We All Shine On: Supporting International Student Voices in an Academic Context

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Abstract

The primary aim of this research is to support English as an Additional Language (EAL) student oral communication on the campus of a small teaching and learning university on the West Coast of Canada, where students have reported experiencing language anxiety (LA), which is the apprehension that an interlocutor gets when engaging or preparing to engage in communication in a language that is not their mother tongue. Studies have reported that their LA can result in communication avoidance and impede language use. In this research, LA is associated with the variables described in theories around willingness to communicate (WTC), which includes group and personal factors. However, my findings uncovered other additional elements.

The objectives of the study were two-fold: (i) to investigate the students' perceptions of using English in their academic classes and other settings where language anxiety often arises; and (ii) to explore the students' strategy use both before and during the study to lower their language anxiety and support communication. To achieve my research objectives, I conducted a qualitative exploratory study using action learning with 5 participants from different nationalities who were recruited by attending voluntary workshops on strategies for oral academic communication. Each participant was involved in five semi-structured interviews. During the first of the interviews the participants were asked to complete the Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) to assess their degree of language anxiety and note specific effects of language anxiety in need of attention. Significant answers were discussed. Next, participants were then asked to complete the Academic Spoken English Strategies Survey (ASESS), to subsequently choose a strategy as an intervention to utilize, and then note the results weekly. At second, third, and fourth interviews, the participants shared their experiences around their use of the intervention, any changes they made to the intervention, or significant experiences they had had in academic communication during the investigated period. They concluded the interviews by choosing to continue working on the same aspect of language anxiety with the same intervention, or to make changes and repeat the cycle. In the last interview, the participants completed the PSCAS again and discussed any changes revealed from the first to last interview. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview data.

The findings revealed a high degree of strategy use before the study and the limited effect that additional strategy use had on reducing language anxiety and supporting corresponding oral communication during the study. Instead, speaking was primarily affected by intercultural relationships, individualized culture, and multilevel context. This led to reconsidering the WTC pyramid to incorporate these cultural and contextual variables; highlighting theories around small culture and their ultimate affect on community and connection; and noting significance of specific context, particularly the academic classroom, and its effect on identity, power and connection.

Land Acknowledgment

I would like to express my gratitude to the Snuneymuxw people for allowing me to raise my family, to work and to study on their unceded territory. I am very fortunate.

Huy ch q’u (Thank you).

> [I] could see that [my] power as an EAL speaker is less than that of professors, and also less than that of native English speakers. I think this part can also explain the theory of Intergroup climate. Because my communication experience with some of the [native English speakers] was quite negative. But I think that part of the reason for [my comments] is my original cultural influences and the other part of the reason is I did not feel welcome[d] and supported from the conversation with some of the NES in my past experience. This reminds me of a psychological book I read before, it said love and power cannot coexist. (Mulan, personal communication, Aug. 20, 2021)

Chapter 1: Introduction

It was 10:30 in the morning on my first Friday coming into my colleague's class. At that point I had been teaching ESL at the same institution for nearly 20 years, and I had been more recently trained in helping students create goals and strategies to support their language acquisition. I was hoping to take this coaching process and use it in this class of students headed for graduate studies. I was trying to find a means of bolstering their voices on campus once they got into their academic studies.

Armed with permission from my dean as well as information sheets and consent forms, I walked into the classroom. I set the computer up with my short presentation on spoken English. The room was full, but it was very quiet. I smiled nervously at the individuals sitting silently in various parts of the room.

"We'll give everyone another 5 minutes, and then we will start," I said. One student got up and left.

First, I thanked the Snuneymuxw people for allowing us to work and study on

their unceded territory. Then, we watched a video by a local First Nations Elder Gary Manson, who demonstrated the local custom of introducing oneself, including family, place of origin, and perspectives and interests. Following the video, I asked the group to turn to the people around them and use the video guide to introduce themselves. The previously quiet room came alive. Students then introduced themselves to the whole group, most of them already with what I sensed was a marked increase in confidence.

The next question I asked the group was how they felt when speaking English in their academic classes. This too initiated a great degree of conversation. When asked to share with the whole group, the topic resulted in comments, like the following:

> "I feel comfortable speaking English in a good environment, and everybody is friendly and respects each other."
>
> "I like to speak English because it gives me a different way of thinking when I speak another language."
>
> "When you see your classmates' faces, you can see if they understand you or not."
>
> "The environment in Canada helps me to practice and become more comfortable."
>
> "I feel more comfortable talking to my classmates than my teachers as I am afraid of being judged."
>
> "It is different in different parameters and different situations."
>
> And even, "it is comfortable for me to speak English with Canadians or people who come from other countries except I feel a bit uncomfortable speaking with people from my home country."

After reading the information sheets and asking students to sign their consent, in future sessions we moved into sharing various strategies and how useful they might be. Students chose strategies as a class to try for the week, drawing and writing reflections on their experiences with the tools. They then returned to class the week after and shared their experiences as pairs and ultimately the larger group. The cycle was repeated, and most students reported feeling stronger.

At the end of each session, students left with strategies they and their classmates had shared to try in future academic settings. They also left chatting and smiling and saying goodbye to me and others in the group. This experience suggested that I was on the right path.

1.1 A Brief Introduction to the Macro Context

Canada has taken strides to increase the population of international students. Though numbers have come down substantially amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Canadian Bureau for International Education reported 642,480 international students in 2019, (CBIE, Dec. 11, 2021), exceeding goals to increase the population.. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has been aiding the education and the immigration of international students as they are now seen as potentially strong immigrants (Brunner, 2017). Douglas & Rosvold (2018) report that 2.5 million newcomers came to Canada between 2003 and 2012 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013), supporting the creation of multicultural, multilingual urban settings like Vancouver where 31% of the population has a mother tongue that is not English or French (Statistics Canada, 2012). Many of these individuals aspire to study at the tertiary level (Grayson, 2008; Krahn & Taylor, 2005) and thus linguistically diverse domestic students have also increased on

Canadian campuses. However, with Canada's policy of HE institutions policing themselves, the province of British Columbia had to create the Education Quality Assurance Designation after issues with fly-by-night schools (Education Quality Assurance, n.d.). VIU joined this registry in 2009, ensuring quality and tuition protection. Finally, our institution is known for the strength of our industry connections including nursing, education and business (About Vancouver Island University, 2019) which draws international students to our programs.

1.2 Institutional Background

This institution started during the Great Depression as a small engine repair class for young men in an attempt to help them gain employment. Later, secretarial classes started as a means to support the same aims for young women. It was named BC Vocational Training School in 1959 (A history of VIU 1936–2017, n.d.). . It remained as such until 1989 when it became a university college, offering degrees in partnership with another local university Despite retaining a number of vocational programs, the province declared the institution a university in 2008 At that time, the First Nations presence on campus began to grow, with the institution offering its own programs starting in 1997, one of which was the First Nations Studies program in partnership with local First Nations groups With the changes in governance of becoming a full university came the position of Chancellor. This job, complete with a position on the Board of Governors, is currently held by a First Nations person, Ms. Louise Mandell, a lawyer and activist (VIU Appoints Louise Mandell, Q.C., as new Chancellor, Oct. 23, 2014), as was the last Chancellor, Hereditary Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, who went on to become Grand Chief of Canada. International students arrived on campus in the 1990s

The population of both of these groups continues to grow, with most recent statistics at 8% for First Nations students and 13% for international students (VIU facts online, n.d.). Nationally, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action were released in 2015. This paper contains 94 actions for federal and provincial governments to carry out in hopes of healing the residual issues from residential schools in Canada, as well as bringing Native and non-Native worldviews together (Calls to Action, 2015). A great deal of this history provides the context for the values that my institution holds today (Johnson, 2017).

Social justice theory suggests focussing on the benefit to the disadvantaged among us, and that has been the position my school has taken since its inception. Initially, this was unemployed young men and woman, and later the local First Nations. Overtime, we have had some significant success along these lines; for example, our newly appointed president is of Metis descent and our last two chancellors have been First Nations as well. And while these groups are still in need of assistance, international students also have significant needs, which should also be supported. To not do so violates social justice theories that include exploitation (Young, 2011). Stearn (2011) argues that provision of resources at an institution does not have to focus on one group or another, but rather can be one group and another, meeting the various needs of all students.

1.3 Internationalization at my Institution

Internationalization includes the "specific policies and programs undertaken by governments, academic systems and institutions, and even individual departments to deal with globalization" (Altbach, 2006, p. 123). And while I think a look at all of these levels would be highly valuable, here I narrow my scope to the small institution at which I teach, located on the west coast of Canada.

Though I have read a number of papers on this topic, I draw attention to Altbach's work, particularly with Reisberg and Rumbley (2019). In this collaboration, the authors delineate the difference between globalization, a much more passive focus on trends affecting higher education, and internationalization, a more active focus on policies and programs to manage these effects. Like many tertiary schools in Canada, my institution now leans towards the former.

Additionally, at many institutions, specific groups get priority and stakeholders are uncomfortable using resources (economic, social, cultural, etc.) for groups that fall outside these limits. For example, my institution operates within the second lowest socio-economic postal code within the province of BC. Thus, local students are an important target group, and providing help to these students is a major priority. Additionally, my institution has long supported local First Nations students. This group has a history of social struggles that include some very ugly experiences at educational institutions; this student group is also a major focus and supporting them a priority.

However, Dr. Peter Stearns (2011) highlights the value of internationalization and notes that that not all students are able to travel internationally to gain exposure to a wide range of perspectives. McCaffery (2010) argues that internationalization is for all

students, aiming to develop global citizens who can work cross-culturally. He further suggests that institutions develop their own definition to fit their contexts.

Internationalization benefits all because it is a "process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension in the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education" (Knight, 2003, p. 2). Thus, it supports respect for multiple perspectives in all aspects of tertiary education. My institution has made significant progress towards including intercultural dimensions from the local First Nations communities. But as Dr. Stearns says, internationalization does not need to exclude other important work, but rather work with it. At my institution, internationalization can bolster voices on campus from both near and far.

Our institution started internationalizing in the 1990s, and now boasts an international population of around 12% in 2020/2021, down from 18% in 2018/2019 (Facts Online - Enrolment, 2021). Though we have had 30 years of internationalization at VIU, and a significant student population from various cultural backgrounds, I would argue that what started as social internationalization has shifted to the economic sense of the term (McCaffery, 2010).

1.3.1 Social Internationalization

I want to reiterate here the active definition of internationalization that I have chosen to use. But this definition can be expanded to include the importance of preparing learners for a globalized society. It is not just a mission, but rather a reworking of higher education both in purpose and delivery (Knight, 2003).

The process implied is not a new one. Enders (2004) writes that since medieval times, Western universities have long been heavily involved in internationalization.

Perhaps because this interchange has mostly been kept within a Western English speaking tradition, we still actively seek internationalization to this day; There has been less history, and arguably less success at internationalization that includes Southern and/or Eastern traditions.

However, internationalization is for all, meant not only to broaden the horizons of students that come to us, but also to revise our own thoughts, theories, and practices. But while it is true that we are confident as to the significance of passing on our own knowledge and perspective, we seemingly resist the potential benefits of learning from others (Enders, 2004). Indeed, as Altbach et al. (2010) write:

> For the "haves" in the developed world, the globalization of higher education offers exciting new opportunities for study and research, which are no longer limited by national boundaries. For many developing countries, though, the trend represents an assault on national culture and identity. It is undoubtedly both. But without a doubt, it has increased the inequalities among nations' higher education systems. (n.p.).

Instead, these researchers suggest recruiting international students, academics, and support staff, encouraging cross-cultural perspectives in curriculum and broadening the institution’s international presence overseas with study abroad, overseas campuses, and international partnerships.

The population of international students is growing significantly on our campus, but I would argue that the internationalization of the curriculum is lacking. We have two weeks of the year when international perspectives are the focus, but I feel that more could be done in the classroom and even these two weeks could be more effective. For

example, recently we had Global Citizen Week in spring semester. The focus is on reggae music from around the world. Other talks and events include a panel discussion entitled “[Our institution] abroad: Transforming our world”, and “Migrant Dreams,” a film about the oppression of migrant workers in Ontario. The First Nations presence is much stronger recently than in past events, which is positive, but I have also noticed that there is still a focus on international development that is patronizing—for example, why are students expected to transform the places they are travelling to instead of gaining knowledge and experience from them?

In the past, the university implemented graduate attributes (GA) to bridge the gap. Thompson ‘s (2014) work on competencies included pillars based on literacies, social responsibility, and integrated applied learning. Among the twenty attributes includes students being familiar with intercultural perspectives. Perhaps this competency would be enough for instructors to include a variety of voices in most classes, or perhaps it would mean that students would be expected to take classes with an intercultural focus.

The GAs were developed by our provost, who did a campus wide scan of what departments felt were important competencies for graduates to take away upon completion of any program, certificate, or degree that is offered at the institution. International Education was approached last; however, our concerns that our students were not yet represented were taken into consideration. It seems the GAs have fallen to the wayside with a change in leadership and the shift in priorities such changes bring.

On another note, no discussion of internationalizing the curriculum would be complete without at least a brief mention of English as an international language. I have

looked at the imperializing factors of this lingua franca in past research (Johnson, 2013) and highlighted the dangers of the cultural influence of this language. However, there are benefits of using one language to communicate, and Altbach et al. (2010) see it as an access to research even with its cultural dangers. One policy that affects international students directly is that of the required score on language proficiency tests. Students at our institution require a score of 6.5 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) English test with no one band or skill under 6 (International Admissions, 2021). In the past, a score of 6 was required on the IELTS, with no one skill under 5.5. Other schools in our area require a 6.5 with no band lower than a 6 (English language competency, n.d.). This means that our students have been at a linguistic disadvantage in the past but have recently assumed the same standards as other institutions in our area. With this change in policy, the academic language proficiency that students require to be successful in the classroom is now more assured. But it has potentially meant a loss in student numbers with the instillation of a higher language barrier than we had before. What once was a change meant to support social development on campus, internationalization has now become one to support economic development, a common shift.

1.3.2 Economic Internationalization

There is little doubt that many Western higher educational institutions have become more dependent on the economic benefits of international student fees; indeed, these activities have grown substantially in the past 20 years (McCaffery, 2010, p. 258). This has led to many countries, including Canada, to change their visa requirements in hopes of attracting more students and “realize substantial financial gains” (Altbach et al., 2010, p. 28).

The effect of this shift is that awareness of competition around these economic benefits has led to countries creating internationalization policies based on economic rationales (Enders, 2004). Perhaps this is an effect of universities becoming more business minded. Higher education (HE) still highlights the differences between the public and the private sector, but current research suggests they are much more of a public and private hybrid than once thought, and in fact the trend now is towards business minded marketplace competition searching for competitive advantage including such business tools as performance management metrics and value adding processes (Marshall, 2007).

Capacity building is one such tool. Altbach et al. (2010) write that:

> Joint-degree programs, "twinning" efforts, and other approaches to cross border education to the extent that these operate in environments with appropriate regulatory and quality assurance oversight—extend the resources of individual universities without significant additional investment, again providing the promise of expanded capacity-building for underresourced institutions and systems. (30)

One example of this is the dual degree that we offer—a Master of Business Administration (MBA) coupled with a UK Master of Science in International Management (MScIM). This program was designed specifically with international students in mind, even promoting that it allows students to work in Canada during and after completion of the program. Very few Canadian institutions are well-resourced these days; therefore, this could explain why these new programs are so popular, even in small local teaching and learning universities like VIU.

Such programs indicate VIU's strong reliance on international students. According to the VIU Consolidated Resources Plan (VIU Governance, 2017), with the rise in such programs, the institution predicted an additional 2 million dollars, a 2% increase in revenue from international enrollments and fee changes in 2017–2018, in comparison to the total 61.3 million the university planned to take in from international and domestic student fees for the same school year. Though I was unable to find numbers on domestic versus international fees, it stands to reason that these figures demonstrate the significant amount that international students contribute, though their population is just 14%. To be fair, the provincial government contributes 58.7 million, or 40.8%, towards supporting our domestic students, but the university reports that this funding has dropped a great deal since the 80s when the province covered 80% of the institution's budget (Budget at a glance, 2017), demonstrating our current need for funds. McCaffery (2010) discusses the relative ease that research universities have for getting funding, but our institution does not fit in that category.

Therefore, our Board of Governors pushes hard for finances, relying heavily on international student fees. It is difficult to find public information on the numbers. Domestic fee schedules and their board approved changes are obtainable, for example, but not for international students, perhaps because the heavy use of international fees might not register well with students and academics. I disagree with this form of leadership where transparency is not a focus. However, perhaps as McCaffery (2010) suggests, it is necessary in some instances.

Indeed, when a teaching university suggests programming to support internationalization, this can create conflict in terms of resource allocation on such a

campus where local development needs to focus on local students. However, not doing so could also create a disparity between the students and academics who are able to engage in international experiences and those who cannot. Thus, the big challenge is to ensure equity in internationalization and ensure that its benefits are available to all stakeholders (Altbach et al., 2010). This means engaging in a return to focus on social internationalization on campus which requires supporting international student voices.

1.4 The Researcher

Later, I attended the Learning at Intercultural Intersections (LII) conference at Thompson Rivers University (TRU), a regional institution. One of the lessons that spoke to me from this experience was the importance of situating yourself. It is a practice that many First Nations people engage in when you first meet them or when they introduce themselves. I feel that it answers the question of who you are and what your perspective is—not just your thinking but also your being. I have always thought of myself as lucky, but I am now starting to realize it is not luck, but the privilege of a colonizer.

I, like all settler Canadians, am from immigrant roots, but my family has been in Canada so long, I only saw myself as Canadian and I saw this culture reflected in the media as I was growing up. The results were that I thought everyone was virtually the same. It was not until I fell into anthropology during my BA that I really started learning about other cultures. I now feel that anthropology of the past objectified the cultures it studies, but I have retained the respect for different ways of being, knowing, and understanding that I have gained at this point in my life. Through studies in social justice, I now recognize we are not the same—because as Bourdieu (1986) suggests, everyone plays with a very different deck of cards. Through my years as an instructor of

ESL in International Education I have come to see the struggle of not only succeeding academically but also participating in the construction of knowledge.

Thus, the perspective I am striving for is one of a Canadian feminist ally—the latter term meaning a person who gives the resources and time to allow colonized people to speak. The ally understands that she does not know more about oppressive structures than the oppressed do. Instead, she is someone who listens, and someone who continues to learn more about her role as an ally (Gehl, 2015).

This is my perspective, and so I would like to frame this work through a lens of cultural humility, a term that Hook et al. (2013) define as "having an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented rather than self-focused, characterized by respect and lack of superiority toward an individual's cultural background and experience" (353).

Thus, the socially conscious context of VIU in combination with the goal of refocusing my institution on social internationalization and its sharing of perspective intersects with my values as an instructor and an ally, resulting in this research on supporting student voices.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

As an instructor of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), I have long benefitted from the variety of perspectives that students offer in my class, and I have utilized various methods of encouraging speech to support learners in communicating their ideas. Self-expression is a real struggle for some of my students, and many of my colleagues have reported the same.

The introduction to this chapter included a narrative of the experience I had in one of my colleague's graduate level English as a second language (ESL) classes in the

fall of 2018. Trying to be as collaborative as possible, I asked the students what they thought was the cause of the lack of international voices in post-secondary classes—why were ESL students silenced in their academic settings on our campus? The overwhelming response was anxiety around speaking to native English speakers. We went on to engage in arts-based action learning, and students would draw or take photos of instances when they communicated in such situations and reflect on those instances, sharing with the group as they felt comfortable. They would then choose a strategy from the group to try the following week to see if it helped them with their language anxiety (LA). Some fantastic strategies came out of those sessions, and thus exploring strategies to assuage LA became my focus.

