three ESL teachers and 26 ESL students are from Confederation College. The return rate from the ESL teachers is 66.7%. Among about 145 ESL students in Thunder Bay, 64.8% answered the student questionnaires. All

student questionnaires are completed by ESL students at Level-Two and Level-Three classes in Thunder Bay area. They are: two classes at Confederation College, two classes at the Redwood Adult Education Centre, one class at the Queen Elizabeth School and three classes at Gron Morgan High School.

### **Instruments**

Data were collected through both student and teacher questionnaires. Before the actual survey, samples of both questionnaires were sent to administrators and ESL teachers to collect their opinion and suggestions. Then revisions were made accordingly. In order to ensure confidentiality, all the questionnaires were anonymous and sealed when they were returned.

#### Student questionnaire

The student questionnaire (see Appendix 1) consists of two sections. Section A relates to background information about the respondent: age, gender and place of birth, socio-economic status in Canada, previous education and English proficiency. Information about time attending class each week, language environment at home, TV viewing time, time in



Canada before entering the program and whether they have or visit Canadian friends are also required to assess their English language input and practice after class. Information about their Canadian friends is used as a measure of level of integration into the Canadian society.

Section B assesses attitudes, motivation, confidence level, opinions about the ESL programs, classroom activities, and talking about their own cultures. Information about respondents' own behaviours and personal feelings in ESL class, and the perception of their own progress in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are also assessed.

### Teacher questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was developed from the literature on teaching methods and provincial curriculum aims, objectives and resource books. It consists of two sections. Section A is designed to collect information about relevant aspects of teacher background. This information is important because each variable is anticipated to influence the teaching method(s) respondents use. Subsequent effects would then be expected on student

confidence, attitudes, motivation and then success in ESL learning.

Section B concerns the respondent's attitudes, teaching practice and perceptions of student success. Single item measurement is used. This section consists of two parts.

Part I concerns respondents' attitudes towards the importance of the four language skills, learning emphasis and the role the instructor ought to play. Each question is arranged in such a way that any checked response will not only reflect respondents' overall orientation in their work, but also fall into one of the three teaching approach categories: grammar-translation, audio-lingual/situational or communicative approach.

Part II concerns respondents' teaching practices. Typical activities of grammar-translation, audio-lingual/situational and communicative approaches are listed for respondents to check. In this way, the preferred teaching method(s) can be assessed by judging the activities used most frequently in class. Information about how each respondent deals with student error, the proportion of time spent on oral, reading, written and communicative work, the measurement and teacher perception of student motivation and success are also collected in this part. In addition, the questionnaire permits respondents to express their opinions and suggestions

about the survey itself. This is expected to lead to suggestions for the improvement in the design and implementation of ESL programs.

### **Analysis**

After the questionnaires were returned, the researcher coded them, processed all the information into a computer and employed the SPSSX statistical package for the data analysis. Frequencies of all the items were calculated. Association between different variables was estimated using the Chi-square statistic.

#### IV. RESULTS

After all teacher and student questionnaires were returned, they were coded and processed for statistical analysis. This chapter will describe the results from the survey. The first three sections describe the ESL programs in Thunder Bay, characteristics of ESL teachers and characteristics of ESL students. The last section describes the significance of relationships between different variables.

##### **Characteristics of Adult ESL Programs in Thunder Bay**

Thunder Bay welcomes many new immigrants each year. In order to help them adapt to this new environment, different ESL programs of various levels are provided for adults by the Lakehead Board of Education and Confederation College either during the day or in the evening, so that students can choose the programs that are most suitable to themselves at their convenience. Classes in Confederation College, the Redwood Education Centre, Queen Elizabeth School and Gron Morgan High School are classified into three levels - Level One for beginners, Level Two for those who know a little English, and

Level Three for the students who know some English but wish to improve further.

The total student enrolment under the Lakehead Board of Education and Confederation College vary all the time, because there may be old students leaving and new students registering in the program every day. At the time of this study, student enrolments in the Confederation College and under the Lakehead Board of Education were around forty-five and one hundred respectively.

Twelve ESL teachers are hired to work in these programs at the time of the study. Four teach at the Confederation College, three in the Redwood Adult Education Centre, two in Queen Elizabeth School and three in Gron Morgan High School. The minimum qualifications required for ESL teachers are that they must hold a B.ED. or B.A. degree. They should also have some training or be experienced in teaching English as a second language. Training in adult education is preferred but not necessary.

The adult ESL programs under the Lakehead Board of Education are sponsored by the Ministry of Employment and Immigration and the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association. Admission to the programs is free. There are altogether six day classes and two night classes. Among the day classes, three classes of different levels are in the Redwood Adult

Education Centre in Fort William, two classes (Level One and Two) are in the Queen Elizabeth School and one (Level Three) in Gron Morgan High School in the Port Arthur part of the city. The two night classes (Level Two and Three) are in Gron Morgan school, too. Each class is assigned only one teacher who works with the class all the time.

The ESL program at Confederation College is not only for immigrants, but also for foreign students. Some new immigrant students receive a government subsidy for half a year while they are at school. There are altogether three classes. Some tuition is charged. Here the ESL students take different courses which are instructed by different ESL teachers. The courses offered are: Reading, Grammar, Language Lab, Computer and Writing.

ESL students at Confederation College have a one-hour reading course every day, in which they usually are given materials from a textbook, newspaper and other publications. After they finish reading, they answer questions related to the texts.

Grammar takes place two hours a day. During this period teachers talk about grammar, tenses, sentence patterns and verb or idiomatic usages which are in common use in daily life. Most materials are conversations or dialogues representing realistic social situations. Then students begin

to practice what they have just learned. They usually have group discussion or pair work. Students can raise any question or any topic at any time. Then teachers invite other students to answer or give their opinions before giving answers themselves. Students are also given some homework to do after class.

During the one hour language lab, students use audio-lingual equipment to practice their listening and speaking. Students are provided with various materials of different English levels and work on their own under the supervision of the teacher. During this period, students choose materials that are suitable for themselves, practise and progress at their own levels and pace.

During the one-hour computer/writing course in the afternoon, students learn how to use the Wordperfect word-processing program and write compositions in English. They can choose whatever topics they like and write using the computer. Then the teacher collects all the printed compositions, corrects them and gives them back to students. The teacher also makes a copy of all these compositions on her disk, then selects the best ones and publishes them weekly.

Every Friday afternoon, ESL teachers at Confederation College take their students off the campus to visit factories,

farms, hospitals, shopping centres or sports and recreation centres. This helps students to develop a global picture of Canadian society.

The adult ESL programs in Thunder Bay which form the basis of this study award no credit or diplomas, nor is there any record of grading. No assessment of student achievement in written form is used in these programs.

### **Characteristics of ESL Teachers**

#### Background Information

There are twelve ESL teachers teaching adult students in Thunder Bay. Eight (7 female, 1 male) of them completed the teacher questionnaires. Their age ranges from thirty-four to fifty-five ( $\bar{x}$ : 42, SD: 6.46) and their experience in ESL education ranges from six to twenty-three years ( $\bar{x}$ : 13.43, SD: 6.48). Seven have primary/junior, junior/intermediate or intermediate/senior teaching certificates. Three have been trained as teachers of adults. As far as their education background is concerned, two teachers have B.A. degrees; three have both B.A. and B.ED degrees; two have M.A. degrees; one has a B.Sc. degree and one studied in a B.A. program but it was incomplete. All of them received some training in



teaching English as a second language (TESL). They also attended seminars, teaching demonstrations or read books or articles about TESL to promote their own professional development. Therefore, they are highly qualified and well-informed about the important issues in TESL.

Among these teachers, two teach six to ten hours a week; two teach sixteen to twenty hours and four teach over twenty-one hours a week ( $\bar{x}$ : 18). They report usually spending about an hour in class preparation each day. The number of students in their classes varied from six to twenty-four ( $\bar{x}$ : 14.67).

### Teacher Attitudes and Practice

#### Teacher Attitudes

Most of teachers report that the most important roles they should play in class are to set up activities, give feedback and act as a resource for students. They also report attaching great importance to encouraging their students to maintain their linguistic and cultural traditions. Other role aspects that were considered comparatively less important were the dispensing of information and provision of models and encouraging students to assimilate into the dominant culture in Canadian society. Table 3 summarizes responses to these items.

Table 3

## ESL Teachers' Ranking of Teaching Role Aspects

Teacher's Role Components	Number of Ranking		
	Most Important	Not Very Important	Important
Set up activities	5	3	-
Give feedback	5	3	-
Act as a resource	5	3	-
Encourage students to maintain their cultural tradition	5	2	1
Provide a model	3	3	1
Dispense information	2	3	3
Encourage students to assimilate into Canadian culture	1	4	2

Seven items are listed under the Teacher Role Components column. These are ordered according to teachers' ranking. The number of teachers ranking as most important, important and not very important is recorded. The total number of respondents for the last item is seven instead of eight because one teacher failed to respond to this item. Tables which follow in this section are arranged in a similar way.

Most teachers rate student abilities to speak and communicate meaningfully as most important. Student ability to read is rated second, followed by the student abilities to write and listen. Automatic production of language patterns

and student awareness of grammar rules are rated lowest. Table 4 summarizes responses from these ESL teachers concerning the importance of the student abilities in the English language.

Table 4

## Teachers' Ranking of Student Abilities in English Language

Student Ability	Number of Ranking		
	Most Important	Not very Important	Important
Meaningful communication ability	5	3	-
Speaking	5	1	1
Reading	4	4	-
Writing	3	4	1
Listening	3	4	-
Automatic production of language pattern	2	2	2
Awareness of grammar rules	1	1	6

The total number of the respondents for most items is eight. Some information is missing from items of 'Speaking', 'Listening' and 'Automatic production of language pattern', because one or two respondents failed to rank them.

### Teaching Practice

In teaching practice, various kinds of teaching/learning activities are organized by ESL teachers to promote student development in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Most teachers (n = 6) report that their classes are student-centred rather than content-centred (n = 2). All of them have observed that their students appear to enjoy themselves in ESL class most of the time. Their students are positively motivated and engage in positive social interaction in class most of the time as well.

The organization of time by teachers for listening, speaking, reading and writing is directly related to their belief about the most important student abilities in the English language. More time is spent on oral work and communication about real life experience than on reading and writing. Six teachers answered the question about the percentage of time they spend in teaching and activities. Their responses are summarized in Table 5.

The organization of classroom activities also reflects these teachers' norms in their teaching practice. Activities that promote student abilities in oral communication such as role play and dialogues or conversations about real life experience are frequently used in class. In order to help students speak correctly and understand others, some exercises

Table 5

## The Distribution of Time Spent in Class

Teaching or Activities	Amount of Time Spent		
	40% - 60%	25% - 30%	10% - 20%
Oral work	3	2	1
Communication about real life experience	-	3	3
Reading	-	2	4
Writing	-	2	4

in changing form, tense or voice of a sentence, as well as grammar and sound discrimination exercises are often used. Group discussion or pair work and student introduction of their own cultures are also often used by most teachers to develop speaking competence and understanding of other cultures. Memorizing pattern drills and reciting texts are used least by these teachers ( see Table 6).

The total number of respondents for most items in Table 6 is eight. However, two teachers did not give any response to 'group discussion' and 'translation'. The total numbers of responses for these two items, therefore, are reduced to six.

In the process of language acquisition, it is natural for the students to make mistakes. Half of the teachers' responding indicate that they deal with student errors by correcting them immediately, while half report that they correct the errors only after the students finish speaking.

Table 6  
Frequency of Teaching Activities

Classroom Activities	Ranking		
	Often	Sometimes	Seldom
Role play	8	-	-
Communicating in real life situations	6	2	-
Exercises in changing form, tense or voice of a sentence	6	2	-
Sound discrimination exercises	6	1	1
Grammar exercises	5	3	-
Group discussion or pair work	5	1	-
Student introduction of their own culture	5	1	2
Students read after teacher	4	3	1
Problem solving	3	4	1
Translation	2	3	1
Memorizing dialogues or pattern drills	2	3	3
Reciting texts	2	3	3

Table 7  
Teachers' Assessment of Student Success

Methods	Responses	
	Used	Not Used
Observation of student interaction	8	-
Oral tests	6	2
Written tests	3	5

Number of respondents: 8

As indicated in Table 7, all teachers report that they assess student achievement by observing student interaction in class. Most teachers also use oral tests in their assessment. Written tests are seldom employed for this purpose.

According to most teachers, their students make greatest progress in listening, followed by improvement in speaking, reading and finally in writing (See Table 8).

Table 8

## Teachers' Ranking of Student Improvement

Items of Student Improvement	Number of Ranking			
	Highest	High	Low	Lowest
Listening	3	2	1	-
Speaking	1	4	-	1
Reading	1	-	5	1
Writing	-	1	1	4

\* Number of respondents: 6

Standard for Success of ESL Program

All the teachers responded to the final open-ended question by describing their own standards for success of the ESL program. Most of them state that if their students can

"use the information they learn in real situations", if they can communicate with English speaking people, or "find a job, or go to university or college", it means that their ESL programs are successful. In the classroom, every effort should be made to "find out and meet the student needs", to "create an environment where their natural fear [of making mistakes] is eliminated", so that students "feel comfortable" and free to "experiment with the language and reach out for new expressions and vocabulary".

In summary, most of these ESL teachers regard setting up activities, giving feedback and acting as a resource as their most important role components. Most of them also encourage students to maintain their cultural and linguistic traditions. All of them think that student ability to take part in meaningful communications and their abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing are very important. The ultimate goals of these teachers are to assist their students in the development of their basic language skills and communicative capability which are fundamental to their integration within the Canadian society.

In classrooms, most of these teachers put their focus on finding out and meeting student needs rather than on content. They also try their best to create an environment which is comfortable and free from anxiety. In organizing time and



classroom activities, more time is spent on oral work such as role play, group discussion or pair work and communicating in real life situations. Meanwhile, grammatical rules, sound discrimination and pattern drill exercises are provided as a supplement to develop student learning of linguistic knowledge, which can be used by the students to monitor their own speech and writing. The main orientation and practices of the teachers surveyed reflect a predominantly communicative approach.

### **Characteristics of ESL Students**

#### Background Information

Among the 94 ESL students who answered questionnaires, 39 are male and 55 are female. Ninety eight percent of these students believe that it is very important to learn English. Perhaps this is the reason why 65% of them registered in the program within six months of coming to Canada. The percentage increases to 75% within one year.

Tables in this student section are similarly organized to those in the preceding section with student frequencies recorded as percentages. Percentages in tables may not always total 100% due to a small number of missing cases.

Origin

These ESL students came from Quebec and twenty countries in Europe, Asia and South America - notably 36% are from Poland, 10% are Chinese (including those from Hong Kong and Taiwan), 9% from Vietnam and 7% from Ukraine. Table 9 shows the percentage of these ESL students from each country or region.