This suited my own aim as an educator: answering the question of what I could teach, and as a department, what we could offer our students that might support them in their oral participation in academic settings on campus. The artistic aspects were meant as another means of communication, and the action learning provided opportunities for critical thought and practical solutions. Finally, I valued the qualitative nature of this experience, and indeed research I had done in the past that included in-depth focus on perception and voice; the use of arts-based action research was a potential strategy.

Despite the success of the group coaching experience I had with my colleague's students, ethics around doing research in a class was a significant consideration going further as was the nature of group created interventions. Thus, I sought an intervention, a strategy or set of strategies that would support my participants in choosing to use their voices in class. I found a suitable approach in Schroeder's (2016) Academic Spoken English Strategies Survey (ASESS), a list of tools that the author used in supporting her

own EAL communication in her graduate studies. This survey instrument also helped me to shape my research questions. Thus, while the coaching experience was distinct from this study, reflection on the results facilitated my research here.

My aim in this qualitative exploratory study (Bryman, 2016) is to help EAL students on my campus empower themselves to share their perspectives in their classes and other academic settings through the use of strategies for oral communication. Altbach (2004) writes that an imbalance of power—economic and cultural—affects the less powerful, creating a loss of academic and cultural sovereignty on campuses in colonized countries, indeed, he writes, "existing inequalities are reinforced while new barriers are erected" (Altbach, 2004, p. 7). Such actions exist on our campus, but I hope to reverse this trend. The strategies shared (see Appendix B) are meant as interventions in a series of cycles designed to explore the utility of these tools to support individual voices and ultimately a wider variety of perspectives in academic discourse on our campus. Thus, to explore tools to support international student voices through the use of strategies was my aim here and my objectives were designed to support explore this aim. However, over the course of the research, it became apparent that my focus on strategies fell short of promoting student voices but that exploration of other objectives suggested future means to success.

My research questions include:

How does the adoption of the Academic Spoken English Strategies Survey (ASESS) as a framework affect the participants' self-perceptions and feelings about using ESL in academic communication?

1. What are the participant's self-perceptions and feelings about the use of ESL in academic communication?

2. In what circumstances do the participants experience language anxiety in academic communication?

3. What strategies have the participants used to cope with their anxiety in academic communication?

4. How effective are strategies in the Academic Spoken English Strategies Survey (ASESS) at reducing the participants' perceived anxiety in academic communication?

Having situated myself, my institution, and to some degree our students, I now turn to a review of the literature around second language acquisition (SLA), willingness to communicate (WTC), languaculture and ecology – aspects of that became significant over the course of the interviews I engaged in with the participants in this research. The synthesis and critique of the literature is followed by a discussion of methodology rooted in Kolb's cycle and in thematic analysis. Later, my findings and discussion support a shift in focus around language anxiety and WTC to include the significant effects of individual culture and environment. Indeed, as an ESL instructor, SLA and WTC were included in the background knowledge that I brought into this study and thus a focus of my research question. However, while the significance of culture and context was also there for me, the degree to which they affect oral academic communication was not.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There are multiple factors that come into play when researching language anxiety. Here I chose two sources of inspiration when choosing which factors to focus on. The first is my data collection – or more specifically, what my respondents chose to focus on in our interviews. While many initially had the perception that their competence in L2 communication was lacking, cultural and intercultural context and connections had a far bigger effect than what I first imagined. The second is the writings of Jian E. Peng, a researcher in the TESOL Program, Faculty of Education and Social Work, at the University of Sydney. Her research on L2 Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in Chinese Post-secondary students at Chinese universities helped me better understand my findings. Peng (2014) helped me focus on the four major paradigms of this literature review: second language acquisition (SLA); willingness to communicate (WTC); culture and ecology. These are the four sections that I provide here with a view to testing their significance against my findings. In my discussion chapter, I suggest that some prove to have more effect on international student voices in academic classes than others.

2.1 Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

There is not a great deal of literature available on English as a second language speakers in Canadian post-secondary academic settings. Consequently, I draw on a wide range of related second language acquisition (SLA) literature, including findings from English as a second language (ESL) and foreign language (EFL) studies—the latter occurring in places where English is not the language immersion context outside the classroom. Indeed, I use literature on English specifically and SLA more broadly—thus

extending to other languages—and studies taking place in secondary and post-secondary settings from around the world.

The literature concentrates more on educational studies on foreign language anxiety (FLA) specifically, not the clinical psychology side of anxiety. For example, Krashen, arguably one of the most significant theorists in SLA, shared his thoughts on what he called the affective filter—the mental state language students are in and the significance this state has on their success in language learning. Krashen (1982) wrote if a student were bored or anxious, their ability to learn language would be negatively affected. This still holds true in the literature today (Lai & Wei, 2019; Patrick, 2019;), and suggests that the methods instructors use and the atmosphere they create are significantly impact student success in language acquisition (Lin, 2008).

Considerable research that demonstrates situational language anxiety is different from trait anxiety is abundant in the literature. Indeed, Horwitz (2010) provides a timeline of the research completed, stating that studies conducted on situational anxiety in foreign language use had more significant and consistent results than those on trait or test anxiety. There are several dated but still relevant studies conducted primarily by MacIntyre and by Gardner, respected researchers in second language acquisition. Lalonde and Gardner (1984) found a negative causal relationship between language anxiety and motivation and attention in the language class but found no such relationship with trait anxiety. Gardner, Moorcroft and MacIntyre (1987) found that anxiety in French class and anxiety in French use correlates with vocabulary production. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) found a correlation between what they called communicative anxiety and poor French vocabulary learning and production, but no

correlation with general anxiety. Horwitz (1986) found no correlation between LA and other forms of anxiety. Finally, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) concluded that language anxiety can be discriminated from other anxieties. Despite the age of these studies, the significance of language anxiety is still explored today. Dewaele (2013) and MacIntyre (2016) conclude that a well-researched and consistent negative correlation exists between language anxiety and language proficiency, more so than that found with test and trait anxieties. These researchers also point out that despite this well-documented existence of language anxiety, the research has been undervalued due in part to the large role that motivation has taken in more socio-educational models. My research rectifies that, and while here I first focus on the more psychological it is to the more sociological models that I ultimately turn.

Similarly, while I have found commonalities between language anxiety and other kinds of situational anxiety in education in the literature, there are also significant differences. For example, math anxiety and LA have aspects that are both the same and different. Ashcraft (2002) reports that math anxiety is well-researched as distinct phenomena in education literature, and that negative correlation between both these situational anxieties, working memory and performance is found, and as I have shown in this chapter, this is also evident in language anxiety. Similarly, teaching styles have effect on math anxiety (Daneshamooz, 2012) just as occurs in the language classroom. Systemic barriers and social messages around identity and aptitude affect student achievement in math (Tobias, 1990), just as occurs in English. However, there are several significant differences between math and language anxiety as well. For example, I would argue that the degree to which identity is affected by social messages is

different in the prevalence that these messages can manifest as micro-aggressions, defined as frequent brief social exchanges that disempower individuals because of their identification with a specific group (Sue, 2010) often presented as a means to teach, and can occur several times over the course of even one communicative interaction. Additionally, while math avoidance is a strategy that students can use when they get to the post-secondary level (Onwuegbuzie, 2004), choosing to avoid English use is impossible here as it is the language of instruction for our institution. While it is true that students can choose to avoid the significant reading and writing that goes into humanities, they cannot avoid the oral communication that goes into nearly all fields of study at VIU. Thus, differences between math and language anxieties are also primarily sociological in nature.

2.1.1 Language Anxiety

Several terms have been defined around the anxious feelings that speakers feel when communicating in an L2. McCrosky (1984) defines communication apprehension in the L1 as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (p. 13). Horwitz et al. (1986) seconded this definition as an element of foreign language anxiety. In studies around WTC, this anxiety is sometimes called communication apprehension (MacIntyre et al., 2003) and at other times language anxiety (Clément et al., 2003; MacIntyre et al., 2002). While Peng (2014) notes that communication anxiety is likely the most used term in L2 WTC theory, and employing Baker and MacIntyre (2000), Cetinkaya (2005), Hashimoto (2002), Kim (2004), and Yashima (2002) as a frame, I have chosen to use *language anxiety* as I think it suggests communication in a language

other than an individual's mother tongue and avoids the association with the clinical anxiety found in psychology.

The study of language anxiety has been recognized in the literature as a factor that can impede language attainment and use. Students with high levels of language anxiety may engage in avoidance behavior, such as simplifying the messages and structures with which they choose to communicate, engaging in procrastination, and skipping class. Indeed, language anxiety correlates negatively with grades and performance for students of Japanese, French, Spanish, Arabic, and English (Peng, 2014).

2.1.1.1 Anxiety: Trait, State, or Situational. Educational research has long delineated anxiety as being either trait or state. Whereas trait anxiety is long-term and personality related, state anxiety is more short-term and in the moment (Woodrow, 2006). However, Spielberger et al. (1976) described a third type of anxiety: situational. While English language learners can experience all three of these kinds of anxiety, language learning is an example of the third type (Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b).

In fact, the literature shows that anxiety around English is not generally related to personality. While Dewaele (2013) did determine a link between neuroticism and anxiety in foreign language communication, which suggests that personality traits play a role in a student's ability to communicate, these findings fly in the face of several opposing studies. For example, Sharpe (2008) found that personality does not correlate with success in second language learning. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989, 1991a) uncovered that measures of general anxiety are too broad to reflect anxiety related to

language learning; and Kim (2000, 2005) concluded that anxiety around listening tasks—considered situation specific—is separable from anxiety that is personality related.

Stepping back from these findings, we can see that perceptions do play a role. For instance, Horowitz et al. define the anxiety around foreign language acquisition as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz, 1986; Horwitz, et al., 1986, p. 128). Indeed, Horwitz et al. (1986) believe that it is the anxiety around communicating in a second language that effects the speaker's self-concept, not the other way around, as mature L2 learners are often frustrated by their inability to express their thoughts with the language that they have acquired or to understand other speakers (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). Similarly, Cheng (2002) revealed that perceptions around abilities to write were associated with anxiety around writing and success in the task.

Recent literature suggests that anxiety around second language speaking is situational. Some studies delineate the difference between studying foreign languages and second languages. An example of the first would be language acquisition that takes place in settings where English is a foreign language like Japan or China and is therefore not spoken every day by the general population. An example of the second would be language acquisition that takes part in setting where English is spoken regularly, like parts of Canada. Woodrow (2006) writes that learning English "in an environment where the target language is also the language of everyday communication may influence anxiety" (p. 309) and suggests that out of class communication in such settings

can be more anxiety producing than in class. Moreover, her 2006 study set in Australia demonstrated that in class and out of class anxiety are distinct.

But even situations within language classrooms can be differentiated. Price (1991) found that students could experience debilitating anxiety in classes where teachers focused on performance over learning. However, Young (1990) concluded that classrooms with atmospheres that were supportive, friendly, and relaxed alleviated FLA and supported language learning. This classroom environment can support motivation, communication confidence, and even willingness-to-communicate (Peng & Woodrow, 2010)

Learners in a variety of situations benefit from a sense of self-efficacy—a concept that is readily discussed in the literature. Bandura (1986) defines it as "people's judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 391). He goes on to say that self-efficacy affects motivation in that it shapes goals, effort, and persistence. Likewise, Dornyei and Clement (2001) write that self-confidence relates to a general sense of potential, whereas self-efficacy relates to specific tasks. I would argue that it is, therefore, situational.

Situational anxiety around foreign language acquisition is significant, and it seems that the majority of second language speakers suffer from it. Woodrow (2006) stated that 85% of participants in her study reported anxiety around speaking in a second language, with "performing in front of class" and "talking to native speakers" being the most stressful tasks (p. 319). Results from Tran et al. (2013) showed that two-thirds of students experience foreign language anxiety, but that instructors do not tend to consider

the implications of the issue. Therefore, I feel I can infer that a majority of students are experiencing FLA, and the anxiety is at least partly rooted in the tasks students are asked to engage in.

As mentioned, Woodrow (2006) asserts that communicating orally with native speakers is one of the biggest sources of anxiety for second language speakers. Although the correlations in her findings are not strong, she expected as much given the inevitable intervening variables at play. For example, Çağatay (2015) supports Woodrow's findings on the anxiety around speaking to native speakers, suggesting it is particularly true of female students in his Turkish respondent sample. Thus, while some of this anxiety may spring from the shame speakers feel when making a mistake in their communication, there may also be cultural perceptions or gender differences involved.

The debilitating force of language anxiety is more conspicuous in L2 oral communication situations. Learners' L2 oral performance is likely to be constrained by limited linguistic resources. Learners might find it hard to fully express ideas which they could articulate well in their native language. The significant negative effect of anxiety on oral achievement or performance has been reported (Machida, 2001; Phillips, 1992; Woodrow, 2006). In Kim's (1998) study with 57 Korean EFL college students, the participants were considerably more anxious in the conversation class than in the reading class. Woodrow (2006) researched 275 international students enrolled in an English for academic purposes (EAP) course in Australia and identified significantly negative correlations between speaking anxiety and oral assessment scores in the form of the International English Language Test System (IELTS) (Peng, 2014).

2.1.1.2 Models. Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 128) conceptualized foreign language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process." They developed the widely used Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which measures anxiety at three dimensions: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension arises from interpersonal interactions; test anxiety is related to fear of failing the course; and fear of negative evaluation is the apprehension about being negatively evaluated by others (Peng, 2014).

Perhaps the explanation is that language anxiety is an element of performance anxiety. Indeed, multiple studies have reported that anxiety negatively corresponds to successful performance (Aida, 1994; Cheng et al., 1999; Horwitz, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Phillips, 1992; Saito & Samimy, 1996), with some suggesting it is the strongest factor (MacIntyre, 1999). I would argue that this is particularly true of oral performance, as the FLCAS that Horwitz developed (1986) has more questions related to oral performance than other skills (Cheng et al., 1999). While Horowitz does not share why she chose to include a focus on oral communication, we can assume it is because it is more utilized than written communication. After all, "We listen to a book a day, we speak a book a week, read the equivalent of a book a month, and write the equivalent of a book a year" (Buckley, 1992, p.623). Questions on Horwitz's (1986) FLCAS include those related to apprehension around communication, like "I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class"; and negative evaluation by the teacher and other students, like "I am afraid the other students will

laugh at me when I speak the foreign language" and test anxiety with "I am usually at ease during tests in my language class" (p. 559–560). These three forms of anxiety do not comprise the three components to Horwitz et al.'s (1986) model on language learning anxiety, however. Instead, Horwitz (2017) suggests that the original research included these specific anxieties as a means of scaffolding understanding of the Language Anxiety experience and that while there is overlap between all of these constructs, LA is distinct.

Other significant models include MacIntyre and Gardner's (1994) model, which delineates stages in second language acquisition (SLA), seemingly related to oral communication, including input, processing, and output stages. An example of a statement from the input stage is "I am not bothered by someone speaking quickly in French/Spanish/German/Japanese"; from the processing stage: "I feel anxious if French/Spanish/German/Japanese class seems disorganized"; and from the output stage: "I get upset when I know how to communicate in French/Spanish/German/Japanese but I just cannot verbalize it" (p. 304–305).

Another significant model includes Tobia's (1985) research, which suggests there are two types of anxious language learner: one is caused by retrieval interference, and the other stems from skill deficits. Retrieval interference occurs primarily at the output stage, where anxiety impedes the ability of the speaker to recall the language they need to use in communication. Skill deficits occur at the input and processing stages and are related to a lack of the skills and/or language needed to communicate.

2.1.2 Oral Communication

While few specific studies exist, anxiety can be related to speaking and listening skills specifically. Because Horwitz's work was too broad, and other scales focused on EFL not ESL, Woodrow (2006) developed the second language speaking anxiety scale (SLSAS) for her work with learners in Australia, where they reflected their experiences with English both in and outside the classroom. Her findings indicated that anxiety around speaking a second language predicted a lack of achievement in oral communication. Similarly, Gluszek and Dovidio (2010) found that speaker perceptions around accents can cause communication breakdowns. Mills et al. (2006) revealed similar findings around listening anxiety and its ability to predict proficiency over both gender and self-efficacy. Indeed, listening is a skill that seems to have significant anxiety associated with it, and Bekleyen (2007) suggests two reasons for this. The first is the fact that listening is rarely a focus in the language classroom; and the second is that students rarely have experience with the oral forms of vocabulary, or with linking and the discourse needed to achieve true strength in this skill.

Horowitz's FLA is operationalized in Yaikhong and Usaha's (2012) Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS). Although Yaikhong and Usaha ultimately created the PSCAS with more of a focus on public speaking, I think their preliminary scale is more useful for this study because it contains aspects of foreign language anxiety that were removed in later versions, aspects like self-perceived ability and test anxiety. Students used a Likert scale to communicate their agreement with statements, such as the following:

1 I never feel quite sure of myself while I am speaking English.

2 I tremble when knowing that I am going to be called on to speak English.

3 I start to panic when I have to speak English without a preparation in advance.

4 In a speaking class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.

5 I feel confident while I am speaking English. (Yaikhong & Usaha, 2012)

2.1.3 Interventions

Interventions discussed in the literature seemingly fall into two categories: teacher-centered and student-centered. Woodrow's (2006) results demonstrated that group work, or student to student collaboration, was one means of mitigating student anxiety—this is one area for which both students and instructors can be responsible. Both can also be responsible for building skills as suggested by Tobias' (1985) study; learners suffering from skill deficits can improve through the use of learning strategies and focusing on skills; and both can be responsible for mitigating retrieval issues, potentially through positive messages and relaxation techniques (Young, 1991; Zeidner, 1998).

It is worth noting that specific, teacher-centered interventions exist as methods and strategies used in the classroom; examples include a variety of methods that have developed over the years generally to sooth anxiety. Ansari (2015) lists methods like the Silent Way, total physical response (TPR), community language learning (CLL), and Suggestopedia. Predictability was also considered a factor that lowered anxiety, which suggests that the practice of activating student knowledge at the start of a lesson can lower anxiety, as can using thematic syllabi and student interests to shape curricula.

However, student-centered interventions are far more prominent in the literature. Researchers have cited perseverance (Woodrow, 2006) and learning strategies (Chamot, 1994) as suggestions for mitigating language anxiety, with more specific interventions being outlined over time. Oxford (1990, p. 163) identified a number of what she called affective strategies to support positive emotions, attitudes, and motivation. See Table 1 for a summary of these strategies combined with sample activities suggested by Rossiter (2003, n.p.).

Table 1

Affective Strategies

Strategy (Oxford, 1990)	Sample Activity
Lowering your anxiety	Speaking strategies (Weaver & Cohen, 1997) Relaxation exercises (Moskowitz, 1978) Music, visualization (Arnold, 1999) Humor: Video: *The Best of Mr. Bean*; summary of the movie *Patch Adams*; reading: "Laughter is good for you" (adapted from Feltman, 1992)
Encouraging yourself	Speaking strategies (Weaver & Cohen, 1997) Positive self-talk (adapted from Powell, 1997) Discussing and taking risks (Brown, 1989)
Taking your emotional temperature	Speaking strategies (Weaver & Cohen, 1997) Feelings checklist (Oxford, 1990) Language learning journal (Nunan, 1996) SLL advice column (Crookall & Oxford, 1991)

Note. Retrieved from "The effects of affective strategy training in the ESL classroom". By M.J. Rossiter, 2003, *Tesl-Ej*, *7*(2), 1-20. Copyright 2003.

The prevalence of these interventions demonstrates the significance of learner autonomy and the importance of students supporting and ultimately empowering themselves in their language learning and academic journeys and potentially their life paths. Further discussion of empowerment is found in the methodology section of this proposal.

However, Rossiter (2003) realized that strategies that support a positive affective filter did not have effect on student anxiety, possibly due to the positive environment he already had created in his ESL classroom. Thus, he suggests that the classroom environment has a greater influence than previously thought.