Table 9  
The Ethnic Composition of Student Participants

<u>Country of Origin</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Poland	36.2
China	9.6
Vietnam	8.5
Ukraine	7.4
Quebec	4.3
Yugoslavia	4.3
Iran	3.2
El Salvador	3.2
Czechoslovakia	3.2
Mexico	2.1
Portugal	2.1
France	2.1
Italy	2.1
Guatemala	2.1
Belgium	1.1
Lebanon	1.1
Iraq	1.1
Nicaragua	1.1
Indonesia	1.1
Brazil	1.1
Germany	1.1

### Age, Education and Pre-Course English Proficiency

The age range for these students is from fifteen to sixty-five ( $\bar{x}$ : 32.96, SD: 10.03). Eighty-one percent are younger than forty. Fifty-six percent had completed college, university or higher education before they came to Canada, 35% had finished high school and only 5% had elementary education or less. Before enrolling in an ESL class, 34% of students did not know English at all, 55% only knew a little and 10% stated they knew the language quite well.

### Time Attending ESL Class

Fifty-six percent of respondents study full-time taking 25 or more hours of ESL class each week. Fifteen percent of them spend between 11 and 20 hours in class and 28% study less than 10 hours a week. The mean time spent in ESL class is 19 hours.

### Language Environment at Home

Sixty percent of these students are married, but 63% of their spouses know very little English or none at all. Eleven percent of students say they do not speak English at home at all. Seventy-nine percent indicate that they sometimes use it, while only 7% report speaking English at home often.

### TV Viewing Time

Watching TV is not only a kind of recreation, but also provides a good opportunity to learn English. Fifty-three percent of the students report that they sometimes watch TV. Forty-five percent say they often watch TV at home.

### Work After School

Besides studying English at school, 36% of the adult ESL students have to work to support themselves or help their families. Four percent work less than fourteen hours a week; twenty-two percent work fifteen to twenty-five hours; and eleven percent work over twenty-six to sixty-two hours a week. The mean hours of work time is 24 hours and most report having to speak some English in the work place.

### Social Interaction with Non-immigrants

Reported friendships with non-immigrant Canadians is an indication of the level of the individual's integration within Canadian society. Most ESL students (80%) report that they have made at least one Canadian friend and sixty-one percent report that they sometimes or often visit their Canadian friends. Thirty-eight percent say they never or seldom visit Canadian friends.

Student opinion about the ESL programs

Eighty-two percent of ESL students report liking their ESL class very much and 66% think the ESL program has helped them a lot with English acquisition. Most believe they have improved some or a lot in listening, speaking, reading and writing (see Table 10).

Table 10

Student Perceptions of Improvement in English

Skill	Ranking: Degree of Improvement		
	A lot (%)	Some (%)	A Little (%)
Listening	45.7	29.8	21.3
Speaking	27.7	39.4	28.7
Reading	27.7	41.5	26.6
Writing	21.3	36.2	38.3

However, seventy percent indicated that their English had not improved as quickly as they expected.

Opinions and Popularity of Some Classroom Activities

Over eighty-four percent of students consider grammar, spelling, reading and writing to be important or very important. Fewer, but still a majority of students think that memorizing sentence patterns, problem solving, role play,

telling life experiences, language lab, group discussion or dialogue are very important (See Table 11).

Table 11

## Summary of Students' Opinion on Some Classroom activities

Classroom Activities	Ranking	
	Important (%)	Not Very Important (%)
Grammar	88.3	8.5
Reading	90.4	7.4
Spelling	85.1	12.8
Writing	84.0	9.6
Memorizing Dialogues or conversations	74.5	19.1
Group Discussion or Dialogue	67.0	22.3
Problem Solving	61.7	28.7
Tell Life Experiences	61.7	30.9
Language Lab	58.5	22.3
Role Play	51.1	42.6

Sixty-one percent reported wishing to spend more time in grammar, reading, writing and spelling activities (see Table 12).

Table 12  
Popularity of Classroom Activities

Classroom Activities	Responses	
	Would Like More (%)	Would not like more (%)
Grammar	61.4	38.6
Reading	61.4	38.6
Writing	59.6	40.4
Spelling	47.7	52.6
Group Discussion or Dialogue	36.8	63.2
Telling Life Experiences	31.6	68.4
Memorizing Dialogues or Conversations	29.8	70.2
Language Laboratory	28.1	71.9
Problem Solving	19.3	80.7
Role Play	19.3	80.7

#### Level of Comprehension in Class

Student understanding of teacher talk and the language used in instruction is very important for English acquisition in class. Seventy-nine percent of the students report that they can understand their ESL teachers most of the time. However, twenty-one percent say they only sometimes understand what their teachers are talking about in class.

Student behavior in class

Ninety-one percent of ESL students report that they often listen to teachers carefully in class. However many report that they seldom or sometimes avoid answering questions while a minority often answer questions without being asked. Most report that they often do what teacher requires and in return ask the teacher questions when they do not understand. Only about half of the respondents report they often say what they think in class (See Table 13).

Table 13

## Reported Student Behavior in Class

Item of Classroom Behaviours	Responses	
	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)
Listen to teacher	7.4	91.5
Avoid answering questions	76.6	19.1
Do what teacher asks	12.8	78.7
Answer questions without being asked	53.2	37.2
Ask teacher when not understand	24.5	70.2
Say what one thinks	43.6	47.9

Student Feelings in ESL Class

Student respondents were required to check six words from



a list of 18 which most closely describe their personal feelings in ESL class. Most ESL students' feelings in ESL class are quite positive. The six most frequently mentioned words are: happy, comfortable, hopeful, wonderful, calm and confident (See Table 14).

Table 14

## ESL Students' Reported Feelings in Class

<u>Items of Feelings</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Happy	76.6
Comfortable	71.3
Hopeful	57.4
Wonderful	47.9
Calm	42.6
Confident	36.2
Exciting	33.0
Competitive	29.8
Nervous	24.5
Worried	24.5
Confused	20.2
Shy	18.1
Strong	12.8
Disappointed	10.6
Bored	10.6
Sad	9.6
Angry	9.6
Lonely	3.2

### Feeling toward Their Own Cultures

Seventy-two percent of students report that they enjoy talking about life in their original countries, 20% of them don't quite like it, while 6% do not like to mention lives in their original countries at all.

### **Predictors of Achievement**

Data analysis by means of chi-square shows that student pre-course English proficiency, age, attitude toward life in their original countries, personal feelings and participation in class are significantly related to their achievement in English acquisition. An unexpected relationship is also found between origin and improvement in speaking. Each of these predictors will be discussed separately in the following section.

Students' educational level failed to relate to their achievement in listening, speaking reading and writing ( $\chi^2 = 5.9, 2.3, 0.3$  and  $4.2$ ;  $P$ : NS) . However, student improvement in listening is significantly related to pre-course English proficiency ( $\chi^2 = 12.2$ ;  $P < .05$ ) . There is also a close relationship between student improvement in speaking and pre-course English proficiency ( $\chi^2 = 10.2$ ;  $P < .05$ ).

Students' pre-course English proficiency is found to be significantly related to educational level ( $\chi^2 = 19.1$ ;  $P < .05$ ). These data suggest that students with a higher education tend to have a higher pre-course English proficiency and that they tend to make more improvement in listening and speaking.

Significant relationships are found between motivation and student educational level ( $\chi^2 = 12.1$ ;  $P < .01$ ), and between hours attending ESL and student educational level ( $\chi^2 = 17.2$ ;  $P < .01$ ). These suggest that students with a higher education tend to have high motivation and spend a longer time in ESL class.

No significant relationships are revealed in this study between attitude, motivation towards English study and improvement in listening, speaking, reading and writing. No relationships are found between students' attitude, motivation, achievement and student acculturation level.

No significant relationships are found between whether or not students work, their weekly working hours and their achievement in English acquisition.

#### Confidence Level, Classroom Behaviour and Achievement

No direct relationships are found between student

confidence level and their improvement in listening, speaking, reading and writing ( $\chi^2 = 0.6, 0.3, 0.1$  and  $0.4$ ;  $P: NS$ ). No relationships are found between confidence and other variables such as 'expressing oneself freely', 'age', and 'pre-course English proficiency' ( $P: NS$ ), all of which are found to be predictors of achievements.

However, confidence is negatively related to 'often trying to avoid answering questions in class' ( $\chi^2 = 3.9$ ;  $P < .05$ ). And 'often trying to avoid answering questions' is then significantly related to pre-course English proficiency ( $\chi^2 = 8.0$ ;  $P < .05$ ). These results suggest that students who seldom avoid answering questions in class tend to be more confident than others. Their pre-course English proficiency tends to be better. While students with lower pre-course English level often tend to avoid answering questions in class.

#### Student Feelings in Class and Achievement

A strong relationship between positive student feelings and achievement in listening and speaking has been found in this study. Students with positive feelings in class tend to make more progress in listening and speaking. Two examples emerged from the statistical analysis: (a) 'excited',

'strong' and 'comfortable' feelings significantly relate to student improvement in listening ( $\chi^2 = 4.0, 3.9$  and  $3.9$ ;  $P < .05$ ); (b) excited and comfortable feelings again are related to student improvement in speaking ( $\chi^2 = 6.0, 5.3$ ;  $P < .05$ ). The two results suggest that students who feel excited, comfortable and strong in class tend to achieve better in listening, and students who feel excited and comfortable also incline to make greater progress in speaking.

There is a significant negative relationship between 'feeling shy' and improvement in speaking ( $\chi^2 = 3.9$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Among sixty-three students who do not feel shy in class, fifty-five report that they have made more progress in speaking.

Results also show that a significant relationship exists between 'comfortable' and 'worried' feelings ( $\chi^2 = 5.4$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Most students who report feeling comfortable in class tend to be free from anxiety. Another interesting relationship indicates that students who feel comfortable in class also tend to be more confident ( $\chi^2 = 3.9$ ;  $P < .05$ ).

#### Attitude Toward Life in Original Countries and Achievement

Relationships exist between ESL students' attitude toward life in their original countries and their improvement in

listening, reading and writing. The Chi-square values for these pairs of variables are 9.9, 7.2 and 8.9,  $P < .05$ . These suggest that students who do not like to talk about life in their original countries tend to make more improvement than those who like to talk about it very much. A significant relationship also exists between the length of time students have been in Canada and the extent to which they enjoy talking about life in their own countries ( $\chi^2 = 6.2$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Students who have been here longer report enjoying talking about life in their native countries less.

Student attitude towards life in their original countries does not relate to age ( $\chi^2 = .004$ ;  $P$ : NS), education ( $\chi^2 = 1.2$ ;  $P$ : NS) and pre-course English proficiency ( $\chi^2 = 2.1$ ;  $P$ : NS).

#### Age and Achievement

During data analysis, student participants were divided into two groups: a young adult group (15 - 20 in age) and an elder adult group (21 or above). No relationships are found between age and student improvement in listening ( $\chi^2 = 1.7$ ;  $P$ : NS), speaking ( $\chi^2 = 3.3$ ;  $P$ : NS), reading ( $\chi^2 = 1.9$ ;  $P$ : NS) and writing ( $\chi^2 = 1.7$ ;  $P$ : NS).

From another perspective, however, 73% of the students in the younger group report that they have made a lot of progress in listening. The percentage for the elder group on

this item is only 45%. The percentages of those reporting having made considerable progress in speaking are 55% in the younger group and 25% in the elder group. The percentages of the younger students reporting having made considerable improvement in reading and writing are both 55%. And percentages for elder students who report to have made considerable progress on the same two items are merely 24% and 17%. Table 15 and 16 show the reported achievement for both groups. In the younger group (See Table 15), the percentages of the students who made more progress are higher in all four items than elder students (See Table 16).

Table 15

Reported SLA Achievement for Younger Group  
( in percentage)

Achievement Item	Level of Achievement		
	A Little	Some	A Lot
Listening	18.2	9.1	72.7
Speaking	18.2	27.3	54.5
Reading	27.3	18.2	54.5
Writing	27.3	18.2	54.5

\* Total number: 11

Table 16  
Reported SLA Achievement for Elder Group  
( in percentage)

Achievement Item	Level of Achievement		
	A Little	Some	A lot
Listening	23.3	31.2	45.5
Speaking	32.9	42.1	25
Reading	28.9	47.4	23.7
Writing	43.4	39.5	17.1

\* Total number: 76

#### Classroom Participation and Achievement

There is a significant relationship between active participation in class and student improvement in listening, speaking, reading and writing. This suggests that students who actively participate in teaching/ learning activities tend to make greater progress in their English acquisition.

#### Active Participation and Improvement in Listening

A significant relationship is found between 'listening attentively to the teacher' and student improvement in listening ( $x^2 = 8.8$ ;  $P < .01$ ). Students who often listen to the teacher carefully tend to make more improvement in



listening. In addition, there is a significant relationship between student level of understanding in class and their improvement in listening ( $\chi^2 = 9.0$ ;  $P < .01$ ). Students who report understanding teachers most of time tend to achieve more in listening than those who only sometimes understand teachers' instruction or conversation.

A positive relationship is found between 'trying to avoid answering questions' and achievement in listening ( $\chi^2 = 8.2$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Paradoxically, perhaps, this suggests that students who often avoid answering questions in class tend to make more progress in listening. There is also a possibility that some of the students did not understand the word 'avoid'.

#### Active Participation and Improvement in Speaking

A strong positive relationship is found between 'expressing oneself freely' and improvement in speaking ( $\chi^2 = 8.0$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Seventy-eight percent of the students who think they have made much progress in speaking report that they often say what they think in class. The relationship between 'expressing oneself freely' and 'asking questions when one does not understand' is positive ( $\chi^2 = 13.6$ ;  $P < .01$ ). Those students who often say what they think in class tend to ask questions whenever they do not understand. A significant relationship is also found between 'expressing oneself freely'

and 'answering questions without being asked' ( $\chi^2 = 13.6$ ;  $P < .01$ ). Ninety percent of the students who often say what they think in class tend to give more responses to questions voluntarily in class.

A strong negative relationship was found between 'trying to avoid answering questions' and achievement in speaking ( $\chi^2 = 5.4$ ;  $P < .05$ ). This suggests that students who often avoid answering questions tend to make less improvement in speaking.

#### Active Participation and Improvement in Reading

Results of the study show that 'doing what teacher requires' is closely related to 'improvement in reading' ( $\chi^2 = 7.5$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Following teacher instructions is also related to 'answering questions without being asked' ( $\chi^2 = 5.3$ ;  $P < .05$ ) and 'asking questions when one does not understand' ( $\chi^2 = 4.0$ ;  $P < .05$ ). These findings suggest that students who often do what teacher requires tend to answer questions voluntarily and ask questions whenever they do not understand. They tend to make more progress in reading.

#### Active Participation and Improvement in Writing

Results show that a significant relationship exists between 'answering questions voluntarily' and improvement in

writing ( $\chi^2 = 7.3$ ;  $P < .05$ ). This suggests that students who often answer questions voluntarily in class tend to make more progress in writing. 'Answering questions voluntarily' is also strongly related to 'doing what teacher asks' ( $\chi^2 = 5.3$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Those who often answer questions voluntarily are more inclined to follow teacher instructions. In addition, 90% of the students who often answer questions voluntarily tend to consider writing very important. The chi-square value for the two variables is 4.6, ( $P < .05$ ).