While this literature review touches on ecology as an aspect of language anxiety, the case studies and analyses concentrate on student-centered, cognitive, study skills related strategies and their effect on learner anxiety in a more academic context. For example, Lai's (2009) delved into strategies related to academic learning, cognitive, and metacognitive thinking and determined that, in study of 418 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, more successful language learners implemented such strategies. This investigation also anchors on Schroeder's (2016) Academic Spoken English Strategies Survey (ASESS). This questionnaire was designed to assess Non-native English speaking graduate student use of oral and aural communication strategies. Being such a learner herself, Schroeder used her own academic English learning journal along with pilot questionnaire results as well as feedback from her participants to create the survey. Overall, the emic perspective of this research and its resulting tool was particularly useful to my study.

2.2 Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

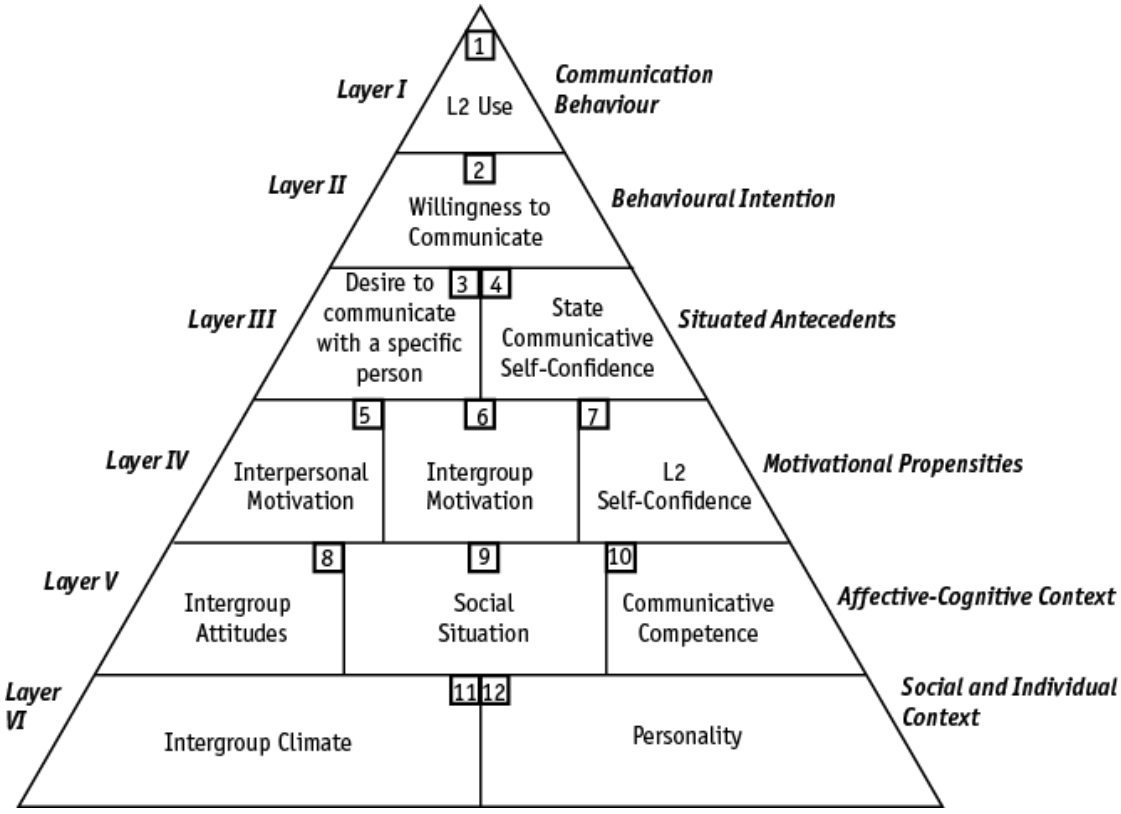
MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) pyramid depicting the various factors in willingness to communicate (WTC) is significant here because of the way all of the factors relate to each other. I would argue that Language Anxiety could be found in layer III, Situated Antecedents, which is supported by Motivational Propensities, Affective-Cognitive

Context and Social and Individual Context and affects Behavioral Intention, and Communication (see Figure 1, MacIntyre's Theoretical Model).

Indeed, a discussion of WTC would not be complete without a closer look at MacIntyre et al.'s 1998 theoretical model in which the researchers present L2 WTC as a composite variable influenced by the "joint effect of variables both internal and external to individual learners" (Peng & Woodrow, 2010, p. 835).

Figure 1

MacIntyre's Theoretical Model



Note. Retrieved from "Conceptualizing Willingness to Communicate in a L2: A Situational Model of L2 Confidence and Affiliation," by P. D. MacIntyre, R. Clement, Z. Dornyei, and K. Noels, 1998, Modern Language Journal, 82, p. 547. Copyright 1998

If we look at the model, we can see that there are six layers, the proximity of each reflecting its effect on the pinnacle, communication in L2 (Peng, 2014). Note that WTC is Layer II, both predicting and supporting this communication. The situational aspects of WTC are located in Layer III, including communication with a specific individual and the affiliation or control surrounding that person, as well as the state confidence experienced in the context, what Clement (1980, 1986) define as perceived competence and lack of language anxiety.

Box 10 located in Layer 5, Affective and Cognitive Context, informs this study, as it includes the strategies student participants explored as interventions. Focusing on student outcomes of second language acquisition (SLA), this box highlights the significance of linguistic, strategic, actional, discourse, and sociocultural competencies (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).

Additionally, significant to this research, this model highlights the importance of intercultural relationships. Of the ten variables that influence L2 WTC identified by MacIntyre et al. (1998), three of them are intercultural in nature: boxes 5, 8, and 11. Moreover, while Peng (2014) notes that these factors may not be as significant in her context (English classes in China), I acknowledge its significance herein: that of academic classes in a small, English-speaking Canadian university. Peng also highlights, however, that the greater cultural context—and the communication norms observed in these cultures—is not an explicit focus of this model. I would argue that this incorporates the cultural context in which the communication is taking place as well as the worldview and background of the speaker.

As the term suggests, WTC is a tool for communication, rather than an act itself (Yashima, 2012). Learners look for opportunities to communicate in their L2, English in this case, if they have strong WTC (Peng, 2014). It is the antecedent to verbal action but observing the processes and variables involved is difficult (Peng & Woodrow, 2010). WTC is highly significant for L2 speakers studying overseas and other cross-cultural settings, as it can support their communication in the community. Lack of WTC can predict issues with communication leading to social and financial difficulties (Gallagher, 2013). Peng and Woodrow (2010) write that in academic settings, "the study of WTC in an L2 is of special importance in decoding learners' communication psychology and promoting communication engagement in class" (p. 835).

Peng (2014) describes WTC as a complex combination of context, motivation, and behavior. To further her argument, she utilizes MacIntyre et al. (1998) to visualize the complexities of the variables that affect WTC. A look at all of these variables is beyond the scope of this research, however, like Peng I am interested in specific aspects, including state communicative self-confidence because as Clement (1980, 1986) defines it, self-confidence is a concept that entails perceived competence combined with a lack of anxiety. Peng (2014) suggests that this situational, communicative self-confidence depends on a number of other variables that are significant to this research, such as intergroup climate, which involves the context and "the attitudes and values regarding the L2 community and the motivation to adapt and reduce social distance between ethnic groups" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 556) and intergroup attitudes, which includes integratetiveness and fear of assimilation in the surrounding culture—threatening

identity, and communicative competence, comprised of both linguistic, socio-cultural, and strategic competence (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).

Peng (2007) categorizes eight themes into two types of factors that affect L2 WTC: variables related to the individual are learner beliefs, communication competence, language anxiety, and risk-taking; and variables associated with social context are classroom climate, group cohesiveness, teacher support, and classroom organization. Peng and Woodrow (2010) later suggest the interconnection of these two factors. Finally, Peng (2014) suggests that the 2 types of factors are in fact three: second language acquisition (SLA), learner beliefs, and ecology. Taken together, these factors and variables have helped to inform the focus of this literature review.

Finally, it is important to note that several scales have been developed (Weaver, 2005; Rasch, 1960) to assess the presence of WTC, but I would argue that the complexities of researching these scales would necessitate a focus on aspects of WTC rather than the theory as a whole, prompting a focus herein on language anxiety, and the factors that my participants identified as playing a role in their language anxiety, as opposed to WTC as a whole.

2.2.1 *Readiness*

Definitions of WTC focus on readiness. MacIntyre et al. (1998) define it as a preparedness to "enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2" (p. 547). Peng (2014) suggests that this focus on readiness contrasts with a more active tendency by virtue of being more situational in nature. Peng further delineates five types of readiness, including linguistic, cognitive, affective, motivational, and cultural, and suggests that while a student might have readiness in one

or more of these forms, lacking others could silence the speaker. Indeed, Peng writes that all of these aspects of readiness are highly interrelated. This will become more obvious as we look at MacIntrye's model of WTC.

2.2.2 Transition from L1 to L2

Initially, WTC sprang from research on L1 communication, but findings by MacIntyre and Charos (1996) suggested extending this theory from L1 to L2 education. This suggests that understanding and support of WTC may scaffold communication and learning in a cross-cultural classroom, supporting both first and second language speakers like many of those found on my campus and others in Canada. Although WTC has come to focus on the language classroom, its origins in L1 suggest that it includes students in a variety of contexts, including the academic classroom. Thus, while the majority of WTC research has been conducted in second language acquisition (SLA) teaching and learning, WTC research has a much greater application. MacIntyre et al. (1998) write that WTC promotes communication in the L2 context, supporting language acquisition.

2.2.3 Trait vs State vs Situational

Like what the SLA literature suggests, the distinction between trait WTC and state WTC and even situational WTC has long been of interest to researchers—the distinction being that trait WTC signifies a predisposition to communication and state L2 WTC is more situational (Peng & Woodrow, 2010, p. 835).

Initially narrowed to L1 contexts, McCroskey and Baer (1985) carried out the early WTC research. The scale they developed included four contexts in which communication took place (pairs, small group, meeting, and public) with three

categories of audiences (friend, acquaintance, and stranger). They theorized that L1 WTC is a relatively stable tendency of speakers to engage in communication and encompassed traits like what they defined as individual and cultural genetically based variables, like introversion, communication competence, and communication apprehension. Despite emphasizing L1, MacIntyre's 1994 study was highly significant because of the use of path analysis and its exploration of causal relationships between variables in WTC. His findings included demonstrating the indirect causal relationship between self-esteem and introversion with perceived communication competence and communication, ultimately placing the latter variables in a position demonstrating their effect on WTC. Later, however, MacIntyre et al. (1999) found that in both L1 and L2 academic settings, trait WTC bolsters a tendency to communicate, whereas state WTC occurring in certain situations predicts initiation of communication. Peng (2014) notes the more state-like or even situational nature of L2 WTC noting "[i]t is not uncommon that a talkative person remains silent in an L2 conversation situation or an L2 class" (p. 38). These situational factors can include topics, group composition and size, and cultural context (Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005).

More recently, Peng (2014) found that L2 WTC in the English language class actually fluctuates over time and is therefore both situational and developmental (Cao, 2011; Kang, 2005). Unlike L1 WTC, which Peng contends is more trait-like, L2 WTC is an interplay between the individual and the academic contexts. She points to the significance of environmental factors, something that I explore later below.

2.3 Culture and Interculture

My first inclination when starting this section of this literature review was to look at Hofstede and his definitions of the characteristics of culture and compare the various cultures themselves. But then several issues came to mind. For example, to what extent, if any, does Hofstede (2011) consider individuals whose cultural background is a minority in their country. It is clear that all of Hofstede's characteristics of a country do not represent all cultures within it. Does Hofstede's assumptions about learners' home country environment represent their ways of knowing and being?

Indeed, this kind of positivistic labelling can result in stereotyping. Bredella (1991) posits that there is no objectivity in cultural analysis. Holliday (2020) scribes that one cannot characterize a belief as "'true', 'false', or 'distorted' since this implies that there is a 'true' picture against which distortions can be measured and that there is real danger in the nature of such labels. Bredella (2003) further suggests that these biased norms can often be demeaning, especially when in relation to ethnocentric standards.

Instead, a constructivist paradigm avoids these false definitions and moves towards recognizing the complexity around the construction of cultures that are far more individually based in specific experiences in specific contexts throughout lifetimes affecting the here and now (Delanty, 2006). With this lens, cultural and special boundaries are blurred (Beck & Sznaider, 2006; Holliday, 2011).

This shift in views potentially affects the responses instructors make to their students. For example, the positivistic, or what Langaard (2020) calls the dominant neo-essentialist view, argues that cultures that are deemed "collectivist" result in a lack of individualism and that Western teachers need to respect this worldview and modify their

expectations to suit these students. Conversely, a more constructivist, or what Langaard calls critical cosmopolitan view, underscores the individual who might be influenced by the traditions and pedagogy they have experienced but who can choose to engage in small-culture formation in the new context and resulting power dynamics. They may choose to use silence as a form of resistance, or they may choose other behaviors to change these dynamics.

Thus, we can see that individuals are not predisposed to adhere to specific thoughts and practices, but rather, tendencies that vary and shift depending on the person and the context (Noels et al., 2020). Kim and Hubbard (2007) suggest this redefining of culture as a contrast to macro culture-typed identities, which dichotomize, often into Eastern and Western cultural norms, ignoring the complexities of globalization.

One such complexity is the effect that English learning is having on the world. This could be the subject of multiple volumes of writing and research, but this discussion is beyond the focus of this research. Here, it is enough to note that there in an effect on the individual who studies English. These effects have been studied and theorized about in the literature for over a century now. When examining the correlations between language and culture, Humboldt (1907/1836) found that perspective changes with the study of a new language. Sapir noted that this could be a result of

> the “real world” [being] to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group [. . .]. We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely

> as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation. (Sapir, as cited in Whorf 1939/1956, p. 134)

In terms of lenses, sociocultural applied linguists define culture as the actions or routines of a community—and not always a country. From the Vygotskyan cultural–historical perspective, culture is based on human development as the result of connections with others and the resulting artefacts of the tasks they engage in (Noels et al., 2020). We will talk more about these aspects of ecology later, but in this research, we will highlight that redefining culture from that of contrasting characteristics to one of acknowledging the effects of experience and connection on the individual or the group, which suggests a more positive commitment to globalization and multiculturalism by all individuals involved.

Despite not having these big "C" Cultures and their corresponding characteristics, intercultural communication still comes into play; it examines the discourse of two people coming from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, interacting in one participant's first languages, or in a lingua franca (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1997; Lustig & Koester, 2009). This kind of analysis may seem more difficult, but I would argue that it is not, as discourse between two individuals—the basis of communication—can still be intercultural in nature. Indeed, Noels et al. (2020) puts forth that intercultural communication means that an individual takes on the role of "dynamic biculturalist," who is sensitive to the negotiation between self-identity and other identities. Communication theory of identity (Hecht et al., 2005) states that social interaction forms, modifies, and is an expression of identity. Similarly, cross cultural adaptation (Kim, 1988, 2005) demonstrates the growth and evolution that results from

significant and multiple encounters with a new culture in a cycle of stress-adaptation and growth. Through this process, an intercultural identity is formed, what Noels et al. (2020) asserts as "individualized and universal . . . transcending ascribed group boundaries, it also provides a developmental framework that has the advantage of explaining the emergent and reciprocal nature of identity and communication (p. 60).

Therefore, each individual is unique based on their experiences, including their social connections, in this case those encountered on our campus.

Finally, Noels et al. (2020) note that the postmodern, critical lens is gaining ground in research on intercultural communication due to applied linguistics, including the movement's use of ethnography and thick description of community and communication practices. Inequities around power, identity, and reproduction of ideology are all significant in this paradigm but are underrepresented in the literature around interpersonal intercultural communication.

2.3.1 Languaculture

Risager (2020) writes that beyond Humboldt, Whorf, and Sapir and their studies on the correlations between language and culture is languaculture. Originally introduced as linguaculture by linguistic anthropologist Paul Friedrich (1989) and the relationships he found between ideology, language, and political economy, it is defined as "the verbal aspects of culture" (p. 306). Another prominent linguistic anthropologist, Michael Agar (1994) expanded this definition when he suggested looking beyond the meaning of grammar and lexis to one based in discourse, including "seeing, knowing, talking, and acting. Not patterns that imprison you, but patterns that mark the easier trails for thought and perception and action" (p. 71). Finally, Risager (2006) introduces what she calls a

transnational perspective whereby with globalization, culture becomes an aspect of language learning, melding sociolinguistics with cultural and social anthropology. Risager discusses and expands on current debates on the relationship between language and culture, including Humboldt, Sapir and Whorf's position that language is inseparable from culture and that language is a neutral structure or system based in communicative function. Risager suggests a third position, one that states both, "(1) language and culture can, in fact, be separated; and (2) language is never culturally neutral" (Risager, 2020, p. 114).

Based on my perspective informed by anthropology and international education, I focus on Agar's work using languaculture as the construct, and the corresponding definition incorporating the inseparable connection that language and culture have for each other:

> Language, in all its varieties, in all the ways it appears in everyday life, builds a world of meanings. When you run into different meanings, when you become aware of your own and work to build a bridge to the others, "culture" is what you're up to. Language fills the spaces between us with sound; culture forges the human connection through them. Culture is in language, and language is loaded with culture. (Agar, 1994, p. 28)

That being said, I also accept Risager's definition with its inclusion of transnationality and suggest that like the discussion of culture above, languaculture is individualistic and fluid. I choose the term languaculture because I reject Risager's claim that it is a linguistic term, but instead believe that it is concept that transcends fields and should also be accessible to speakers of EAL.

However, despite the differences over time, one theme has remained essentially the same: “one always transfers into a foreign language, more or less, one’s own worldview” (Humboldt, 1907, p. 60). But while the national, romantic thinking that one’s national culture and the L1 affected thought and communication in the L2, Risager’s more contemporary theories suggest that a speaker and a listener’s individual languaculture will affect understanding in a shared language. Thus, in order to ensure communication, the process becomes more active as “people must deal with other people’s meanings” (Hannerz, 1992, p. 14). Significantly, as Risager (2020) writes, the significance of languaculture is the understanding that meaning is specific to language and therefore language cannot be completely disassociated from culture. Risager goes on to say that this is also true of various knowledge discourses—from those on education to those on intercultural communication—and that discourse is framed by the languaculture in which it takes place. Hence, discourse that takes place in English is affected by colonialism, Western science and business practices, and in the classroom, Western pedagogy. On the micro level, the individual level, each person involved in a conversation brings their own perspective and the interaction envelopes the ensuing cultural process. Risager defines these loci as external—related to the shared language; and internal—related to the subject and the speaker’s experiences and constructs around the idea of the language. Finally, Risager (2019) writes that identity is a significant dimension of languaculture and the significance that it has as an educational lens suggests that identity is transformed through the learning of a new language. Identity is also potentially reflected in accent, as discussed below.

2.3.2 *Accent*

A native speaker (NS) accent has long been held as the standard for second language acquisition (SLA) and this is still held true for L2 English speakers today (He & Zhang, 2010; Kang, 2015; McKenzie, 2010; Ren et al., 2016; Scales et al., 2006; Timmis, 2002; Wang, 2015; Xu et al., 2010; Zhang, 2013). Li (2009) found that 80% of participants in their study chose to adopt an NS accent while 20% chose a local accent. This is in large part due to the common perception from both L1 and L2 English speakers that the NS accent demonstrates competence, is internationally intelligible (Jenkins, 2007), and are thus associated with prestige (Timmis, 2002). Indeed, Sung (2016) writes that the symbolic capital of an NS accent can result in social and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). More on English speaking and its various associations, such as respect can be found in my look at the literature around face, are discussed below**.**

Accent and its connection with identity has become a more popular focus in SLA research in the past two decades, particularly in English Lingua Franca (ELF), what Seidlhofer (2005) defines as "communication in English between speakers with different first language backgrounds, across linguacultural boundaries (p. 339)." Sung (2014) writes that ELF replaces native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS), which have recently come into contention. These terms have negative connotations around power and identity. Instead, the term ELF suggests that L2 speakers of English are authentic communicators of the language, and they can express and preserve their identity through their accents without feeling disadvantaged. This shift in the metalanguage around English is significant due to the association that accent and identity have come to have.