#### Classroom Participation and Student Feelings in Class

There is a strong negative relationship between 'expressing oneself freely' and 'feeling shy' in class ( $\chi^2 = 4.8$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Students who often say what they think are not likely to feel shy. 'Expressing oneself freely' is also negatively related to feelings of worry and nervousness ( $\chi^2 = 4.4, 4.0$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Ninety-four percent of the students who often say what they think do not tend to feel worried and nervous in class.

#### Origin and Achievement

During data analysis, students were divided into three

groups: Europeans, Asians and South Americans. No significant differences are found between different origins in motivation, opinion on the ESL program, classroom behaviour, attitude towards English study, towards different classroom activities and life in their original countries. Results also show that origin is not significantly related to achievement in listening, reading and writing, nor does it relate to understanding level and personal feelings in class.

However, significant differences are found between origin and education ( $\chi^2 = 10.7$ ;  $P < .05$ ), and between origin and improvement in speaking ( $\chi^2 = 14.7$ ;  $P < .01$ ). Students from Europe tend to be more educated and make greater progress in speaking. Asian students rank next, followed by South American students.

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The objectives of this study were to find the effects of the ESL students' SES status, age and origin on their English acquisition. Student motivation and attitude towards English study, confidence and anxiety levels, classroom behaviour and personal feelings in class in relation to their improvement in listening, speaking, reading and writing were also examined.

It has been expected that higher student educational level, positive attitude toward English study, higher motivation and confidence levels will relate to higher achievement in English acquisition. Younger age, positive personal feelings and active participation in class will also relate to greater improvement. However, race or national origin will not relate to student motivation, attitude toward English study and achievement in English acquisition.

The following section will discuss these expectations and results found in this study in relation to second language acquisition theories.

### **Level of Education and Achievement**

Most ESL student participants in this study had just come

to Canada. They had not been here long enough to become established. Whether they work or not, or how many hours they work in a week, their social status and economic situation remain quite similar. Therefore, the aspect of SES most likely to affect their achievement in English acquisition is prior educational level.

Although findings show that the students' educational level does not directly relate to their English acquisition, it does relate to motivation, hours attending ESL, and pre-course English proficiency. Students with a higher education level tend to have greater motivation, a better pre-course English proficiency, and they tend to spend more hours in ESL class.

Reasons that caused the relationships between motivation, hours attending ESL and educational levels remain unclear. Perhaps it is because students with higher education are likely to have higher social status in their original countries. Because of the language barrier, it is difficult for them to find a satisfactory job at the moment. Dissatisfied with their present situation, they want to change it as soon as possible. This highly motivates them. So they are likely to spend more time studying the language and trying their best to excel.

Results also show that the students' pre-course English

proficiency can influence their English acquisition. Students with a higher pre-course English level tend to make more progress in listening and speaking than those who did not know English at all when they entered the program. However, this result should be treated with caution because the student progress was measured by self-reported data. There is a possibility that some students with higher pre-course English proficiency level might think that they have made more progress.

It is natural that students with a higher educational level have better pre-course English proficiency. English is a language widely used in the world. It is included in secondary school and university curricula in many countries. ESL students with a higher educational level might not have had a good language learning environment in their own countries to practise listening and speaking. However, they had learned some knowledge of English (e.g. grammar, syntax, pronunciation) and have a limited vocabulary. This makes things much easier. They do not have to learn the basics, but can brush up and internalize the 'language knowledge' they already have, and turn it into 'language acquisition' (refer to Krashen's Monitor Model). In addition, as Nelson et al. (1984) suggest, students with a higher educational level have higher first language cognitive and pre-course cognitive

proficiency levels. These are very beneficial to their second language acquisition. Therefore, their achievement in listening and speaking is greater.

Since a higher educational level relates to better pre-course English proficiency, and tends to generate high motivation and a longer time in class, and since better pre-course English proficiency tends to bring about greater improvement in students' English acquisition, it can be deduced that there is a positive relationship between the ESL students' educational level and achievement in English study.

### **Attitude, Motivation and Achievement**

The rejection of the expectation that high motivation and positive attitude would relate to high achievement may be due to the small number of students who had a relatively lower motivation in learning English.

On the other hand, this phenomenon confirms Schumman's statement about social distance as an external influence to the L2 learners' personal attitudes and motivation in second language acquisition. Data presented in the previous chapter shows that the ESL teachers in Thunder Bay have successfully created a friendly learning environment in which ESL students share social facilities with Canadian students and feel



'happy', 'comfortable' and 'hopeful'. The government also shows its support by subsidizing some ESL students at Confederation College as well as in the ESL programs under the authority of the Lakehead Board of Education. In addition, as new immigrants, most ESL students understand that learning English is absolutely necessary if they are to stay and make new lives here. All these factors contributed to reduce the social distance. Therefore, most ESL students have a very positive attitude and a high motivation toward studying English and wish to learn even more quickly than they actually did.

### **Confidence and Achievement**

The reason for the rejection of a direct correlation between the confidence and achievement variables may be due to a biased sample or to an inadequate measuring instrument. A series of questions should have been developed to measure student confidence rather than having a single direct question about student feelings while in class (See Question 27 in Student Questionnaire).

However, it has been found that an indirect relationship exists between confidence and achievement. Results confirmed that students with a low confidence level often tend to 'avoid

answering questions'. They tend to make more progress in listening whereas their improvement in speaking tend to be rather slow. The data also show that students with lower English proficiency often tend to avoid answering questions in class. The explanation may be that students with a lower English proficiency tend to be uncertain about the answers, lack confidence and thus often tend to avoid answering questions. On the other hand, according to Elson (1983), the order of second language acquisition is similar to the order children pick up their mother tongue. Listening competence tends to improve first, followed by speaking, reading and writing. Beginners always tend to have a period of 'silent' time during which they try to get familiar with the language they are studying until they feel confident enough to attempt conversation. This is the case with students who have a lower English level. Because they tend to avoid answering questions, they have fewer chances to practise speaking, and their progress in speaking tends to be slow. As beginners, they tend to spend more time listening, becoming familiar with the sound and structure of the language and finding out the correct answers. Consequently, their listening competence tends to improve.

### **Age and Achievement**

According to Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978), teen-agers tend to have better capability in second language acquisition than other age groups. When they pass this stage, their performance begins to decline. This observation has been applied in grouping respondents in this study prior to examining age differences and achievement.

Results confirm the expectation that age does relate to achievement in second language acquisition. Comparisons of achievements reported by the two age groups clearly show that the younger group tends to do better in all four aspects of the language. Also, their improvement in listening, speaking, reading and writing exceeds that of their elder classmates.

Krashen (1982) and Brown (1980) provide an explanation: young people are less culturally bound. It is much easier for them to get over culture shock and culture stress, and adapt to the new environment. Consequently they have lower affective filters and make more improvement in English acquisition. However, the possibility that maturational factors contribute to the ability to acquire a second language remains.

### **Positive Student Feelings and Achievement**

Relationships found between positive student feelings and achievement confirm the expectation based upon Krashen's affective hypothesis that the L2 learners' affective filter controls the amount of input they receive and consequently makes a difference in their language acquisition pace. Positive feelings, high motivation, high confidence and low anxiety level tend to create a low affective filter which lets in more input and speeds up the L2 learners' acquisition pace.

Results of the study are consistent with Krashen's affective filter hypothesis. Students who feel 'comfortable', 'excited' and 'strong' tend to make more progress in listening and speaking. The reasons for this are that these students are highly motivated to learn English. In a friendly learning environment they are excited to learn something new every day. They feel comfortable to study and progress at their own pace and are encouraged to experiment with the language without being afraid of making mistakes. Thus their self-defensive level remains low. These factors greatly assist ESL students in shortening the psychological distance (Schumann, 1978) between themselves and the new environment. Consequently they tend to have low affective filters, take in more input and make greater improvement in their study of English.