Kirkpatrick (2007) writes that conserving accents relates to preservation of identity and respect of self and culture. The use of ELF shifts the perception of L2 English speakers from deficient users of the language to legitimate users of International English (Sung, 2014). Because there is little research on the causal chain between the effects of this change of metalanguage, its resulting change of perception, and its potential change in the experience of language anxiety, this is certainly an area for future studies.

Indeed, change like this values the identity of the speaker as an individual with cultural and historical multiplicities, distinctive of Anglophone culture. Sung (2016) found that participants "indicated a desire to express their identity through their L1-influenced accent…[as] speaking English with one's accent was perceived to be closely related to identity expression" (p. 60). This represents a move away from what Li (2009) found which could represent a refocusing of perspective that represents a broader shift in power. Jenkins (2002) writes that individuals should be empowered to retain their accents and therefore their identities.

Gordon (2011) reported that there is some degree of conflict between a goal of obtaining an NS accent versus what the literature calls intelligibility; that a shift has occurred in English language classrooms, moving away from the unrealistic goal of the native accent to speech that supports communication. Indeed, as research in L2 phonology has demonstrated, it is unrealistic to expect learners to acquire a native accent, and very few learners actually achieve such proficiency levels (see Højen & Flege, 2006; Moyer, 1999; Munro, 1993). Thus, there has been a paradigm shift in instruction, from upholding native accent as the goal to helping learners achieve intelligible speech that will enhance communication (see Levis, 2005). However, despite

this shift in the literature, EAL speakers often want to sound like a native speaker, and that this goal is often tied to what the speaker's motivation for learning the language is. Often this is tied to what Norton (1997, 2000) calls capital resources. Based on Bourdieu (1977), this suggests that benefits of having a certain accent can be social and economic in nature like going to graduate school or getting a good job opportunity. And yet a local accent often better supports a speaker's identity. The tension between these two language functions results in what Kirkpatrick (2007) calls the "identity-communication continuum" along which a speaker chooses a balance between identity and intelligibility to other ELF interlocutors (Sung, 2016). Again, there has been little research done in this area and its effects on language anxiety, providing an area for future studies.

The listener's focus on ELF is also highly significant because, as Rubin (2011) writes:

> [m]ainstream listeners will continue to "hear" the vestiges of ELF accent that they expect to hear. It is only when mainstream listeners are trained to recognize and countervail against their proclivity to RLS [reverse linguistic stereotyping] that pronunciation training can protect NNS speakers from being judged negatively. The cynic might say that RLS limits the efficacy of pronunciation training. (p. 15)

Indeed, Rubin posits that comprehension, the listener's side of intelligibility, can be marred by prejudice that arises when accent is perceived to be a characteristic of the "other." On a more positive note, Munro et al. (2012) state instead that some listeners may just have proclivity to understanding accents, and/or training and experience may result in better comprehension.

Finally, Sung (2016) writes that speaker agency can also have positive results, quoting Jenkins (2012), who expounds, "learner choice as to which kind of English to aim for" (p. 492). That being said, Sung also underscores that raising awareness towards speakers own perspectives on accent and pronunciation can alter goals in these areas. Reflection and critical thought on the meanings behind accent encouraged by instructors can help speakers understand the politics behind accent choices, preferences, and goals.

2.3.3 Face

Another significant aspect of languaculture is the concept of face. While accent had more to do with pronunciation and identity, face is based more in sociolinguistics and power. Yu (2005) writes that without the inclusion of sociolinguistics, we focus on the meaning of words, but miss the understanding and the complexity. This is true if we do not take face into account. Ting-Toomey (1994) defines it as a metaphor for "a claimed sense of self respect in an interactive situation," (p. 1), which implies some agency for the speaker and the listener. Indeed, facework is defined as the strategies used to create respect for oneself; to support or challenge the face of another interlocutor during a communicative act (Shimanoff, 1994; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998); to counteract any negative actions or words that threaten one's face (Green Cheng & Lam 2020); or to affect the face of the group (Oetzel et al., 2001).

As the first Western researcher to study face, Goffman's (1955) definition of the face was rooted in the Chinese conceptualizations of the term Hu provided in 1944. Goffman wrote that face was the positive social value a person effectively claims for [themselves] by the line others assume [they have] taken during a participant contact" (1955, p. 213), and likened it to a mask that could be created, preserved, or lost.

Goffman (1959) wrote that facework can be used to counteract an incompetent presentation of image or if another threat to face is perceived.

Face is still often associated with Chinese culture, and indeed, some researchers focus on the sensitivity to image that individuals from this background have. Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998) write that losing face brings humiliation and can result in being socially ostracized, which can affect student behavior and WTC in the classroom (Peng, 2014). Indeed, Dörnyei (2007a, p. 723) describes language class as an "inherently face-threatening environment." I would argue that this is also accurate in an academic classroom where ELF speakers still feel judged for their language skills. Liu (2001) writes that the silence that results from these students is a face-saving strategy to protect from the risks of potential judgement.

It is also significant to note that though face is significant to individuals with a Chinese background, it is not limited to the Chinese culture. Indeed, multiple studies have shown variations are present cross-culturally (Gao, 1998; Morisaki & Gudykunst, 1994; Oetzel et al., 2001). In their study, Oetzel et al. (2001) examined the similarities and differences of face across Chinese, Japanese, German, and American cultures. Despite using Hofstede's (2011) positivist definitions of these cultures, including dyads like collectivism vs individualism and variations in power distance, their research commented on the significance of both self-construal and cultural background with the former having a stronger correlation. Thus, just as is supported in the literature around languaculture, self-concept is an important factor, yet we cannot deny the significance of culture. Oetzel et al. (2001) do demonstrate some of the differences between cultures, coming to conclusions, though specifics vary within each culture, like collectivistic

cultures as those found in China and Japan tend to avoid conflict and individualistic cultures as found in Germany and the US tend to use conflict. If used properly, discussion of differences such as these can create greater cross-cultural understanding. Known as rich points, these instances can be enlightening (Agar, 1994).

2.4 Ecology

In their seminal work, *The Psychology of the Language Learner*, Dörnyei and Ryan (2005) focus on the individual differences (ID) of foreign language students: their personality, motivation and learning styles. In their 2015 edition, *The Psychology of the Language Learner Revisited,* these researchers revise their work to include a focus on situational influences, such as the classroom environment and time. While my study does not look at SLA through a psychology lens, Dörnyei and Ryan's focus on context in their revised work is still highly significant to this study. And while my research does not concentrate on the language learning classroom, it highlights the second language speaker primarily in an academic setting, and their anxiety around communicating orally with the native English speakers around them.

Additionally, while most of the theory I present here is based in the language classroom, I think it is important to recognize that a great deal of the research around the in-class psychosocial environment has been conducted with high school students in math and science classes (Peng, 2014). Thus, I feel we can extrapolate the research offered here to the academic classroom, where still our focus is on the L2 speaker.

Van Lier (2002) first defined ecology as the "study of the relationships between all the various organisms and their physical environment" (p. 144), but the definition has come to include sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978) and

sociocognitive perspectives (Atkinson, 2002). Tudor (2001) suggests that individual perceptions, some deriving from the past, some from outside influences, should also be added to the definition. Regardless of the focus, it is important to acknowledge that all of these theoretical perspectives embrace the contextual nature of learning and the individual (Peng, 2014), for as Noels et al. (2020) assert, "context is inseparable from the individuals' lived experiences; in every interaction, interlocutors constitute context and are constituted by context" (p. 61).

Research, like Peng and Woodrow's (2010) work looking at the Chinese EFL classroom, demonstrates the interrelationship between WTC, learner beliefs, and the classroom environment. However, Noels et al. (2020) take this a step further, arguing that the theoretical movement focusing on tools like WTC and its prediction of interaction promotes the idea that language learning and use is cognitive, and not as social as other theories suggest (Krashen, 1982; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1987).

Nonetheless, research shows it is the interaction between learners and learners and teachers that greatly affects the classroom environment. For example, Breen (2001) states that the language classroom is a context in which multiple perspectives come together, impacting learners' language use as well as anxiety. Indeed, theories around WTC are not distinct from an ecological lens informed by sociocognitive perspectives. Moos (1979) informs us of three relationship dimensions to the classroom that support student willingness to participate: (a) connection; (b) personal growth; and (c) system maintenance and change. Similarly, in Peng's 2014 study, she delineates three sides to the ecology of the language classroom that supports WTC: teacher

support, task orientation, and student cohesiveness. It is this latter model that informs the completion of this review.

2.4.1 Teacher Support and Language Instruction

MacIntyre et al. (1998) posit that "the creation of WTC should be the "primary goal of language instruction" (p. 545). I would argue the same for language learners in academic classes as well. A great deal of success in this area has to do with teacher support, including help, trust, friendliness, and interest in students (Dorman, 2003). Teachers have a major effect on student learning behavior and psychology. Teacher immediacy, including student perceptions of "closeness," greatly affects L2 WTC (Wen and Clément, 2003) including learning (Andersen, 1979; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990; Zhang & Oetzel, 2006b).

Conversely, unconscious stereotyping by instructors can have serious negative effect. In their research on teachers' attitudes to culture and language and its effects on assessments, Jensen (2004) reported the feedback given on one essay, read by 4 different students: two ethnic Danes with Danish accents and two second generation Palestinian Danes with accents that reflected their Palestinian background. A total of 160 teachers were asked to evaluate the essay and the results were telling: the highest grade average was given to a female ethnic Dane, the equivalent of a B+ and the lowest grade average was given to a male Palestinian Dane, the equivalent of a C. There were two minor grammar mistakes in the essay that were not picked up by the teachers marking the work of the ethnic Danish students; however, the work of the Palestinian Danish students was marred by their issues with grammar. Finally, comments on the Danish students' work included suggestions that the work was highly creative and

language skills were strong and suggested that they consider university in their future, whereas work by the Palestinian Danish students was noted to lack creativity and language skills. This study suggests the serious and long-term effects that teacher unconscious bias can have, affecting student marks in the short term, and the opportunities open to this othered group of learners in the future.

Indeed, Wen and Clement (2003) suggest that teacher support has the greatest influence on various aspects in the classroom environment. Their support can bolster affective learning and even relieve language anxiety (Zhang & Oetzei, 2006b). Diaz (2013) articulate that language teachers in higher education can have positive effect through their critical languacultural pedagogies. In fact, languaculture is more of a focus in fields that include language and cultural lenses, like language teaching, as discussed in the Task section below. And along with effective learning tasks, teacher support and enthusiasm can mold student perceptions of the classroom environment (Peng & Woodrow, 2010) as mentioned in Classroom Community.

2.4.2 Task

Positive perceptions of the environment are not only shaped by the supportive behaviors of the teacher but also the usefulness of the learning tasks according to the learner (Peng & Woodrow, 2010). Tasks that include this meaningfulness as well as personal significance and relative challenge can support performance (Kubanyiova, 2006), including oral communication. Wu (2003) states that challenge can promote motivation and perceived competence.

Peng (2014) writes that form-focused tasks are found to support WTC to a greater degree than meaning-focused tasks, which denotes that lessons based in

grammar, structure, discourse, and collocation will support WTC more than lessons based in specific topics. This is obviously more significant in the language classroom, but it speaks to EAL student beliefs and experiences surrounding learning and education. A use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) may also point to useful means of scaffolding and/or assessing student work—overtly teaching structures of presentations or specific phrases to be used in group work. Indeed, researchers have suggested that instances of focus on form can be included in lessons based on meaning or content (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2002). In the academic classroom, this translates into language that is used in the field or community of practice.

Diaz (2013) suggests that methods like participatory action research is a useful means of exploring critical languacultural pedagogies. Veritably, several of the methods that the language teacher participants employed as interventions utilized the concept of rich points, Agar's (1994) term for instances when a cultural misunderstanding leads to discussion and intercultural understanding. These instances can be based on individual life experiences to avoid cultural stereotyping and to promote personal response and reflection. For example, Diaz asserts that discussions and forums on topics like consumer behavior could lead to understanding about intercultural differences and the importance of languaculture in a business class.

Finally, instructors can support willingness of students to speak up in class by building connection and community through the use of methods in the classroom. Gkonou (2014) encourages the use of pair work. Indeed, she recommends the use of pair and group work where students are placed according to their task proficiency. Gkonou also promotes the value of discussions around anxious feelings, discussions that

highlight the commonality of anxious feelings in the classroom. Finally, she suggests that praise helps mitigate some of these feelings, as can one-on-one tutorials with students, encouraging students to feel supported by their instructor. All of these methods build community across individuals.

Indeed, instructors can promote social connection despite anxiety around socialization. Oxford (1991, 2011, 2017) suggests that promotion of a learner's positive affective filter can be accomplished through tasks that are designed to promote a supportive classroom atmosphere. One means might be through through exposure therapy, the practice of gradual and repeated exposure to anxiety producing situations; or it might be beneficial to engage in social skills training. Perfectionism can be mitigated through the use of the Serenity Prayer, reminding us of what we have the ability to change, and what we do not; or the use of active constructive response with messages of enthusiasm and attention to detail. Hope based interventions promote the use of hopeful language and acknowledgement of multiple paths to successful completion of goals; students can be grouped into hope buddies to support each other in this manner . Finally, optimism includes realistic goal setting in the classroom as well as gratitude, an example of which is the 3 good things exercise, fostering reflection on the causes of positive events and means to encourage more of the same in the future. Several of these methods have found their way into my teaching, and as my curriculum development continues, others will be piloted as means to support individuals and communities.

2.4.3 Classroom Community

Interconnection is a significant aspect of MacIntyre's work on WTC, and it is little wonder. We have seen the importance of the connection between student and teacher, and the tasks provided, but student cohesion within the classroom is also reported to be highly significant. Peng and Woodrow (2010) wrote:

> Cohesiveness is also a contributor to students' perception of environment. Students who share feelings of cohesiveness may feel psychologically closer to each other and perceive the class as a more pleasant community, which can impact on their classroom learning behaviors. (p. 856)

And while the support of the teacher is perhaps most significant in its effects on WTC, student-to-student connection is also reported to greatly affect perceptions of the environment, minimizing anxiety, promoting affective learning (Zhang & Oetzei, 2006b) and ultimately L2 WTC (Peng, 2007). Indeed, scaffolding student learning and development does not always occur teacher to student, but often learner-to-learner academic support occurs with student cohesiveness (Clément et al., 1994; Dorman, 2003; Wen & Clément, 2003). Senior (2001) contends that a good language class includes "the presence of a feeling of social cohesion within the class as a whole" (p. 251). In fact, exercises in group dynamics are considered one of the most significant aspects of the L2 class for promoting cohesion (Clément et al. 1994; Dörnyei, 1997, 2007a; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003).

And while much of this theory has come from studies in second language acquisition (SLA), it still holds for English as additional language (EAL) speakers in the academic classroom, as well as their English native speaking classmates—the

interconnection of which could be highly significant. Clément, Dörnyei, and Murphey suggest exercises which would also prove useful in academic classes, as all students need the structures, strategies, and language to work cohesively. Moreover, intercultural communication training might be particularly useful in multicultural classrooms, as Ladegaard (2020) pens that learners "notice difference and ignore similarity; they see the prejudice they encounter in [other parts of the world] as strong because it is targeted at different groups" (p. 199). For example, Ladegaard (2020) notes the rise in nationalism and corresponding anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe that her student respondents did not see, due in part to discourse in the media and amongst the majority population. This othering is an issue in Canada also, as recent racist acts against people from Indigenous, Asian, and Muslim backgrounds show (Woo, Thomas, Chen & Choo, 2021).

2.4.4 *Micro to Macro Ecosystems*

A discussion of ecology would not be complete without a look at Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1993) nested ecosystems model, significant here not only for interconnection of stakeholders and layers of environment but also systems, culture and their effects on WTC. Bronfenbrenner delineated four layers of environment: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem. The microsystem is the immediate setting in which the learner develops—a classroom, for example. The mesosystem is made up of two or more related settings in which the learner engages, e.g., perhaps multiple classes in one program or extra-curricular experiences. The exosystem is two or more settings, one of which the learner does not engage directly but still feels the effect; curriculum development may play a role at this level, for example, or maybe the administration at a specific campus. Finally, the macrosystem includes

broader influences, like beliefs and social systems, that affect the learner both past and present, on and off campus. These systems support the development of the individual, what Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines as "a lasting change in the way in which a person perceives and deals with his environment" (3). This development of the individual being in direct response to his or her environment suggests that students who spend time abroad are changed by the ecology they experience, and potentially the systems they engage in change as well.

From their sociocultural, applied linguistics lens, Noels et al. (2020) suggest that institutional culture also needs to value multiple perspectives and the relationships and artefacts that are created when these worldviews come together, promoting learning and development. This facilitates the creation of multiple identities for all individuals based on context, including macro social factors: representation, prestige, and institutional support of diversity of culture and language.

MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) original WTC model was in part based on Clement and associates' (Clément, 1980, 1986; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985) social context theory that state and trait confidence, motivation and success with L2 spring from the multi-ethnic L2 community. Ethnolingistic vitality features here, including the representation, status, and institutional support given to the various populations discussed above. Additionally, frequency and enjoyment of contact within the community is also a significant factor bolstering confidence in the L2 (Peng, 2014). Peng and Woodrow (2010) deem that it is likely that a comfortable learning environment may raise perceived competence and lower learning anxiety.

Peng's (2014) research showed that communication confidence had the strongest effect on WTC. Additionally, she found that the classroom context had the most direct effect on confidence and ultimately WTC, and provided a depiction of the complexities between these variables as well as motivation and learner beliefs.

I think it is perhaps significant to note that the correlation between environment and language anxiety extends across cultural boundaries. Baker and MacIntyre (2000)'s study involving immersion and non-immersion junior high school students in Canada revealed that immersion students experienced higher anxiety due to the higher expectations they faced in their programs. Kim (2004) uncovered a correlation between perceived competence and WTC amongst Korean EFL university students; Cetinkaya (2005) concluded the same with Turkish college students in Iran (Ghonsooly et al., 2012); as did Fushino (2008), Yashima (2002), and Yashima et al. (2004) in Japan; and Peng (2014) in China.

This suggests that despite events, learner beliefs and worldview, a supportive classroom environment will support feelings of competence, WTC and ultimately L2 communication.

There is scant literature that looks at the intersection of factors like these and their effects on the communication of EAL speakers in academic contexts (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018). The four theoretical frameworks outlined above inform this research in cohesive ways which will be explored in the findings and discussion chapters of this paper.

However, first we need to explore the methods employed in this research, with a focus on Kolb (1986) whose cyclical learning process provided both the chance to

explore the utility of strategic competence on language anxiety and the significance of these other factors. While Kolb provides another significant framework that is worthy of discussion in this chapter, I have chosen to focus on it in the methods section as it greatly informed the process and protocols I used in my research design.

Chapter 3: Methodology

As I have outlined in previous chapters, the focus of this study is the use of strategies to mitigate situational anxiety that ESL students may experience when engaging in oral communication at our English-speaking, post-secondary institution. The aim behind this focus is to scaffold discussion and dialogue in the academic classroom, and in our campus community utilize tools from the ASESS. Thus, the specific aim of this research is to evaluate the effects of ASESS strategy use on LA academic situations in our context. The objectives are to assess the presence of LA, find situational causes, and explore strategies the participants used before and during the study. In line with these goals and methodology, the overarching research question I intend to explore is as follows: how does the adoption of the ASESS as a framework affect the participants' self-perceptions and feelings about using ESL in academic communication?

In breaking down the primary question, I intend to answer four integral questions:

1. What are the participants' self-perceptions and feelings about the use of ESL in academic communication?
2. In what circumstances do the participants experience LA in academic communication?
3. What strategies have the participants used to cope with their LA in academic communication?
4. How effective are strategies in the ASESS in reducing the participants' perceived LA in academic communication?

At first I might have been inclined to frame this work as a multiple case study. With its focus on situational use of strategies, my research certainly seems to fit the definition VanWynsberghe et al. (2007, 80) provide, denoting case study as a "transparadigmatic and transdisciplinary heuristic that involves the careful delineation of the phenomena for which evidence is being collected". However, there are some significant criteria for case study that are not met. Indeed, there are several criteria that were not met here, some have long been included across definitions of case study, an admittedly difficult methodological tool to define. The first is boundedness; Goode and Hart (1952) wrote that though significant to do so, it is "not always easy to say where the [case] ends and where the environment begins". I have not made that distinction in this study because it is not possible to do so. Instead, I have found that language anxiety is highly situational – as evidenced by the experience of being able to communicate orally with other ESL speakers but not NES. The inclusion of triangulation is another criteria generally attributed to case study, and another that I do not meet in my work here. An example is Khan's (2007) study where she collects test scores, interviews and observations of teachers and students in her study of the use of simulation in design of class space and interactions. Yin (2003) suggests that synthesizing data from multiple means such as these results in greater validity. I did not utilize such convergent tools but instead focussed my efforts on initial findings in a context that has not yet been fully explored, and using methodology that has been under utilized (citation). Indeed, this leads to a third criteria for case study, the goal of generalization. Gerring (2004) defines case study as having this objective. I have no such aim in this study, though I do plan to employ the conclusions as a practitioner, and hope that other educators take lessons from these

participant perspectives. Thus, I chose to frame my work here as an exploratory study with the goal of sharing these voices and encouraging others to explore the themes found here in future work.

During the research I present, the participants engaged in multiple cycles of Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning, utilizing the interventions provided in the ASESS. The flexibility of the exploratory nature of this study allowed for some variety in the number of cycles, foci during interviews, and indeed the degree to which the arts were brought into our conversation, as some of the participants included the arts in our interviews and others did not. Additionally, some chose to provide the photos I asked for in the description of the research process that I provided them, and others brought in other forms of art including music and poetry. This flexibility meant that it was difficult to analyse the art formally, and thus, this component of the research became a talking point in the interviews more than data itself.

In summary, the plasticity of the process I went through to create this methodology, in addition to the collaborative nature of the research meant that it evolved over time into something I did not initially foresee—an exploratory qualitative research project framed by Kolb's theories on experiential learning. Thus, to facilitate a more in-depth look at the various aspects of the research presented here, I now turn to focusing on Kolb's cycles, thematic analysis, and ethical considerations—including those that the COVID-19 pandemic required. First, however, I introduce the epistemological foundations of this work.

3.1 Epistemological Foundations

This qualitative exploratory study is based on multiple epistemological perspectives. The first is phenomenology, through which I hope to develop a better understanding of student constructs around communicating orally in English by asking the participants to reflect on their experiences. This process includes space to share and analyze and ultimately to communicate "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). This also demonstrates aspects of participatory research with its focus on reflection and emphasis on ways of knowing and the development of humanity through a decolonization of method (Guba & Lincoln, 2008). Ideally, as a researcher, I need to have what Finlay (2009) calls a phenomenological attitude, meaning that I "strive to be open to the other" (p. 12). Context is also significant here as the pure and natural experiences that these international students have are central, as are the descriptions and interpretations of these experiences that the participants provide (Padilla, 2015). These descriptions and interpretations of experiences are integral to creating the understanding required to find the interventions to mitigate the LA that the participants might feel when speaking English as a second language to native English speakers in an academic setting.

Additionally, I take action to improve my practice and engage the participants collaboratively to support their self-empowerment (Blaxter et al., 2010). Guba and Lincoln (2008) write that the ontology of critical theory includes "social emancipation" through "multivoice reconstruction" of "co-created findings" and "co-constructed realities" (p. 260). My use of Kolb's cycle focuses on this by taking action and creating new understanding through a cyclical process (Kolb, 1984). My hope is that using this

process would support international students on campus in finding their voices, and in sharing their perspectives on their experiences at the institution, and in their lives here in the community and beyond. By supporting students in finding their voices, both during the research and afterwards, I hope to play a small part in the creation of that freedom. Here, I choose to collaborate with the international student community on campus as their perspectives and experiences underpin the work I present.

As introduced above, the cyclical nature of this research as well as the goals of creating knowledge through growth and reflection are exhibited in my use of Kolb's cycle and its basis in experiential learning theory (ELT). While Kolb's learning process is examined below, it is important to note here that his work is based on the work of seminal theorists, including Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget. The works of these scholars help form what Kolb and Kolb (2009) synthesize into six propositions that form the foundation of ELT:

1. Learning is defined as a holistic adaptive process that involves behavior, perception, thought, and feeling. It can also include adaptation based in models that include creativity or critical thinking.
2. Learning is a process that includes feedback and reformation; as Dewey writes, "education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience . . . the process and goal of education are one and the same thing" (1897, p. 79).
3. Learning is relearning. The process starts with a student's background on a subject and then integrates new knowledge with schema that learners already possess.

4. The learning process is characterized by conflict between action and reflection, thinking and feeling. The resolution of this conflict is a requirement in the learning process.
5. Situation and context work in synergy with the individual and their corresponding choices to create learning.
6. Learning is rooted in constructivism not transmission. Knowledge is, therefore, social in nature, created through interaction and recreated by the learner.

3.2 Participants: Moving from Purposive to Convenience Sampling

My original research plan included rationale for purposive sampling including being able to focus on features of the population and the phenomenon in which I am interested (Guba et al., 1994), the former being academic ESL students, and the latter the LA they experience. More specifically, the target population was EAL academic students that regularly utilize the International Academic Support at the institution. I chose this group because it is comprised of individuals who are likely to benefit from the cycles of this research design based on Kolb's theories. I initially planned to engage 12–16 students from diverse cultures and nations well-represented at our institution including China, India, Japan, and others.

However, I had just started initial interviews when the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact Canada, and I was unable to get the numbers and range of participants that I was hoping for. Fortunately, I gathered data from five participants, all students from my institution who spoke English as an additional language, though with LA that they had been experiencing in various situations and to varying degrees. These

participants came from four different cultures; five quite different academic fields and levels of study; and included male and female genders.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) believe that there are several benefits to convenience sampling, some of which I experienced in this research. The first is that it is practical, which is significant given that I was commencing my data collection just as the pandemic was having an effect locally and globally. To complete my data collection, I had to accept the participants who came to me willing to participate in research that might have to be flexible given the pandemic. Given the context, I felt I was fortunate to have participants willing to open up and share their thoughts and feelings.

Additionally, despite selecting convenience sampling, I was able to gather data from naturally differentiated participants. This became particularly apparent as I came to recognize the significance of individualized culture and the situations in which these individuals suffered LA. Thus, while I did not have the range of responses I hoped for initially, I did have a variety of perspectives and experiences represented.

Finally, as my data collection and analysis progressed, it became evident that the micro and macro context in which students were studying, and the social connections made there, were more theoretically significant than that of the participants' backgrounds. This led to some reorganizational work based on concepts I might not have seen had I been merely focusing on participant culture.

Ultimately, I conducted 20 interviews, two or more for each of the five participants. This gave me a great deal of data with which to analyze and form concepts and conclusions.

3.3 Operationalizing Language Anxiety

Before we discuss data collection, it is important to operationalize the definition of the concept of Horwitz's foreign LA. While Gkonou (2014) reports the strength of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al. (1986) as a tool to measure speaking anxiety specifically, I arrived at a working definition of language anxiety by incorporating the preliminary 25-Item Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) (Yaikhong & Usaha, 2012) into my initial and final interviews with the participants (see Appendix A). I chose this tool because Yaikhong and Usaha synthesize several scales, including the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al. (1986); the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) and Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA-34) by McCroskey (1970); and the Speaker Anxiety Scale (SA) by Clevenger and Halvorson (1992). Additionally, because Yaikhong and Usaha ultimately created the PSCAS with more of a focus on public speaking, I think their preliminary scale is more useful for my study's context. I chose to work with this specific version of the PSCAS because it synthesizes factors related to LA that I found useful to my research but were removed in later versions, including aspects related to self-perceived ability and test anxiety. I also felt that this version of the PSCAS would be useful in helping to inform the participants' choices of strategies from Schroder's (2016) ASESS.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection in this research design was accomplished through multiple semi-structured interviews that occurred during the reflection stage of Kolb's cycle. Given

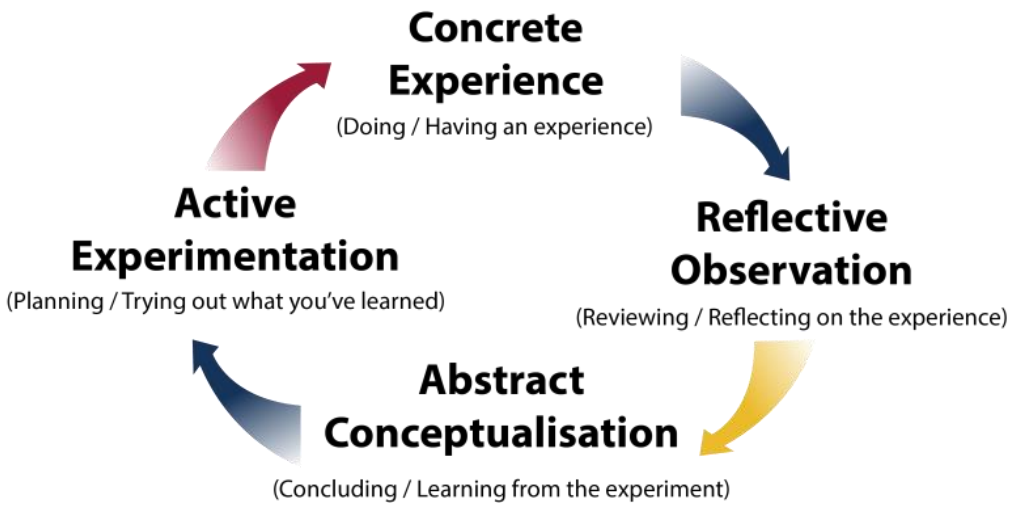
this cycle and the corresponding actions that the participants and the researcher took, here it is important to introduce Kolb's work. Kolb et al. (2001) write that as an example of experiential learning theory (ELT), Kolb's cycle (1984) represents a model of the learning process that focuses on experience. Indeed, Kolb describes ELT learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (Kolb 1984, p. 41).

Kolb's model, as depicted in Figure 1, is a cycle or a spiral comprised of four stages:

1. Concrete Experience (CE)—the stage where action occurs. This engagement in active experience provides the impetus for future stages.
2. Reflective Observation (RO)—the stage where observation is the focus. Participants are encouraged to reflect—often orally or in written form.
3. Abstract Conceptualization (AC)—the stage of integration of experience, background, and theory. A new understanding may form that can affect future experiences.
4. Active Experimentation (AE)—the stage of hypotheses and predicted effects. Solving issues and making choices may lead to trying a new take on the experience. (Kolb & Kolb, 2011)

Figure 2

Kolb's Cycle



Note. Retrieved from *What is Experiential Learning?*, by Queen's University, 2021. https://www.queensu.ca/experientiallearninghub/about/what-experiential-learning. Copyright Queen's University, 2021.

Thus, learning occurs because experiences are the basis for reflection and conceptualization, which leads to experimentation, confirmed or rejected by further experience, and then the cycle continues (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). This process guided the methodological approach that I present here, including the two research protocols given below. In research protocol 1, I outline the general process for each interview. In research protocol 2, I provide the cyclical process from the first to last interview with each participant.

3.4.1 Research Protocol 1

Silverman (2010) conveys that though having a set list of interview questions can improve the reliability of the research, qualitative research is often conducted with much smaller numbers and more informal questioning with the aim of "setting the pace." In this research, it also allows the flexibility to empower the participant. There is still a premade set of questions, but they are treated as guidelines.

This was certainly true in my research where I had more of a research protocol as my guidelines than a list of questions. This protocol changed over time, but each interview was based on the following:

I. Concrete experience

1) Participants engage in experiences of oral communication in the academic classroom.
2) Participants utilize strategies and other tools for coping with LA or other situational issues.

II. Reflective observation

3) Participants reflect on their recent experiences with oral communication in an academic setting.
4) Participants create or select art that represents their experiences.
5) Participants share their reflections in an interview with the researcher.

III. Abstract conceptualization

6) Participants and researcher discuss the experiences, the reflections, and the effects of the strategies on mitigating LA when speaking academic English. Analysis of efficacy occurs.

7) Participant chooses to continue with their chosen strategy, modify the strategy, or select another for use.

IV. Active experimentation

8) Participants try the new strategies or try the previous strategies used in different situations.

3.4.2 Interventions

As Kolb's theory suggests, honoring participants' background knowledge is important, and in my study, I achieved this in terms of engaging the strategic competence that the participants had prior to taking part in this research. However, as an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instructor, teaching strategy use is a significant aspect of my curriculum. Gabriel (2004) explores the validity of experience over expertise, suggesting "rapprochement between the two approaches, whereby the expert seriously engages with the voice of experience without raising it above criticism" (p. 12). Strategy use for all four skills has long been a common focus in EAL education, and here I chose to explore tools to support academic speaking skills of EAL students at my institution. I selected Schroeder's (2016) ASESS (see Appendix B). This provided a list of interventions to support students in their academic oral and aural communication, supplementing what they already knew, and giving them potential options to choose from or modify. The survey includes statements like the following:

1. I pay attention to my pronunciation and try to sound as clear as possible.

2. I read aloud materials in my field to practice speaking in academic English.

3. I deliberately try to expand my academic vocabulary in English. (Schroeder, 2016)

3.4.3 Research Protocol 2

While Kolb's cycle focuses on learning based on one cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and renewal, it is also based on Dewey's (1938) dated yet still current concept of experiential learning, which is more spiral shaped in nature due to the developmental nature of Dewey's theory, the long-term effect of which suits the goals and aims of this research. Dewey (1938) asserts:

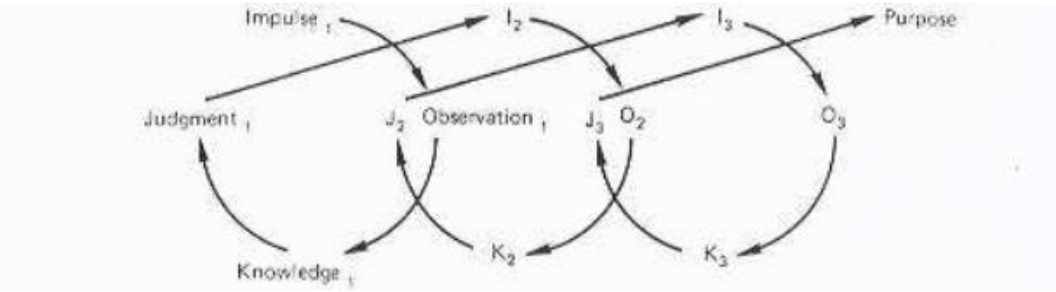
> . . . the principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after . . . As an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts. He does not find himself living in another world but in a different part or aspect of one and the same world. What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow. The process goes on as long as life and learning continue. (35–44)

While lifelong development is beyond the scope of this study, some small degree of growth was the more attainable goal I sought. Therefore, a repetition of cycles was included in this research design as a means of assuaging the LA that the participants felt when communicating orally in EAL in an academic setting. Figure 3 shows this broader

research protocol and the action and reflection of the research encompassed in this process over several interviews.

Figure 3

Figure Caption



Note. Retrieved from *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. by D.A. Kolb, 1984, p. 23, Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Copyright 1984.

I asked the participants to engage in multiple 30-minute sessions every one to two weeks for approximately six weeks. This meant that they could choose to come to approximately three interview sessions. As mentioned earlier, these sessions supported cycles that were meant to delve into a variety of interventions presented by Schroeder's (2016) (ASESS) (see Appendix B). Three or more interviews allowed each participant to uncover multiple strategies or aspects to the same strategy, subject to the individual's interest and availability or the results suggested by the PSCAS.

3.4.4 The Interviews

The process from the first to the last interview was designed to be flexible but followed the below protocol for each individual participant.

First interview

1. Review the Participant Information Sheet used for informed consent. Sign consent form and ask for participant's ability to go over time.
2. Ask participant if they have an image they want to talk about.
3. Ask participant to take the PSCAS (Yaikhong & Usaha, 2012). Ask if there are any aspects of LA that participant wants to talk about.
4. Ask participant to take the ASESS (Schroeder, 2016). Ask if there are any strategies that stand out or if there is anything participant wants to discuss.
5. Participant chooses one intervention to put into use this week.
6. Participant is asked to take a photo regarding their experience using their chosen strategy and bring it to the next interview.

Interviews conducted in the middle stages of research process

1. Ask participant to discuss images they present and/or reflect on their experiences around use of strategy chosen for this period.
2. Ask participant to make a choice: continue with this strategy, modify it, or utilizing another strategy. Remind them to take photos or create other means of reflection to bring to the next interview.

Final interview

1. Ask participant to discuss images they present and/or reflect on their experiences around use of strategy chosen for this period.
2. Ask participant to take the PSCAS (Yaikhong & Usaha, 2012). Ask if there are any aspects of LA that participant wants to talk about.
3. Discuss significant changes in the ASESS from first to final responses.
4. Ask participant if they found the research useful in mitigating their LA or supporting their oral communication in academic settings.
5. Thank participant and remind them that contact will be maintained regarding analysis and conclusions for their approval.

While this process included a set protocol, the degree to which I strictly adhered to it varied over the course of the study. Blaxter et al. (2006) describe interviews as being like a spectrum, with a set of questions and somewhat closed answers at one end, with much more open, discussion style at the other end, writing that "[i]n the latter case, the purpose of the interviewer may be simply to facilitate the subject's talking at length" (p. 193). It quickly became apparent that LA was more than just the variables found in WTC and thus more than the strategies found in the ASESS. That was when I started to note themes around culture and ecology as Peng (2014) found. These became important themes in future interviews and analysis. While we were more structured with our initial face-to-face interviews, as the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact our daily lives, I found that the participants wanted more time to talk on a greater variety of subjects. For example, we also talked international politics and economics as well as shared what we

were doing in our personal lives to stay safe and mentally healthy. The participants' classes had been switched to online versions, many of which were asynchronous, and so our discussions became the academic setting that was needed to keep this study going, and to keep us all feeling connected at what was a very isolating time. I think this flexibility also allowed for this research to be expanded in scope, which permitted us space and time to talk about a broader variety of issues, some of which are included in the data, discussion, and conclusion sections of this study.

3.5 Thematic Analysis

Xu and Zammit (2020) suggest a form of thematic analysis that is similar and yet slightly different from Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach. Therefore, while I follow Braun and Clarke's six steps to thematic analysis, I also include what Xu and Zammit call a hybrid approach, using both inductive and deductive coding to identify themes and engage in analysis in a method supported by constructivist epistemology. As I describe below, the coding I did early in the interview cycles was inductive in nature, but ultimately became far more deductive as the process went on.

3.5.1 Become Familiar with the Data

I started my analysis by familiarizing myself with the data during the transcription stage. Though I used Nvivo 12 to help transcribe the interviews, it was a tool that required a great deal of rewriting as the software did not record the participants effectively due to the program's limitations regarding accents. However, this gave me the opportunity to listen to and read the data, often multiple times. Therefore, at this stage I was able to note emerging themes and sometimes ask participants about them in subsequent interviews. This early coding was inductive in nature but even at this early stage I coded for culture, context and power. I also requested from the participants that

they review the interviews at this stage to check for accuracy and ask if they had anything to add, or anything they wanted removed from the record.