**Student Attitude toward Life  
in Their Own Countries and Achievement**

Findings in this study suggest that students who have spent a longer time in Canada are less inclined to talk about life in their original countries than those who just came a short time ago. They tend to achieve more in listening, reading and writing. Schumman's Accommodation Theory provides a possible explanation for this phenomenon.

First, those who have stayed longer are more accommodated to Canadian society. As time goes by, their connections with people in their original countries and ties with their own cultures become weaker. Their concerns and feelings are increasingly associated with things happening around them in their new environment. Consequently the identification they have between themselves and their own cultures becomes weaker.

Secondly, because the government of Canada promotes multiculturalism, people from different origins are supposed to have equal opportunities and social status. Students who have been here longer have had more time to accommodate and fit into this society. They have become more used to interact and share the same social facilities with other ethnic groups, and therefore, relate their ingroups more closely to the dominant culture than those who came to Canada not long ago.

Thus their perception of the ingroup boundaries tends to be soft and open. Their perception of ethno-linguistic vitality tends to be low, because in Canadian society their own language is no longer as important as English, which they have to know well if they want to integrate into this society.

Thirdly, most of the ESL students received university or higher education. They tend to have quite a satisfactory ingroup status and strong identification with other social categories in their in-groups.

All the above factors generate high motivation among these students. Moreover, they have had a longer time to get in touch with the language, receive input and internalize what they learn in formal or informal learning situations. Therefore, they tend to greater progress in SLA.

### **Classroom Participation and Achievement**

Usually, active participation is an indication of high motivation, keen interest and positive attitude. This explains why the results confirm the expectation that active participation in class is positively related to student improvement in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students who often 'listen to the teacher carefully', 'say what they think', 'do what the teacher requires' and 'answer

questions without being asked', make more progress in their English acquisition.

### Listening to the Teacher and Improvement in Listening

Besides pre-course English proficiency, 'listening to the teacher carefully in class', not surprisingly, is another important factor that influences student improvement in listening comprehension.

ESL students are surrounded by the language they are studying every day. They listen to English on the radio and TV, and they hear English during their interactions with other English-speaking people in addition to listening to the teacher in class. All these focus on meaning or message and can be taken as language input to ESL students.

However, the most important thing that leads to improvement in language acquisition, according to Krashen (1982), is not how often learners listen to the language, but the amount of the language that is understandable to them. Radio and TV are addressed to native listeners. The language is very often far too advanced for the ESL students' understanding. It is too difficult and spoken too quickly. That is why the present study failed to find a relationship between TV time and student improvement in listening.

Krashen also mentioned another condition that is

important in considering improvement in second language acquisition. He states that 'language acquisition' takes place when input is a little beyond the learners' level of competence. The length of time most ESL students have been in Canada has not made much difference in their language acquisition, because most ESL students have not been here very long and they use languages other than English at home. Their interaction with English speaking people is quite limited not only in the amount of time involved, but also in the kinds of language input. Even if English-speakers try to negotiate the meaning by explaining with the use of other expressions (Hatch, 1978), their efforts are usually spontaneous and based on their own experience with the language rather than on the students' level of competence. Very often, students are merely in an 'exposure-type' environment in a natural setting and may not necessarily receive much functional input to upgrade their English level. The language input leading to 'acquisition' in such cases is limited. However, ESL teachers have been trained to teach English as a second language. They are experienced. They prepare for the class, work with students every day and know them quite well. Their conversation in class as language input is understandable to most students most of the time and therefore, students who often listen carefully to the teacher in class tend to receive



more input and make greater progress in listening comprehension.

As Krashen states, the pace of language acquisition is determined by the amount of input that is understandable to and taken in by the learner. The input should be a little beyond the learner's present level of competence. Given the conclusion that students who understand their teachers most of the time tend to achieve more in listening comprehension, this again confirms Krashen's hypothesis from another perspective.

#### Expressing Oneself in Class' and Improvement in Speaking

Students who often 'say what they think in class' tend to make more progress in speaking. There are at least two possible explanations for this result: (a) students who often say what they think tend to ask the teacher questions whenever they do not understand; (b) students who often say what they want tend to have more positive feelings in class.

Practice makes perfect. It seems logical that expressing oneself and 'asking questions when one does not understand' would have a causal relationship with improvement in speaking. When students who often say what they think ask questions, they practise speaking in a meaningful way. When their questions are answered, learning takes place. Sometimes ESL

teachers will invite the students to answer questions so that the students have more opportunity to practise. Usually these students tend to give answers without being asked. By and by, their speaking competence is greatly improved after continuous self-initiated practice and learning.

As has been previously discussed, positive feelings in a learning situation are related to higher achievement in language acquisition. This is the case with students who often express themselves in class. The fact that these students do not tend to feel shy, worried and nervous indicates that their anxiety level is low.

Such students who often speak freely display high motivation in learning English by often asking questions whenever they do not understand and answering questions without being asked. They tend to be in a state of low anxiety level and have positive feelings in class. The high motivation and low anxiety level result in a low affective filter and therefore, they tend to assimilate more input and make a greater improvement in English acquisition.

#### Following Instructions and Achievement in Reading

It has been shown in the findings of this study that there is a significant relationship between following instruction and achievement in reading. Students who often

do what the teacher requires also tend to ask questions whenever they do not understand and often answer questions without being asked. This suggests that they participate actively in teaching/learning activities, complete all exercises, homework, try to remember the new words, read all the reading materials given to them, and still tend to initiate learning themselves by asking questions. These students are highly motivated to learn English. They follow teachers' instructions, indulge in an inquisitive learning and practise whenever there is a chance. Increase in the knowledge of English and vocabulary greatly enhances their understanding of written English. Therefore, these students tend to make more progress in reading.

#### Responding to Questions Voluntarily and Achievement in Writing

The findings show that students who often answer questions voluntarily tend to make more progress in writing. They often tend to follow teacher instructions and tend to consider writing to be very important. It has been discussed above that 'following teacher instructions' is closely related to 'answering questions without being asked' and student improvement in reading comprehension. This suggests that students who report having made greater progress in reading also tend to achieve more in writing. Another example is that

high motivation and active participation in class can result in better achievement.

Active participation in class involves listening to the teacher carefully, asking questions when one does not understand, volunteering to answer questions and following teacher instructions. The four situations discussed above follow the same pattern: students' active participation in class brings about greater achievement in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

These four aspects of language are interrelated. Under formal learning circumstances, improvement in any one will sooner or later lead to improvement in the other three aspects. It should be mentioned that the above situations should not be taken in isolation from each other. Listening to the teacher carefully in class not only leads to an improvement in listening comprehension, but can also result in improvement in speaking, reading and writing as well. 'Following teacher instructions' and 'asking questions when one does not understand' can also lead to improvement in the four aspects of language. The key lies in 'active participation' in all teaching/ learning activities. When students are highly motivated and encouraged to take an active part in class, their improvement in listening, speaking,

reading and writing is bound to follow.

### **Origin and Achievement**

No relationship was found between national origin and reported student achievement in listening, reading and writing. However, a relationship exists between origin and achievement in speaking. This does not mean the expectation that origin will not relate to student achievement must be rejected.