3.5.2 Generate Initial Codes

Subsequently, I engaged in line-by-line coding, sometimes using Nvivo codes to honor participant voices, perceptions, and infinitives to demonstrate action and to answer the question *how* (Charmaz, 2006). Initially, I thought that this stage would be inductive in nature. However, it is significant that because the first interviews for each participant included the PSCAS (Yaikhong & Usaha, 2012) and the ASESS (Schroeder, 2016), which I used to operationalize LA and provide interventions, these two tools also shaped the codes. Additionally, my literature searches and reading also informed the coding, including Peng (2014) and MacIntyre's (1998, 2007) theories on willingness to communicate (WTC). These also shaped the codes that I used in my analysis. After completing this initial analysis, I again asked the participants to review my work—this time to check the codes for accuracy and again to add or remove anything significant.

3.5.3 Search for Themes

Nowell et al. (2017) argue that this stage is very much one of organization, including sorting, collating, and combining to create themes. It was here where I noticed how clearly our data fit Peng's (2014) discussion of WTC. Moreover, although the initial coding had included this in a more organic way, I checked the data specifically for MacIntyre's (1998, 2007) categories and, after identifying them in clear and overt ways, presented these findings at one of the University of Liverpool's online conferences (Johnson, May 11-20, 2020); taking part in the conference further helped me to see and analyze the prevalence of several of MacIntyre's boxes. Finally, at this

stage I also drafted the write-ups of the participants, focusing on their experiential learning cycles, including the initial mental and physical effects of LA; the interventions they engaged with and the corresponding experiences at these stages; and how these cycles ultimately affected their LA and to what degree. At this stage and its initial analysis, I also started to see that I had a great deal more reading to do on culture and ecology, and this shaped the fourth stage.

3.5.4 Review Themes

Reviewing themes occurs by comparing and contrasting (Boyatzis, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and Braun & Clarke (2006) state that this phase involves two levels. Level one includes checking for consistent themes by rereading data extracts. Level two entails reviewing theme representation in the data set in its entirety.

I had grouped codes and corresponding data in stage 3 of the analysis process, noting the prevalence of WTC. However, despite the significant difference in context in our studies, I began to see major similarities between Peng's (2014) findings and my own. Hence, my analysis became more of a hybrid—moving from deductive to inductive analysis. In stage 4, I went back to the transcripts and the line-by-line coding to see how prevalent codes were to fit the themes of culture and ecology. It was at this stage that I noted how very prevalent these themes were in my initial coding, having focused more on WTC and SLA in later analysis. Indeed, upon color-coding the line-by-line codes in stage 2 and the corresponding data, I noted that culture and ecology were present in a significant way. Therefore, the literature around WTC, culture, and ecology really started to give contour to my findings, but only because the Level 1 codes supported these themes.

3.5.5 Define and Name Themes

The quintessence of each theme is ascertained at this stage by creating names and definitions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is also the stage where the researcher embeds the themes into an overarching analytic narrative.

At this stage, I confirmed the story that this research data told by comparing it to Peng's discussion of the significance of WTC, culture, and ecology. Here, I grouped excerpts from the data and corresponding initial analysis into an extensive document that demonstrated the significance of each of the three grand themes. Further reading of corresponding literature in these areas also helped me to conceptualize the analysis, including the embedded nature of these aspects of LA. Hence, the top-down nature to my thematic analysis became at least as important as the bottom-up, another example of my hybrid approach. While I removed some themes that I found in the literature but not the data, and recoded others, it became clear at this point how significant the literature was to my analysis.

3.5.6 Produce the Report

In stage 6, Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) suggest supporting the narrative using participant voice, quotes chosen to represent the essence of what the group communicated or special cases of experiences unique to the group. Instead, I noted examples of the three main themes from the literature in quotes from each of the participants, and then used these instances to support specific aspects of each. Here, I documented that all the participants demonstrated WTC, culture, and ecology as major themes in their communication. Although lesser themes, like accent or speaking style were not mentioned by each participant, they did come up multiple times by multiple participants.

At this stage of writing, I also asked how each theme was significant as a means of furthering my analysis. Thus, while a great deal of my voice and analysis occurred at stage 5, writing the final discussion created depth of findings as I aggregated the literature and the analysis, ultimately analyzing again for significance.

3.6 Ethical Concerns

A methods section is incomplete without a discussion of the significant aspects of the ethics review. This research involved research ethics boards at two institutions, my university and the University of Liverpool. Applications for amendments were also filed with each of these institutions when my data collection went online as the COVID-19 pandemic emerged.

3.6.1 Permissions and Setting

Consent was initially approved the first time by my institution's Research Ethics Board on December 12, 2019 (see Appendix C), and the second time, with the addition of steps I took to mitigate the effects of moving to an online research setting with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic on March 25, 2020 (see Appendix D). Consent was initially granted from the University of Liverpool on January 19, 2020 (see Appendix E), with the addition of steps I took to mitigate the effects of moving to research conducted online with the start of the pandemic in the spring of 2020 (see Appendix F).

3.6.2 Power-over

One of the greatest challenges with this research project had to do with ethics. I would have preferred to do research with my own students, but I wanted to respect the ethical issue of what some institutions call power-over (UVIC, 2008), or what my institution calls undue influence. My institution's policies (Evidence into Practice, 2015)

seems clear-cut and asks whether there is undue influence in the relationship between the researcher and the participant, such as a teacher-student relationship.

Thus, with permission from my Associate Dean, in the fall of 2018, I conducted multiple workshops that included group language coaching with a colleague's class of 16 graduate level ESL students. This was a relative success but did not provide the example I had hopes for in terms of research design. The biggest change was based on a conversation I had with a member of the ethics board at my institution who reminded me I had to provide for the participants who chose not to participate in the study. Thus, I could not record the group if one person did not approve participation, a potential difficulty in a class of students. The result was I chose to work one-on-one with students from my institution's International Academic Support (IAS) programs. This service does not create grades or report to instructors in any way, and thus the issue of power-over was mitigated.

3.6.3 *Informed Consent*

The information sheet that I provided the participants changed with the rise of COVID-19 and the shuttering of the campus. I provided an information sheet to the IAS student participants at the start of our first interview (see Appendix G) but was later altered due to the pandemic (see Appendix H). I used a consent form and revisited it regularly (see Appendix I), which was also altered amid the pandemic (see Appendix J).

The initial version included asking students to engage in a minimum of 3 interviews to a maximum 5 depending on their needs and schedule. Each interview was 30 minutes long. I provided the participants with an outline of the action and reflection cycles so that they could see the process. I informed the participants that I would be recording their interviews and using their direct quotations in my research analysis and

writing; sending them a copy of the transcript to give them the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and so that they could add or clarify any points that they wished; and that I had planned to send them my work at the analysis and writing phases so that they could give feedback at those stages as well. In terms of protecting identity and confidentiality, I assured the participants that their names would not be written down, or in any way associated with data collected in this study, as I would use codes and pseudonyms to protect their identity. I noted that I had purchased a computer specifically for this research, which was password protected, that all information would be treated as confidential. Finally, I assured the participants that their participation would be completely voluntary, and that they were free to withdraw at any time without explanation and without incurring any disadvantage. I also informed the participants that I would put backup files on a USB, which I would store in a locked file cabinet retain data and recordings used in this evaluation study for a period of seven years, and then I would shred those papers and crush any associated USBs. Finally, despite taking these steps to ensure student anonymity, I also chose to remove the institution's name from this study to further protect participants.

With the rise of Covid-19, I shared that we would now be using Zoom to conduct our online interviews. However, as this platform is based in the US, I did not use it to conduct recordings due to privacy concerns. I asked the participants that they not use identifiable information on Zoom either, like course names, personal names, and identifiable photographs. I informed the participants of my plan to use sync.com to store and help code information as this program stores encrypted data on Canadian servers.

The focus on phenomenology, collaboration, and the reflection on action of Kolb's cycle promotes the participant perspective in my research design. After all, supporting student voices was my impetus for this study. With this focus in mind, I now turn to my findings chapter where I introduce the participants who gave their time and their perspectives. Although studies similar to the one described herein might typically choose to focus on the discussion based on researcher-generated theories and codes, I wanted a chapter that provided space for data and thought from participants specifically. That being said, I chose to avoid providing information that might identify the individuals who participated in this study as some come from small programs or small cultural groups as represented on campus. I also did not want to fall into the trap of stereotyping according to culture. With all of that in mind, may I introduce Mulan, Churchill, Bonnie, Batman, and Jane.

Chapter 4: Participant Findings

In this chapter, I provide data based on surveys and interviews with each of the five participants in this study to both simplify and clarify the impacts demonstrated by the cycles we engaged in here. Thus, I have chosen to include this detailed information based on the experiences and perceptions of the 5 participants – Mulan, Churchill, Bonnie, Batman, and Jane. I introduce each participant starting with results of interviews in chronological order as a means to observe the changes incurred with the Kolb's cycles engaged in. In addition to introducing each participant, I provide a narrative of their cycles; I then conclude with impacts of this study as demonstrated by changes to their individual answers on Yaikhong and Usaha's (2012) Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) from first to final interviews. I have included tables to visualize these impacts as well as quotations from interviews and several artistic submissions to aid in presenting the perspectives and worldviews that the participants shared in this research.

Before introducing each participant, I think it is important to mention that each of them would have had to demonstrate English proficiency at an academic level to obtain admission to their respective programs. Mulan, Churchill, Bonnie, and Jane were all undergraduate students, so according to our institution's admissions policies, they had to achieve a score of 6.5 on the IELTS exam. Being a graduate student, Batman had to obtain a score of 7. This is significant as it demonstrates that, though each participant has the language skills to succeed in their studies, it is language anxiety with which they struggle. The skill or skills that each participant focused on is demonstrated by whether

they completed the section of the PSCAS for listening, or the one for speaking. See Tables 2–6 for these results.

4.1 Mulan

4.1.1 Introduction to Participant

Mulan is a bright-eyed and quick-thinking undergraduate student completing her final semester of a Bachelor of Hospitality Management degree. She completed 4 interviews over 7 weeks, completing her strategy cycles just before she headed back to her home country. The Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) (Yaikhong and Usaha's, 2012) that Mulan completed in the first interview revealed several strengths in oral communication as determined by the PSCAS, including confidence after preparing in advance to speak or while waiting to speak English; a desire to speak English despite feeling shy; and comfort with body language and eye contact while speaking English. Weaknesses entailed a feeling of panic when having to speak English without preparation; a feeling of nervousness and confusion when speaking English; issues with others when speaking English, such as fear that they would laugh at her while she was speaking English; and a belief that other students are better English speakers than she is (see Table 2).

Table 2

Mulan's PSCAS responses

Mulan

	First	Final	
1. I never feel quite sure of myself while I am speaking English.	5	3	-2
+22. I tremble when knowing that I am going to be called on to speak English.	5	4	-1
3. I start to panic when I have to speak English without a preparation in advance.	5	2	-3
4. In a speaking class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	4	2	-2
5. I feel confident while I am speaking English.	3	3	=
6. I feel very self-conscious while speaking English in front of other students.	2	3	+1
7. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English.	5	3	-2
8. I am afraid that other students will laugh at me while I am speaking English.	5	2	-3
9. I get so nervous when the language teacher asks me to speak English which I have prepared in advance.	2	1	-1
10. I have no fear of speaking English.	1	3	+2
11. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on.	3	2	-1
12. I feel relaxed while speaking English.	1	3	+2
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer to go out first to speak English.	2	2	=
14. I face the prospect of speaking English with confidence.	4	3	-1
15. I enjoy the experience of speaking English.	3	3	=
16. The more speaking tests I have, the more confused I get.	2	2	=
17. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while speaking English.	4	3	-1
18. I feel anxious while waiting to speak English.	2	2	=
19. I want to speak less because I feel shy while speaking English.	2	4	+2
20. I dislike using my voice and body expressively while speaking English.	2	4	+2
21. I have trouble to coordinate my movements while speaking English.	2	4	+2
22. I find it hard to look the audience in my eyes while speaking English.	2	3	+1
23. Even if I am very well-prepared I feel anxious about speaking English.	5	2	-3
24. I keep thinking that other students are better at speaking English than I.	5	2	-3
25. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	5	3	-2

Preliminary 25-Item Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) (Yaikhong and Usaha, 2012)

(5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Undecided (2) Disagree (1) Strongly Disagree

Positive change / Negative change

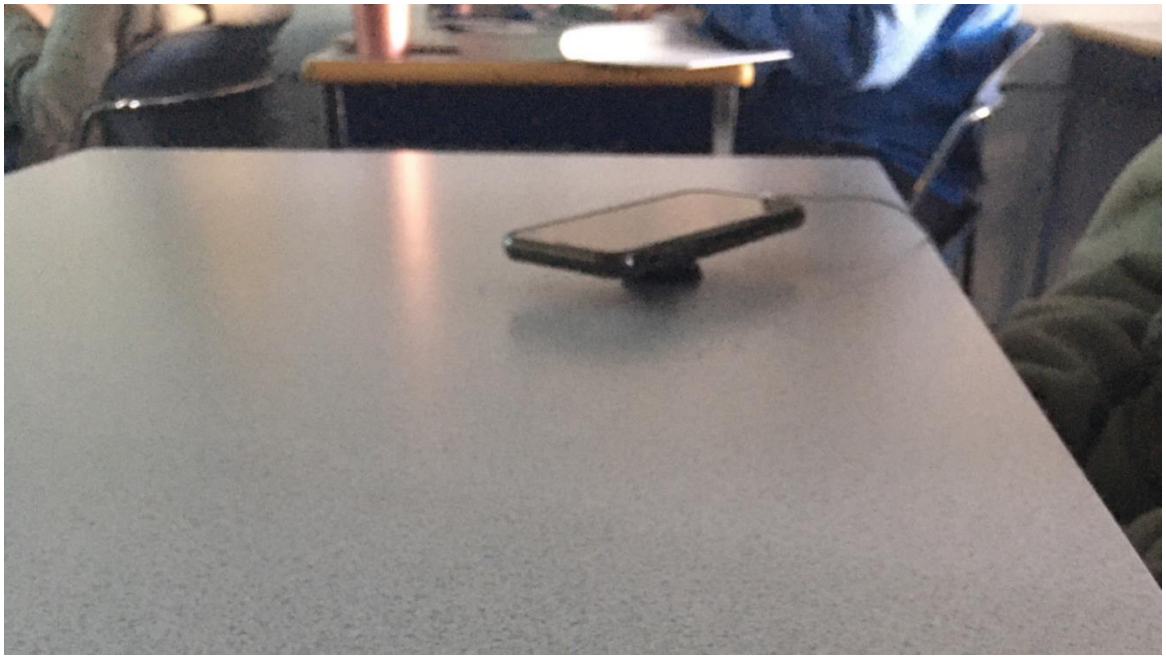
This idea of comparison was a significant theme; as she commented on her first photograph of the hands of one of her classmates, she said

> I don't know what she's doing, but it seems like—looking at the picture I feel like she's actually doing the other homework, the other homework of the another class. So, that the part can make me feel as a second language too. I can't really do multitask as a native speaker. Because they . . . because their, well, English skills allow them to multitask, like chatting on the Facebook and doing other assignments. If I were me, I would totally lost track and I don't know what. What is going on in the class? They can multitask. Even though might think they might be doing their homework, but they still have a good grade. (Mulan, personal communication 1a, Feb 24, 2020, Year)

In Figure 1, Mulan described frustration with the differences between her and a classmate who was seemingly able to multitask in class—working on her homework while listening to the lecture. The participant noted that multitasking is not an option for her as all of her cognitive capacity is taken up with comprehending lectures. Consequently, she has to put in more time and effort into her studies just to keep up. This difference was significant to her, providing a significant contrast between the experience she had in class and those of her native English speaking classmates.

Figure 4

Mulan's In-class Photo



4.1.2 Background Strategies

According to her answers on Schroeder's (2016) Academic Spoken English Strategies Survey (ASESS), Mulan learned from others, noting how individuals in her field use language to explain complicated ideas as well as from classmates and presenters who spoke clearly. Similarly, she sought interaction with others in academic settings, she listened attentively and volunteered to answer questions in class. Finally, she prepared for others, rehearsing before presentations and gauged her audience's reactions while she spoke and adjusted her speaking accordingly. Additionally, Mulan paid attention to her pronunciation and spent time expanding her academic vocabulary; she valued preparation, stating "I prepare key points to share in class. And before I speak in class, I think about how to make the message clear and precise."

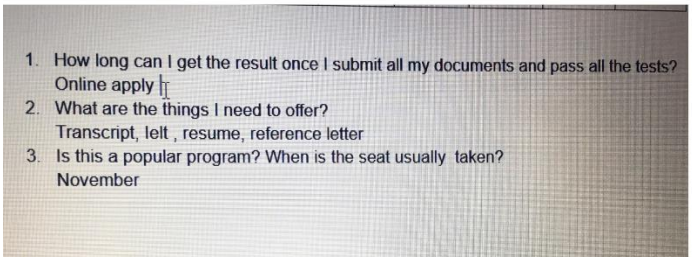
4.1.3 Narrative of Experiential Learning Cycles

Mulan implemented three strategies as interventions over the course of the experiential learning cycles we engaged in, many of which focused on reading and writing as scaffolds for oral communication. For example, her first strategy was originally meant to involve reading field specific texts aloud to practice speaking in academic English; however, Mulan chose to engage in preparatory writing instead (see Figure 4), stating

> [In this picture I show that] I write all the questions down because I don't want to miss any of them. I found it when I write it down. I just read to the person who is talking to me it is easy for me to understand because I can. There's no grammar mistake. I can minimum the grammar mistakes of my sentence. (Yes). Yeah, so, the second picture is I think I've got group discussion. I write down all the key points and talk about it because I don't have many time to prepare. So I just write the key point roughly. (Mulan, personal communication 1b, March 16, 2020, Year)

Figure 5

Mulan's Written Pre-communication Photo



Mulan's second strategy was to expand her vocabulary through listening to multiple texts on a specific topic. Because COVID-19 was starting to have a greater

impact globally hit hard, and was a highly motivating topic, Mulan chose to focus on looking for more positive stories for her mental health, and vocabulary to improve her English. When later reporting on her strategy use, she admitted she had changed the strategy to focus on vocabulary in written text but found this useful in the end and commented:

> And you know, when you're listening to that kind of thing and you're getting that vocabulary, it's almost a passive way to study or not study. But just to take in language, right. (Yeah. Yeah). You know, if you hear, you know, isolation 10 times, you're going to remember what it is and what it means. That's how I learn incubations, quarantine, infected, and vaccine. That's how I learn all those vocabularies for this pandemic. (Mulan, personal communication 1c, April 1, 2020 Day, Year)

And finally, her third was using vocabulary she was exposed to in a written form to support her listening comprehension. Unfortunately, she found that the language and the content around the virus had changed to more of a focus on policy and funding for Canadian residents, what other countries were doing for supplies, etc. However, our interview lasted for over an hour and focused on written information around the virus, comparing the responses of our respective countries. It was a deep and engrossing discussion that occurred in the academic setting of this research and included new vocabulary and content. Thus, the interview itself exemplified the success of the strategy she had employed and her ability to utilize the language she had acquired in oral communication.

Reading and writing were skills that Mulan used to support her oral communication, engaging in reading vast amounts of information on COVID-19 which we discussed extensively; and prewriting before significant meetings with classmates as well as phone calls to other academic institutions. The effect of utilizing these other skills on speaking and listening are considerable here.

Additionally, the strategies she chose were an extension of her previously utilized tools around engaging with others, specifically preparing to speak to others as in preparing notes and looking for vocabulary and content to share. Finally, it is important to note the strength that Mulan demonstrated, and perhaps the relationship we had developed, in her ability to choose to change the strategies she engaged in to support her communication. Though we had discussed strategies from the ASESS, and she chose one that she had not previously used to try to scaffold her communication, often she would choose a different strategy based on the situation. Flexibility was useful for her, especially with the changing events that surrounded us as well as the resulting change in methods both to this research and to the classes that Mulan was taking at the time.