Student educational level is related to their pre-course English proficiency. Higher pre-course English proficiency relates positively to higher achievement in listening and speaking. Students from Europe tend to have a higher education than students from Asia and South America. In addition, their cultures are similar to the dominant culture in Canada. Their languages share much in common with the English language. The language and culture shock these European students have experienced may not be as severe as that of students from Asia, where cultures and languages are quite different. Therefore, European students tend to have a shorter psychological distance than Asian students. As for the students from South America considered in this study, although their languages and cultures are more similar to

Canadian culture than is so for Asian students, their average educational level is relatively low, and is not sufficiently offset by cultural and language similarities. Consequently they tend to have a lower language acquisition achievement level than the Asian students. Therefore the conclusion can be drawn that the differences between origin and student achievement in speaking is best understood in terms of the difference in educational levels rather than different racial or ethnic origins.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

It is assumed that adult ESL programs in Thunder Bay are implemented under objectives similar to the objectives set in the provincial ESL Guideline for public schools and are typical of adult ESL programs in the province. The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence the perceived student achievement in their English acquisition and the teaching methodologies employed by ESL teachers in Thunder Bay. Both teacher and student questionnaires were tools used for this correlational study. The participants included 94 adult ESL students and 8 ESL teachers from Confederation College, Redwood Adult Education Centre, Queen Elizabeth School and Gron Morgan High School in the Thunder Bay area.

The tests of significance between different variables were carried out by means of chi-square analysis in this study.

It was found in the survey that most ESL teachers' orientation and practice predominantly reflect a communicative approach. They believe that their most important roles as an ESL teacher are to set up activities, give feedback, act as a resource and encourage students to maintain their own cultural and linguistic traditions. They rank student abilities in meaningful communication, speaking, reading, writing and listening as more important than abilities in automatic production of language patterns and awareness of grammar rules.

In their teaching practice, these ESL teachers make sure that their instruction or conversation is suitable for their students' English level. In this way they are able to make themselves understood by the majority of the students most of the time. They usually spend more time on oral work or communication about real life experiences than on reading and writing. Role play, communicating in real life situations, exercises in changing form, tense or voice of a sentence, group discussion or pair work, student introduction of their own cultures, sound discrimination and grammar exercises are used more frequently in teaching/ learning activities. Most teachers use observation of student interaction and oral tests

in their assessment of student success. Their perceptions of student improvement rank listening as highest, followed by student improvement in speaking, reading and writing.

It is unfortunate that the number of ESL teachers in the Thunder Bay area is small and only seven of them returned teacher questionnaires. The sample was too small to make valid analyses of the relationships between different teaching methodologies and student success. For this reason the study about methodologies the ESL teachers employed in the Thunder Bay area was confined to a descriptive level.

All ESL students surveyed pursue their study on a voluntary basis. They came from 21 countries in Europe, Asia and South America. Most of them are highly motivated and have positive attitudes toward their ESL class and programs. Grammar, spelling, reading and writing are considered by most students to be more important than memorizing sentence patterns, problem solving, role play, telling life experiences, language lab, group discussion or dialogue. Student feelings in class are generally positive. Most of them feel happy, comfortable and hopeful.

Most ESL students take an active part in class. They often listen to teachers, do what teachers require and ask teachers questions whenever they do not understand. Regardless of the time they have been in the ESL programs, all



of them have some made progress in their English study. Both students and teachers noted the same order of achievement as they progressed: first in listening, then in speaking, then in reading and finally in writing.

It was found that students with higher educational levels tend to have higher pre-course English proficiency and higher motivational levels. They are inclined to spend more time in ESL class. These students with a higher pre-course English proficiency tend to make more progress in listening and speaking. Students with a lower pre-course English proficiency often tend to avoid answering questions in class and their improvement in speaking tends to be slow.

Age is related to student achievement in English acquisition. Teen-agers are more likely to achieve more in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Results of this study also support the expectations that positive student feelings and active participation in class are related to higher achievement in their English acquisition. Students who feel excited and comfortable in class are more likely to feel confident and make higher achievement in listening and speaking. Students who feel shy often try to avoid answering questions or expressing themselves in class. These students tend to make slower progress in speaking.

Students who usually listen to the teachers carefully in class tend to make more improvement in listening comprehension. Students who often say what they want are more likely to ask questions whenever they do not understand and answer questions without being asked. Consequently they tend to make more improvement in speaking. Students who often listen to teachers carefully, answer questions voluntarily, ask questions whenever they do not understand and follow teachers' instructions also tend to make more progress in reading and writing.

Results of this study are consistent with some of the hypotheses in second language acquisition theories, which include the effect of social and psychological distance on SLA in Schumman's Acculturation Model, the influence of L2 learner's personal relationship and attitudes toward their own group and target language group on their motivation and SLA in Giles's Accommodation Theory, and age, the kind of language input and affective factors in relation to SLA in Krashen's Monitor Model.

This study is confined to an investigation of adult ESL education in Thunder Bay. The small sample of teacher participants is not representative of the ESL teachers in Ontario. Therefore, the findings about their orientation and teaching methods cannot necessarily be applied to all ESL

teachers in the province.

The major part of this study concerns factors that influence student achievement in language acquisition. However, the study did not use a pre-test and post-test design, nor did it employ any standardized tests or teacher reports to determine the present student achievement level on an individual basis. Since it is not possible to determine specific standards for a student's perception of their own achievement, the findings should not be interpreted as reflecting actual achievement.

The findings of this study have some implications for ESL teachers in their teaching practice. It is suggested that efforts should be maintained in establishing a positive learning environment, where students feel comfortable, excited and encouraged while they pursue their study. While addressing student needs, ESL teachers should constantly adjust their speech or instruction to the students' comprehension level, design an interesting curriculum to attract the students' attention, encourage them to initiate conversation or talk more, and stimulate the dynamics of active participation in all teaching/learning activities.

Results of the study also have some implications for education administrators. Planning professional development for ESL teachers should include the following: theories about

second language acquisition, practical teaching strategies, demonstrations on how to effectively bring about positive student feelings and active participation in class.

Further studies are recommended to identify the factors that affect students' improvement in reading and writing and relationships between the improvement in the four aspects of language and students' self-esteem, acculturation level and attitudes toward both their in-groups and Canadian society.

The adult ESL programs in Thunder Bay have proven to be very successful. After a period of study, hundreds of adult ESL students have left school, found employment and have felt confident enough to be progressing on their own. Most students presently enrolled in the program feel happy, comfortable and hopeful about their future. They have gained the knowledge of the English language and skills that are fundamental to their lives here in this new homeland. These outcomes are exactly consistent with the objectives of the ESL programs in the province of Ontario.

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**Appendix I**  
**COVER LETTER**

Dear ESL teacher:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information about the ESL teaching methods used by ESL teachers in the Northwestern Ontario, along with their perceptions of student success. This study is entitled "Relationships Between Northwestern Ontario ESL Teachers' Teaching Methods And Perceived Student Success". It is expected to be carried out and completed in the fall of 1990.

The information gathered will be useful in helping to determine which teaching strategies may be most effective in our classrooms. The Ministry of Education and Lakehead University have approved this study.

You are not asked for your name, because our interest is in the perceptions of groups rather than of individuals. You also have the right to withdraw at any time. Please try to answer every question as accurately as you can and return the questionnaire by Feb. 20, 1991. A stamped and addressed envelope is included for this purpose. Your assistance is sincerely appreciated.

Wenjie Li

Graduate Student

Teaching English as a Second Language

Teacher Questionnaire

Directions: This questionnaire is anonymous. Please answer every question. If you wish to comment on an item, or upon the questionnaire as a whole, please do so.

Part A: The items in this part concern your personal background and experience as an ESL teacher.

1. Please indicate your age: \_\_\_\_\_ years
2. Please check your gender: \_\_\_\_\_ male; \_\_\_\_\_ female.
3. Please indicate the number of years you have spent teaching ESL:  
\_\_\_\_\_ years
4. Please check degrees held:  
\_\_\_\_\_ none; \_\_\_\_\_ B.A.; \_\_\_\_\_ B.ED; \_\_\_\_\_ M.A.; \_\_\_\_\_ M.ED; \_\_\_\_\_ PhD; \_\_\_\_\_ other
5. Please check ESL training received:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Graduate degree major in TESL;  
\_\_\_\_\_ Some TESL courses;  
\_\_\_\_\_ Attended seminars, teaching demonstrations or read books or articles about TESL to promote professional development;  
\_\_\_\_\_ Have not received TESL training, nor have had opportunity to attended in-service activities in TESL area.
6. Please check teaching certificate held:  
\_\_\_\_\_ primary/junior \_\_\_\_\_ junior/intermediate  
\_\_\_\_\_ intermediate/senior \_\_\_\_\_ letter of standing  
\_\_\_\_\_ training as a teacher of adults  
\_\_\_\_\_ other (Please indicate Province/Country)
7. Please check average number of hours per week spent teaching ESL:  
\_\_\_\_\_ 0 - 5; \_\_\_\_\_ 6 - 10; \_\_\_\_\_ 11 - 15; \_\_\_\_\_ 16 -20; \_\_\_\_\_ over 21.
8. Please try to assess the average minutes of preparation for each ESL class:  
\_\_\_\_\_ 0 - 15; \_\_\_\_\_ 16 - 30; \_\_\_\_\_ 31 - 45; \_\_\_\_\_ 46 - 60; \_\_\_\_\_ over 61.

9. Please check the number of students in your ESL class; if you have more than one class, use extra check marks:

\_\_\_ 0 - 10; \_\_\_ 11 - 17; \_\_\_ 18 - 24; \_\_\_ 25 - 30; \_\_\_ over 31.

Part B: The purpose of the statements which follow is to obtain an indication of your views on ESL teaching aims and objectives. Please indicate the degree of importance you attach to each statement by checking the appropriate response:

I. ATTITUDE

	<i>most important</i>	<i>important</i>	<i>somewhat important</i>	<i>not important</i>
10. Student ability to read is	___	___	___	___
11. Student ability to write is	___	___	___	___
12. Student ability to listen is	___	___	___	___
13. Student ability to speak is	___	___	___	___
14. Automatic production of language patterns is	___	___	___	___
15. Meaningful communication ability is	___	___	___	___
16. Student awareness of grammar rules is	___	___	___	___
17. The role of the teacher should be:				
a. to dispense information	___	___	___	___
b. to provide a model	___	___	___	___
c. to set up activities	___	___	___	___
d. to give feedback	___	___	___	___
e. to act as a resource	___	___	___	___
18. ESL teachers should				
a. encourage students to maintain their linguistic and cultural traditions.	___	___	___	___
b. encourage students to assimilate into the dominant culture in Canadian society.	___	___	___	___

II. PRACTICE

19. Please indicate the frequency with which the following activities take place in your classroom.

never      seldom      sometimes      often      very often

- a. grammar exercises      —      —      —      —      —
- b. translation      —      —      —      —      —
- c. having students read after you      —      —      —      —      —
- d. memorizing dialogues or drills      —      —      —      —      —
- e. problem solving      —      —      —      —      —
- f. role playing      —      —      —      —      —
- g. communicating in real life situations      —      —      —      —      —
- h. reciting texts      —      —      —      —      —
- i. sound-discrimination exercises      —      —      —      —      —
- j. exercises in changing form, tense or voice of a sentence      —      —      —      —      —
- k. group discussion or pair work      —      —      —      —      —
- l. student introductions of their own customs or displays of things from their native countries      —      —      —      —      —

20. Please check appropriate response:

I deal with students' errors in speaking by

- ( ) correcting them immediately.
- ( ) correcting them after student finishes speaking.
- ( ) neglecting them.

21. My class is more accurately described as:

- ( ) content-centered;      ( ) student-centered.

22. I most often measure student achievement level by

- ( ) written tests
- ( ) oral tests
- ( ) observation of student interaction

23. Please estimate the percentage of time your class spends on

- ( % ) oral work (pronunciation, drill, pattern practice, questions and answers)
- ( % ) reading work
- ( % ) written work
- ( % ) communication among students based on life experience



10. How many hours do you attend ESL class in a week?

\_\_\_\_\_ hours.

11. The highest education you completed in the country you came from is:

- a. elementary school;                       b. high school;  
 c. college or university;                       d. master or higher;  
 e. none of the above.

12. How long had you been in Canada before you joined this class?

\_\_\_\_\_.

13. Did you speak or understand English before you took this course?

not at all;     a little;     quite well;     very well.

14. How many Canadian friends do you have?

none;                       one or two;                       three or four;                       many.

15. How often do you visit or go out with your Canadian friends after school?

never;                       hardly ever;                       sometimes;  
 often;                       very often.

16. How often do you watch TV in your leisure time?

seldom;                       sometimes;                       often;                       very often.

Part B:

17. How important is it for you to learn English?

not important at all;                       not very important;  
 important;                       very important.

18. How much do you like your ESL (English as second language) class?

not at all;                       a little;                       some;                       very much.

19. Do you think this ESL class has helped you with your English?

\_\_\_ not at all; \_\_\_ a little; \_\_\_ some; \_\_\_ a lot.

20. Are you happy to talk about life in the country you came from with your classmates?

\_\_\_ not at all; \_\_\_ a little; \_\_\_ somewhat; \_\_\_ very happy.

21. How often do you do the following things in class?

- a. listen carefully to the teacher
- b. avoid answering questions
- c. do what the teacher asks
- d. answer question without being asked
- e. ask the teacher questions when you don't understand something
- f. say what you think

*seldom*      *somtimes*      *often*      *very often*

___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___

22. What do you think of the following activities in class?

- a. grammar
- b. spelling
- c. reading
- d. memorizing dialogues or conversations
- e. problem solving
- f. playing a role in a story, drama or dialogue
- g. telling what you saw, heard or think, or listening to others tell
- h. language lab
- i. group discussion or dialogue
- j. writing

*most important*      *important*      *somewhat important*      *not important*

___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___

23. From the list in Question 20, choose the activities you want more often in class and write: "a, b, c, ... or j" in the space given below:

24. How much often do you understand what your teacher is saying in class?

- hardly ever;                       sometimes;  
 most of the time;                       all of the time.

25. Since being in this class, I have improved in:

	a little	some	a lot
a. listening	_____	_____	_____
b. speaking	_____	_____	_____
c. reading	_____	_____	_____
d. writing	_____	_____	_____

26. Are you learning English as quickly as you want to?

- yes;                       no.

27. Please underline 6 words that tell how you feel most of the time when you are in this class.

- |                  |             |               |           |
|------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1. excited       | 2. happy    | 3. nervous    | 4. angry  |
| 5. comfortable   | 6. confused | 7. strong     | 8. lonely |
| 9. wonderful     | 10. sad     | 11. worried   | 12. shy   |
| 13. disappointed | 14. hopeful | 15. confident | 16. bored |
| 17. competitive  | 18. calm    |               |           |

Thank you !



24. Please estimate relative degree of student success in each of the following areas by ordering them 1 through 4 (1=highest; 4=lowest):

- ( ) listening                      ( ) speaking  
( ) reading                         ( ) writing

Please express your opinions about student involvement in your class by indicating the extent of your agreement/disagreement with the following:

25. My students are positively motivated in class most of the time                      \_\_\_\_\_
26. My students engage in positive social interaction in class most of the time                      \_\_\_\_\_
27. My students appear to enjoy themselves in the ESL class most of the time                      \_\_\_\_\_
28. Please describe your standard for success in the ESL program:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

29. Additional comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

30. An important part of this study is your students' opinion about their ESL class. your willingness to permit your students to fill in the attached questionnaire would be greatly appreciated. If you would be willing to distribute and return such questionnaires, please indicate below and we will make the necessary arrangements:

- ( ) Yes.            number needed: \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) No.

Thank you !