4.1.4 Impact

Changes that Mulan experienced in her language anxiety from the start to the finish of this study were more positive in nature than negative. Changes from first to final interviews are provided in Table 2, where we can see that Mulan's anxiety was mitigated in 14/25 of the statements on the PSCAS, it worsened in 6/25, and it remained constant in 5/25. She experienced substantial positive change demonstrated by a change of 2 or more on the Likert scale in several areas. Most significantly, Mulan's comparison of herself to others dropped, her feelings that others laugh at her while she

was speaking English decreased, and so did her thoughts that others were better at speaking English than she was. Mulan said that the study was a little helpful and concluded that "I still have room to improve, but with my, with my endeavors. I can let me get better." She reported that having someone to speak with during the process was helpful:

> I feel like it is important to have some have you to sort my mind and see what really happen. It's important to have someone to talk about. Talk me through and [having a] good guide. I think is important. You ought to have that support. (Mulan, personal communication 1d, April 7, 2020)

4.2 Churchill

4.2.1 Introduction to Participant

Churchill is a serious but talkative undergraduate student working on her Bachelor of Business Administration. She completed 5 interviews over 7 weeks and valued our talks so much that she asked that we keep in touch after completing our work together. The PSCAS that she completed in the first interview revealed several strengths, including a sense of understanding and assurance when speaking English and confidence that others are not laughing at her when she speaks. She reported an ability to use body language with her English and experiences a sense of reassurance when well-prepared to speak.

Despite these strengths, Churchill's responses on the PSCAS suggested that she harbors a great deal of language anxiety as well. This included a feeling of panic when having to speak English without preparation and experiencing a difficulty with recalling vocabulary due to language anxiety. She reported experiencing a sense of doubt and

even fear while speaking English. She further reported feeling shy with her English use and a dislike of using her voice and body expressively, including making eye contact. Finally, she reported believing that other students are better at English than she is (see Table 3).

Table 3

Churchill's PSCAS responses

Churchill

	First	Final	
1. I never feel quite sure of myself while I am speaking English.	3	1	-2
+22. I tremble when knowing that I am going to be called on to speak English.	3	1	-2
3. I start to panic when I have to speak English without a preparation in advance.	4	2	-2
4. In a speaking class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	4	3	-1
5. I feel confident while I am speaking English.	3	4	+1
6. I feel very self-conscious while speaking English in front of other students.	4	4	=
7. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English.	3	1	-2
8. I am afraid that other students will laugh at me while I am speaking English.	3	1	-2
9. I get so nervous when the language teacher asks me to speak English which I have prepared in advance.	3	1	-2
10. I have no fear of speaking English.	2	2	=
11. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on.	5	4	-1
12. I feel relaxed while speaking English.	3	4	+1
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer to go out first to speak English.	4	4	=
14. I face the prospect of speaking English with confidence.	3	5	+2
15. I enjoy the experience of speaking English.	2	5	+3
16. The more speaking tests I have, the more confused I get.	5	1	+4
17. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while speaking English.	3	3	=
18. I feel anxious while waiting to speak English.	3	2	-1
19. I want to speak less because I feel shy while speaking English.	5	2	-3
20. I dislike using my voice and body expressively while speaking English.	5	1	-4
21. I have trouble to coordinate my movements while speaking English.	2	1	-1
22. I find it hard to look the audience in my eyes while speaking English.	5	1	-4
23. Even if I am very well-prepared I feel anxious about speaking English.	2	2	=
24. I keep thinking that other students are better at speaking English than I.	4	1	-3
25. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	4	1	-3

Preliminary 25-Item Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) (Yaikhong and Usaha, 2012)

(5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Undecided (2) Disagree (1) Strongly Disagree

Positive change / Negative change

When asked to comment on the PSCAS, Churchill said:

I feel that I'm not confidence with my English. I just want to get progress with my English. So even I didn't prepare for a topic. I just want to try to express myself. But sometimes I just didn't can recall something. But I actually want to express myself. Is it just like I'm stuck in my mind. But most of time, I didn't feel so nervous about it. But I, I did feel a little bit nervous. Even though I use to for [my first language] example, gave a presentation, something like that. I did feel nervous but not severe.

Researcher: Do you think it's changed over time? Are you getting more confident?

Yeah, especially for after I started my academic courses. I read, read and have read a lot of materials. And I, if f I try to remember lot of terms, sentence structure, but maybe some of them couldn't fit to the oral English. But I try to use it in the academic situation. And yeah, and for the instructor's expression, I just want to catch more. But I still cannot understand more than 80 percent during classes right now. Some instructor, they spoke too fast. Yeah, yeah, yeah. (Churchill, personal communication 2a, February 27, 2020)

Here, Churchill wants to move beyond having to prepare for discussions, moving beyond this process to one of more in the moment self-expression. The levels of anxiety she feels initially (see Churchill's PSCAS) seemingly affect her recall – making her "stuck in her mind." She uses strategies, like reading in her field using the language she discovers in written texts, but notices the differences between written and oral language,

the former of which is much more formal. Finally, speed is an issue as while reading can be done at her own pace, lectures are often fast, and do not allow for repetition, which equates to a lack of comprehension.

This inability to "catch" language was a focus in Churchill's discussion of her first photograph, as was her lack of desire to interrupt conversations with her questions and even express her perspective, perceiving that she is taking up time. Because Churchill chose to provide images that she found online, I am unable to include them here. However, her description further describes the image she submitted of a young girl chasing butterflies—a metaphor for her chasing language and communication:

> Actually, I have this picture in my mind just for. That was, I am, I was feeling about I want to catch the expression in my mind. When I was discussing some academic problem with my classmates because I'm a little bit weak for my listening. So especially for the native speaker when they spoke too fast, I can't catch up with them. But I didn't interrupt them too many times, especially during the discussing situation. Yeah, so I just want to catch the information what they wanted to express, and I, in the same time, I want to catch the information in my mind to express myself. So, I'm just like that little girl who want to catch up. Like that. A rise, yes. But sometimes I can't, yeah. Mm hmm. So maybe I can just catch the words or the phrases in their sentences. And I try to guess what exactly they want to express. But sometimes my strategy is I just express myself at first so I have the enough time to express myself. But after that, after the native speaker spoke, yeah, I can hardly interrupt, right? Yeah. (Churchill, personal communication 2a, February 27, 2020)

4.2.2 Background Strategies

Churchill had several strategies that she used frequently before engaging in this research, many of them in preparation of communication. She arrived early to lectures and chose her seat so she could better hear the instructor. She checked the meaning of key words or concepts before lectures, deliberately trying to expand her academic vocabulary. She made predictions, checked that information made sense to her, adjusting understanding if hers was incorrect. She rehearsed presentations of her own, watching for her audience's reactions while she spoke, and praising or rewarding herself when she was successful. Overall, she employed a great number of strategies before engaging in communication, many of them focusing on vocabulary and collocations from her field. During her experiences with academic communication in English, she tried to interact with classmates and instructors in academic settings, learning from their use of language, and paid attention to the language experts used in her field. She inferred the meaning of unknown words from the oral context they were delivered in and judged whether or not she needed to look up a word to support understanding without losing track of speech. She also kept up her concentration even if she had trouble understanding or her mind wandered.

4.2.3 Narrative of Experiential Learning Cycles

Churchill used 3 strategies as interventions over the course of the experiential Learning cycles, all of them quite different from the preparation that she reported engaging in previously. Churchill shared that strategy was not always helpful: "You know, I sometimes I just feel about maybe. Some strategy, or some methods. I know it, but just cannot have time to use it."

This was true of the first strategy we discussed, reviewing the lecture with the instructor or a classmate after class. Churchill felt that after class, most classmates rushed off and there was little chance to share. Additionally, she felt that she did not always have sufficient comprehension to summarize the lecture. We talked at length during her first interview regarding what that might look like and agreed that perhaps one question after class could be beneficial. She chose to ask how the lecture could apply to the next assignment. When she reported back on this strategy, she told how she adjusted it again to fit the situation, this time using paraphrasing to check her understanding of an assessment task. Churchill shared a picture of a woman at the grocery store with a shopping list and said the following:

> Last week I tried to use our strategy to discuss some class content with my classmates. Yes. And they'll, uh, we'll have, um, English test this this Tuesday. So last week I caught a chance to have a talk with my classmates to discuss our test. Because our instructor introduced the style of this test. So I—I pretend I didn't understand it, and I want to discuss with her and I found I just like the woman who want to buy something in supermarket cuz I already have the list in my mind. So I just—checked each word or each point, which I already know.
>
> But I found that this method is useful for me to understand what she want to express. It's very helpful to practice my listening…one more thing I want to mention is I at that time I pretend I didn't understand, but actually I understood. So maybe it helps me as well to understood what she talked about . . . Cuz I didn't have chance to try a content I didn't have any idea about it right now, so I don't know if I talk about the topic that I didn't have idea in my mind. Maybe

> it's a little bit difficult for me. (Churchill, personal communication 2b, March 12, 2020)

Here, Churchill demonstrates her discomfort when discussing information that she does not fully understand. Instead, she chooses to confirm information that she thinks she knows. Both are strategies, but the latter takes a great deal less anxiety.

Discussing this difference led to focusing on paraphrasing other's speech as another strategy to check for comprehension and at the end of interview 2b, it became Churchill's newest strategy to support her listening. This second strategy was not included in the ASESS but rather is a variation of the same strategy she started the cycles with. In her second action cycle, instead of trying a new strategy, Churchill chose to build on her first strategy, exploring its usefulness. When she reported back with a picture of a box of chocolates, she said:

> And I discovered [paraphrasing is] just the like a box of chocolate. I know they will talk about chocolate. Yeah. It's that background I but I don't have idea about which flavor. Or whether there is a nut in it. You know what I mean. So I, yeah, that's what I'm feeling about. Well I want to try to paraphrase their sentence. I will discover a lot of new thing for me. Maybe something is. Will surprised me. I don't have idea about they will talk about this like that way. (Churchill, personal communication, 2c, April 2, 2020)

She uses the metaphor of the box of chocolates to represent the communication of meaning. The chocolate represents the main idea, but the flavors in the box are subtleties like details and opinions. Paraphrasing helps Churchill check her comprehension, but it also allows her to discover more about the topic. Additionally, it leads the conversation

into areas she cannot predict, but Churchill reported feeling comfortable with this new information because of her understanding of the main idea. She experienced success with this strategy, both being able to check her understanding and expand on it. She also shares that this kind of communication allows for co-creation of knowledge and helps her create depth of meaning with two-way communication.

The third strategy that Churchill chose to explore was one that supported her issues with vocabulary recall. Over the course of our third interview, both Churchill and I had struggled with words and asked each other if we knew the term that we were looking for. The result was a discussion regarding the usefulness of this strategy and how this and paraphrasing were relatively common aspects of native English speaker (NES) communication. Churchill stated that she valued our sharing of strategies and that coming to understand that NESs used strategies as well made her feel more confident.

Consequently, in her fourth interview, Churchill shared a picture of a library and discussed how our conversations were having an effect on her confidence stating that she is starting to feel that she has the time to consider what exactly she wants to communicate:

> You really gave me a lot of confidence about my . . . communication with the native speakers. So I just feel that I in a library and I can check the book. Which one is the best one to use? Yeah. I want to, I want to say. It seems like I have more time to look into my mind. So I think. I think the confidence gave me a more time. Yeah, I feel relax so I can have time to check my mind. Which one I can use? Maybe that one is the best one. Or maybe I can choose another one.

> You know what I mean? Yeah. So I feel I, I get a less anxious. (Churchill, personal communication, April 9, 2020)

Finally, the last strategy that Churchill employed was one that many of the participants chose to use in the end of our study as their classes became online and asynchronous due to the COVID-19 pandemic: watching the news with the goal of gaining information for use in discussions, practicing listening skills, and gleaning vocabulary. However, like Mulan, Churchill instead chose to read about the pandemic. And while we did not discuss this shift in input, I would suggest that the pace of listening may have been one reason she made this choice. However, despite choosing not to practice her listening, the conversation we had on the pandemic, society, and the economy was deep and lengthy, demonstrating Churchill's skills and confidence in our final interview.

It is significant to note the shift that Churchill made from strategies that helped her prepare for oral communication in English to those that she used to check or expand understanding in communication or afterwards. Churchill also felt a sense of confidence when she realized that these strategies are employed by both native English speakers and EAL speakers alike. With this realization, she felt she could take the time to understand and communicate the nuances of her thinking with language she chose specifically—just like her classmates.

4.2.4 Impact

Like Mulan, changes that Churchill experienced in her language anxiety from the start to the finish of this study were far more positive in nature than negative: her anxiety was mitigated in 19/25 of the statements on the PSCAS, meaning that her

answers moved in a positive direction on the Likert scale provided, worsened in 1/25, and remained constant in 5/25 (see Table 3). Like Mulan, Churchill experienced a decrease in her experience of panic when she had to speak English without or without advance preparation; her comparison of herself versus others also improved including her fear that others speak better than she does as well as thoughts that her classmates may be laughing at her. Additionally, Churchill's confidence and enjoyment of speaking in English both increased. Finally, she reported that the research process was helpful in supporting her own self-reflection:

> [the] questions just give me a hint or something make me to think about a question by myself but you will give me a little bit of help or pushing me a lot, you know. It's, it's really useful and helpful to make me think by myself. Yeah. (Churchill, personal communication, April 16, 2020)

4.3 Bonnie

4.3.1 Introduction to Participant

Bonnie is a quiet, sunny, and focused post-secondary student in the dental hygiene program. She completed 3 interviews in just over 3 weeks, finding this study worthwhile but a lot of responsibility. Like Churchill, Bonnie's initial PSCAS revealed several strengths, including confidence that other students do not laugh at her while speaking English and an ability to use body expressively while speaking English. This expression extended to her voice as well, and Bonnie also reported a fair sense of certainty around speaking tests.

Weaknesses entailed a feeling of panic when having to speak English without preparation, a feeling of nervousness that leads to forgetting things she knows, wanting to speak less because of shyness, difficulty making eye contact, and feeling anxious

even if well-prepared. Bonnie highlighted that she usually experiences several physical responses, like trembling and a pounding heart when knowing she is going to be called on to speak English, and experiencing rigidity in the body while speaking English (see Table 4).

Table 4

Bonnie's PSCAS responses

Bonnie

	First	Final	
1. I never feel quite sure of myself while I am speaking English.	4	2	-2
2. I tremble when knowing that I am going to be called on to speak English.	5	4	-1
3. I start to panic when I have to speak English without a preparation in advance.	5	2	-3
4. In a speaking class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	5	2	-3
5. I feel confident while I am speaking English.	2	2	=
6. I feel very self-conscious while speaking English in front of other students.	4	3	-1
7. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English.	4	4	=
8. I am afraid that other students will laugh at me while I am speaking English.	2	1	-1
9. I get so nervous when the language teacher asks me to speak English which I have prepared in advance.	5	2	-3
10. I have no fear of speaking English.	2	2	=
11. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on.	5	4	-1
12. I feel relaxed while speaking English.	3	3	=
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer to go out first to speak English.	3	4	+1
14. I face the prospect of speaking English with confidence.	4	4	=
15. I enjoy the experience of speaking English.	4	5	+1
16. The more speaking tests I have, the more confused I get.	2	1	-1
17. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while speaking English.	5	4	-1
18. I feel anxious while waiting to speak English.	5	4	-1
19. I want to speak less because I feel shy while speaking English.	5	4	-1
20. I dislike using my voice and body expressively while speaking English.	2	1	-1
21. I have trouble to coordinate my movements while speaking English.	3	2	-1
22. I find it hard to look the audience in my eyes while speaking English.	5	5	=
23. Even if I am very well-prepared I feel anxious about speaking English.	5	2	-3
24. I keep thinking that other students are better at speaking English than I.	3	2	-1
25. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	3	3	=

Preliminary 25-Item Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) (Yaikhong and Usaha, 2012)

(5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Undecided (2) Disagree (1) Strongly Disagree

Positive change / Negative change

Bonnie notes this physical response as one of her main challenges, one that others experienced but not to the same degree:

> I have very high anxiety. For example, if I know and I am anticipating that I will be reciting, then I will start having nervousness. My hands are really shaking and cold and it is starting for me that is so difficult to breathe. (Bonnie, personal communication 03a, March 10, 2020)

4.3.2 Background Strategies

Like other participants, Bonnie's answers on the ASESS indicated several strategies that she used frequently before engaging in this research. She engages in many strategies like Mulan, including paying attention to her pronunciation, spending time expanding her academic vocabulary, noting how individuals in her field use language to explain complicated ideas, and learning from classmates and presenters who speak clearly. She also seeks interaction with others in academic settings, and she listens attentively to others to join the conversation. Significantly, after a class (or presentation) Bonnie reflects on how she participated or presented and thinks about ways to improve, praising herself if she is satisfied with her presentation. Indeed, Bonnie engages in a great deal of reflection on her oral participation in class and mentioned the following:

> I always try if I speak or present something, I always try to reflect. What are the things that I did wrong? And what are the things that they can still improve? So I start from that is something I don't know how can I improve? So I start with that. It clarifies to me which are the things that I need to work on. (Bonnie, personal communication 3a, March 10, 2020)

4.3.3 Narrative of Experiential Learning Cycles

Bonnie used 3 strategies as interventions over the course of the experiential learning cycles we engaged in, trying to move away from what she called “rumination” over her oral communication. The first strategy she tried was making a goal of answering two questions in class and then celebrating her achievement. Bonnie described her success in one class:

> [We] were actually talking about the sensitive topic. So she wants us to discuss it first within small groups. And then afterwards she made us discuss with the whole class . . . As usual, I felt nervous again. But I tried to this time around . . . I realized once I hear our professor or someone says that you have to speak in groups as long as I hear the key word ‘speak’, suddenly, I over think. I feel nervous. And then I think that's what makes my brain not function really well because the nervousness is getting ahead of me. So I said maybe I should calm down myself first and think about what I can answer about what we're talking about. So I listed down all my notes what I wanted to say, the key points or something that would trigger words . . . so [then] we had this small discussion. Thankfully the girls there made my group mates are kind, so because usually I don’t speak ahead if I feel like they don't want to hear my opinion, but they're the ones just asking how about you, what do you think about this. And it just made me comfortable. So I shared my own. I think I expressed well what I wanted to say . . . I'm not panicking that much like before, I was calming down, although I still feel my heart beat really fast. And my hands are still cold. So I said it's okay. At least I got my chance to speak up within the small group. And then when we

> proceed with the class discussion. So my professor ask us about what we, what we discuss in our group. Then she was asking for our opinion and then she asked if anybody has a different say for this certain topic. And because we're talking about culture. So ours is really different. So I said, It's my chance to speak up. Should I? I'm kind of hesitating because it's okay . . . I think every time that we have discussion, I will just settle for okay. I will not speak up. So I pushed myself. I said maybe I'm just overthinking it . . . I'm already racing in my head. What I wanted to say, though, when I memorize what I want to say and then I speak up. What happens is that because of the anxiety that I feel, I forget, I forget what I'm supposed to say. So I said, just raise your hand and figure out, figure it out when you have to speak. So I said, don't think about what you want to say and just speak up in the moment. So I tried that way. So I just raised my hand without thinking about anything. And then I, I felt so nervous when my professor was speaking up with me. But because it's, I think it's the birth of the moment. So what I just wanted to say, I don't know . . . I was able to share about what I wanted to share about my culture. So I think it's great. Other words I still feel nervous. My heart is beating fast. My hands are still cold. (Bonnie, personal communication 3b, March 17, 2020)

Bonnie used a number of strategies in this one experience, including practicing what she wanted to say within the small group first, listing what she wanted to say as key points, and choosing not to plan the language she would use as she felt she was "overthinking." She was successful in communicating her perspective, which was a big

step for her but highlighted that she would still feel the physical effects that she had shared in our first interview.

With our second interview, COVID-19 pandemic was starting to hit hard, and Bonnie was having difficulty finding opportunities to practice her oral communication in class. Student presentations were cancelled, and Bonnie was disappointed that she had not had the chance to speak more the previous week. But we persevered and the second strategy Bonnie chose was reading aloud materials in her field to practice speaking in academic English, saying, “I actually did it before and it's effective because I don't know. It seems like it's some sort of a warmup with how I speak.” Bonnie shared a photo (see Figure 5) of the kinds of texts she chose to read aloud including course textbooks and other fiction and nonfiction favorites. Bonnie described the photo she took of the texts that she was choosing to read:

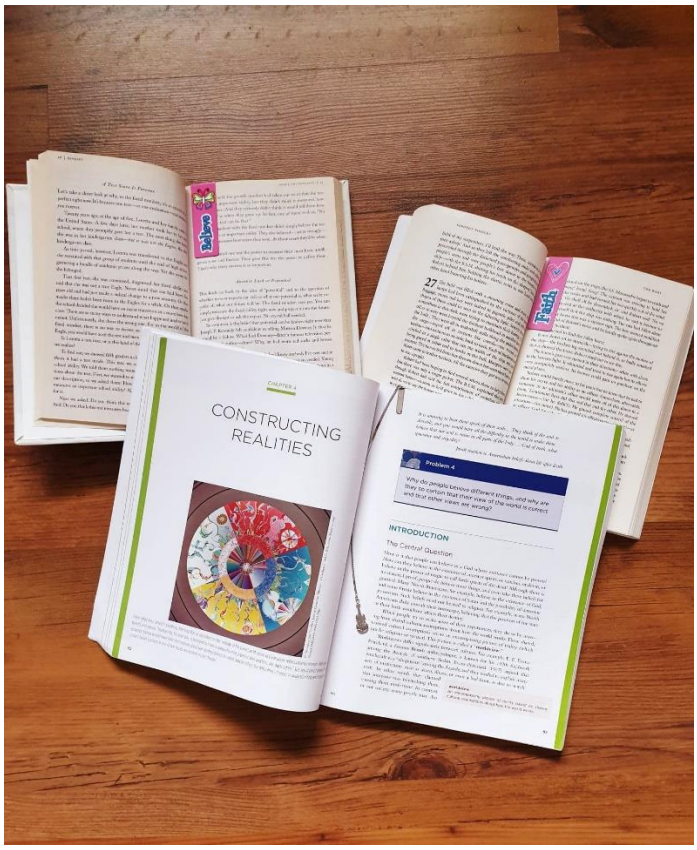
> I think it’s really effective because when I read aloud materials, I notice my errors like which words I am having a hard time to pronounce like I found out that vowels sounds, vowel sounds like ‘o’ and ‘a’. And when they're next to each other, sometimes I get confused on how to pronounce it. So all that simple mistakes. I, I get to see it and then I practice it in. Yeah practicing it. And then I notice when I talk with my friends and before I talk with my friends and then I practice before having conversation with them, I noticed that I can speak more, like the words, just come out. (Bonnie, personal communication 3c, April 2, 2020)

Language accuracy seems to be in the forefront of Bonnie’s mind, causing much of the anxiety that she feels. Practicing some of this language allows her to have some

familiarity, both with vocabulary and with pronunciation, especially when she uses a skill she likes and feels comfortable with: reading. Bonnie shared this photo, which included the kinds of texts she chose to read aloud, such as course textbooks and other fiction and nonfiction favorites.

Figure 6

Bonnie's Oral Reading Photo



During her third and final interview, Bonnie described another success she had with speaking in a group, this time with her housemates. She provided a picture of her favorite chocolate treat saying it was a reward for speaking up:

> So last week we didn't have a meeting together. So. But I still made sure that I'll do something about my speaking. And then I think it was last, last Sunday

> because here in our house, we usually every Sunday, we usually have dinner together with my housemates. And every, everyone is local Canadians. So it's good for me too because I get the practice, how I communicate with them. Great. And most of the times when I sit in the table, I just listen, nod, say yes. But I challenge myself because I'm not having classes anymore. So I challenge myself. Maybe it's time for you to speak up. Share your thoughts or anything. Just try. Even though I feel there was. So I just started talking with them even it's not a perfect English. But as long as they understand me, or even if I'm having a hard time to communicate what I wanted to tell them. As long as I speak up. It's okay. Then after the end of the dinner, I feel so satisfied because I was able to communicate my thoughts, even though I know with myself that it's not perfect, but because I try and I feel like I should reward myself. (Bonnie, personal communication 3c, April 2, 2020)

Here, Bonnie suggests the value of the feeling of satisfaction stands out as a potential motivator for future speaking experiences. This, in combination with the rewarding of herself—an acknowledgement of success—may well lead Bonnie to push past her anxiety around perfection of her language use.

Like she had before the research, during the experiential learning cycles Bonnie engaged in strategies that focused on reflection on her communication. However, she chose instead to focus on more positive messages, congratulating and rewarding herself for communicating outside her comfort zone. Though she was not able to completely shake the physical responses she reported having with her language anxiety, she persevered. She reported that the very act of engaging in this research made her feel

more accountable and thus better able to engage in these difficult experiences. that she empowered herself by choosing to participate here.

4.3.4 Impact

Like Mulan and Churchill, changes that Bonnie experienced in her language anxiety from the start to the finish of this study were far more positive in nature than negative: her anxiety was mitigated in 17/25 of the statements on the PSCAS, it worsened in 1/25, and it remained constant in 7/25 (see Table 4). Like the previous participants, Bonnie experienced considerable positive change in her experience of panic when speaking English with and without advance preparation. Bonnie also experienced an improved sense of feeling sure of herself and a reduction in issues with recall, defined as being nervous enough that she forgets concepts she knows.

Bonnie also experienced positive results in several of the physical responses she was accustomed to experiencing when speaking English—aspects of language anxiety that were noteworthy for her. This included a reduction in tenseness and rigidity of the body as well as trembling and elevated heart rate.

When asked if the research helped her she said that she felt this was a small beginning – feeling better but with a long way to go. She felt that the biggest change was that she no longer had to plan – could start communicating and "words would come out" (Bonnie, personal communication 3c, April 2, 2020).

4.4 Batman

4.4.1 Introduction to Participant

Batman is a charming graduate level student in the Faculty of Business. He completed 4 interviews in less than a month, agreeing to an extra interview as we started

to connect over music. The PSCAS that he completed in the first interview revealed multiple strengths in our academic context, including self-confidence and understanding when speaking English. Like some of the other participants, he reported self-assurance when asked to speak on something he has prepared for in advance, confidence that others will not laugh at him while he is speaking English, and being able to make eye contact while speaking English. Unlike Mulan, Churchill, and Bonnie, Batman did not report a sense of weakness in his first interview, but on his PSCAS he responded saying he never felt quite sure of himself while speaking English. However, Batman had the unusual experience of feeling stronger speaking English in our academic context than when he was in his home country. For example, he reported trembling and having an elevated heart rate when knowing that he was going to be called on to speak English at home, but not at our institution. This was also true of the nervousness he experienced when speaking English without preparation in advance, feeling a general lack of confidence while speaking English, and feeling self-conscious while speaking in front of other students (see Table 5).

Table 5

Batman's PSCAS responses

Batman

	First	Final	
1. I never feel quite sure of myself while I am speaking English.	4	2	-2
+22. I tremble when knowing that I am going to be called on to speak English.	2	3	+1
3. I start to panic when I have to speak English without a preparation in advance.	2	2	=
4. In a speaking class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	2	4	+2
5. I feel confident while I am speaking English.	4	4	=
6. I feel very self-conscious while speaking English in front of other students.	2	2	=
7. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English.	1	2	+1
8. I am afraid that other students will laugh at me while I am speaking English.	1	1	=
9. I get so nervous when the language teacher asks me to speak English which I have prepared in advance.	1	1	=
10. I have no fear of speaking English.	2	4	+2
11. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on.	2	2	=
12. I feel relaxed while speaking English.	4	4	=
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer to go out first to speak English.	2	3	+1
14. I face the prospect of speaking English with confidence.	3	3	=
15. I enjoy the experience of speaking English.	5	4	-1
16. The more speaking tests I have, the more confused I get.	3	3	=
17. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while speaking English.	2	2	=
18. I feel anxious while waiting to speak English.	2	2	=
19. I want to speak less because I feel shy while speaking English.	2	2	=
20. I dislike using my voice and body expressively while speaking English.	2	1	-1
21. I have trouble to coordinate my movements while speaking English.	2	2	=
22. I find it hard to look the audience in my eyes while speaking English.	1	1	=
23. Even if I am very well-prepared I feel anxious about speaking English.	2	3	+1
24. I keep thinking that other students are better at speaking English than I.	2	2	=
25. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	2	2	=

Preliminary 25-Item Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) (Yaikhong and Usaha, 2012)

(5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Undecided (2) Disagree (1) Strongly Disagree

Positive change / Negative change

When asked why he had these different answers, he replied, “Accuracy matters back home. Yeah. It matters. Yeah. People will judge you on the base of that. Mm hmm. Like everybody does that. And I do. [I would say] oh, that was wrong” (Batman, personal communication 4a, March 11, 2020).

Furthermore, Batman reported on building on what his classmates had to join in class discussion; he raised his hand and would raise it again persistently if he failed to get the chance to speak in class, saying “You can’t ignore me, right?” Finally, knowing that his English was not perfect, he encouraged himself to speak up when he had something meaningful to say, and he reflected on his participation in class and thought about how to improve.

4.4.2 Background Strategies

Batman utilized several strategies before engaging in this research, focusing on interactions with others and their effects. Like Bonnie, he sought opportunities to interact with classmates and others in academic settings; and like Mulan, he takes time to think about how to make his message clear and precise before speaking in class. When expanding his response to our exchange on this topic, he replied as follows:

> I like to keep it short, so that people don’t get bored. Short and up to point – with some interesting words, yeah, that’s it . . . I’m the fastest . . . Yeah, but in one on one conversation, I’m not that fast. But if there’s a presentation I’m fast. Yeah. Cause I don’t like to bore a big audience. Everybody’s on their phone, someone wants to go…everybody’s mind’s somewhere else . . . but in in-on-one conversation, I tried to like engage more. I don’t have a problem with that. That’s because I am a talkative person. Yeah. So it doesn’t matter whether it’s

> English or my native language . . . Yeah. At least in presentation. In the one-on-one, it depends on the person and what the topic is. In presentations, everybody is not into the topic. Somebody is and somebody is not. So you've got to focus on the main points and just. Rest it's up to them. They google it. (Batman, personal communication 4a, March 11, 2020)

4.4.3 *Narrative of Experiential Learning Cycles*

In the first interview, Batman chose to try continuing to interact with classmates and professors in an academic setting, a strategy that he frequently implemented. It seemed that he found it more difficult to interact in his classes than in other settings:

> [it's important] that one know the topic because in class here like there are many things I don't know. I'm just sitting. I'm like, OK, I can't say anything. Even though I try hard. Like, what are they saying? Like I come up. This is the first time in Canada. So a course is like business, government relations. So they talk about politics. And I don't know about Canadian politics. It's like, oh, what's happening? . . . Something . . . we talk about business. I can just say something. So the topic matters. [You] cannot just raise your hand and say something foolish. (Batman, personal communication 4a, March 11, 2020)

We considered comparing Canada with his home country in discussion with classmates, and he felt that it might be a good extension of this strategy. Unfortunately, with the rise in severity of the COVID-19 crisis and migrating from face-to-face to online instruction at our institution, he was unable to engage in class as he would have liked. However, he was able to interact with his housemates, other business graduate students, and they spoke about the virus and its effect on various countries.

Perhaps because he was not having the kind of interaction and corresponding speaking practice that he wanted, Batman chose to explore the listening strategies. Here, he showed several strengths, which included arriving early for class so he could choose his seat, looking up words that he did not know and paying attention to speakers' facial expressions. Batman said that he used many of the listening strategies on the ASESS, but that his use often depended on the topic:

> Well, before coming here, I was interested in Canada but when they teach me about that I'm like oh no please! Not too much.
>
> *Researcher*: Yeah, well, I mean, it can. I'm sure it's very, very different. Yeah. So that can mean it's difficult to understand even.
>
> Ya it's something I'm not interested in. It just goes above your head. Ya, you can't help it. How many times the person say it but you just can't put it in there. (Batman, personal communication 4b, March 18, 2020)

Batman continued his push for interaction with his choice of strategy in week 2, agreeing that it might be useful to find someone to share notes of summaries with after class. However, he reported in week 3 that the style of online studies that his professors adopted in the pandemic did not include lectures; therefore, the strategy we had talked about did not work for him. He reported feeling a lack of motivation with his courses and coursework. Nonetheless, he was anxious to ensure that his participation in this study be useful, and when I assured him it was, he agreed that moving to a strategy of listening to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's speeches and talking about current events around the pandemic could be useful to both of us. It was then that we started comparing

our two countries and the conversation expanded to culture and how it affects economy and finance:

> Someone was telling me like [my country] will not suffer that much. I think maybe because of that. Like it is. The credit-based system is there, but not too much like here—[where] like everything is on credit. Yeah. You make money literally matters here. Back home it's not that much. Money doesn't count. They've got value for money that's it. Because here money, if you don't pay the bill next minute, then you're in trouble. Yeah, that's the problem. (Batman, personal communication 4b, March 18, 2020)

These conversations demonstrated the significance that comparison has on constructivism. Comparing economic structures in Canada and elsewhere helped me learn more about the systems here and the systems elsewhere. Hence, I think that facilitating broader comparative discussion in the classroom might increase motivation and comprehension.

These discussions around culture expanded in our last two interviews. Batman admitted that he hadn't watched much of the Canadian Prime Minister:

> Like I thought he's going [to say something useful]. Like there's to say something about COVID-19. Yeah, I'm listening to that. There are some schemes that like you are saying that last, last week they think some scheme for Canadians or the permanent residents. So maybe that's the motivating factor. I'm not a Canadian citizen. There's [nothing] for me. (Batman, personal communication 4d, April 8, 2020)

Instead, we started sharing videos from our countries and cultures. When Batman suggested that his people were suffering under settlement much as the First Nations people of Canada, I showed him videos by a Northern Canadian Band called the Jerry Cans. Then, Batman introduced me to videos by the band Krewella and to songs produced by Coke Studios. Both artists are heavily influenced by culture, including language and religion.

The discussion around this sharing of art was motivating for both of us, and certainly enlightening for me. We discussed the privilege behind the English language and how language was political: “I don't want anyone to understand what I'm saying. So I speak my mother tongue.” It occurred to me that the purpose behind my teaching English and conducting this research was to support a diversity of perspectives on campus, but perhaps these goals are not as altruistic as I had believed them to be. We discussed his experiences being asked to represent his culture in conversations: “Like the other person would have an impression about you, about your culture as a whole based on you - that happens, like stereotyping.”

In the end, though our discussions about strategies was a jumping off point for discussions about language and culture, our conversations on art were deeper and more meaningful. Batman was not originally interested in photographs, and I did not want to push him. But as we later discussed music and culture, Batman opened up and shared more about himself, his people, and his thoughts on language. I learned a great deal, including the lack of truth behind many of my assumptions, and the depth of effect that art and language have on Batman’s identity, perspective, and worldview.

4.4.4 Impact

Unlike the previous participants, changes that Batman experienced in his language anxiety from the start to the finish of this study were constant to negative in nature as he reported on the PSCAS in his exit interview: his anxiety was mitigated in 3/25 of the statements, it worsened in 6/25, and it remained constant in 15/25 (see Table 5). However, he experienced positive change in terms of feeling less fear and surer of himself when speaking English. Conversely, he also reported feeling less sure of himself, more forgetfulness associated with anxiety, and less enjoyment in speaking English.

That this research led to the rise in language anxiety in Batman's final interview as seemingly indicated in the changes on his PSCAS is unlikely. It is more likely that the answers he gave in this final survey had more to do with COVID-19 and the effects of isolation he was experiencing, including his studies going online. He repeatedly reported feeling demotivated and discussed the conflict and competition he felt around him. Nonetheless, he was attentive throughout our interviews, and his trust grew as we progressed, resulting in several significant insights.

Finally, when asked if he valued his time in the interview, Batman agreed. With some of his final words, he commented:

> Yeah. [There's a] saying in [my country], if you learn something or you help like a person. That person should help other three and the other three should help three like bring about a change.
>
> *Researcher*: Oh, that's lovely. That's lovely.
>
> Well, nobody does that. Nobody does that. (Laughing) (Batman, personal communication 4e, April 15, 2020)

4.5 Jane

4.5.1 Introduction to Participant

Jane is a smart and artistic undergraduate student working on her Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology. She completed 2 interviews in just over 3 weeks, struggling with the cyclical nature of this research and the changes when COVID-19 hit. The PSCAS that she completed in the first interview revealed several strengths, including self-confidence and comprehension when speaking English. Like several of the other participants, Jane reported confidence when asked to speak on a topic she had prepared for in advance and no thoughts that others would laugh at her while she speaking English. Unlike other participants, Jane was not embarrassed to volunteer to go first when speaking, reported no issues with body language, and no thought that others were better at speaking English than her (see Table 6).

Table 6

Jane's PSCAS responses

Jane

	First	Final	
1. I never feel quite sure of myself while I am speaking English.	3	2	-1
2. I tremble when knowing that I am going to be called on to speak English.	2	2	=
3. I start to panic when I have to speak English without a preparation in advance.	4	2	-2
4. In a speaking class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	2	2	=
5. I feel confident while I am speaking English.	4	4	=
6. I feel very self-conscious while speaking English in front of other students.	2	2	=
7. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English.	1	1	=
8. I am afraid that other students will laugh at me while I am speaking English.	1	1	=
9. I get so nervous when the language teacher asks me to speak English which I have prepared in advance.	1	1	=
10. I have no fear of speaking English.	4	1	-3
11. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on.	2	4	+2
12. I feel relaxed while speaking English.	5	4	-1
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer to go out first to speak English.	1	2	+1
14. I face the prospect of speaking English with confidence.	4	4	=
15. I enjoy the experience of speaking English.	5	5	=
16. The more speaking tests I have, the more confused I get.	1	4	+3
17. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while speaking English.	1	1	=
18. I feel anxious while waiting to speak English.	1	3	+2
19. I want to speak less because I feel shy while speaking English.	2	3	+1
20. I dislike using my voice and body expressively while speaking English.	1	2	+1
21. I have trouble to coordinate my movements while speaking English.	1	2	+1
22. I find it hard to look the audience in my eyes while speaking English.	2	2	=
23. Even if I am very well-prepared I feel anxious about speaking English.	1	4	+3
24. I keep thinking that other students are better at speaking English than I.	1	2	+1
25. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	1	3	+2

Preliminary 25-Item Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) (Yaikhong and Usaha, 2012)

(5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Undecided (2) Disagree (1) Strongly Disagree

Positive change / Negative change

She credited her confidence in speaking English with a public speaking class that she took:

> [It] basically consists of like seven to eight minutes of speech. You have to do like seven or ten times during the whole semester. And we stand, basically stand in front of people, and then we memorize sales pitch, and then have a speech in front of people. And I sign up for that class because I wanted to. I have confidence in speaking in class. Because before I was like, I feel very small. And speaking in English in class and I was new. And then, I feel like I look different than other people here. And I thought my English was not that good. So I felt very like small speaking English to people, even when I have like small discussions. I felt like unlike me, like not like because in Korea I speak a lot. I'm very willing to help people like leadership kind of stuff. But here I feel like I'm just basically listening other than speaking. You know, I decided to take that public speaking class. (Jane, personal communication 5a, March 12, 2020)

4.5.2 Background Strategies

On the ASESS, Jane reported that she inferred the meaning of unknown words from the contexts of the speech and paid attention to the speaker's facial expressions, gestures, and voice changes. Additionally, she tried to recover her concentration when her mind wandered, and after lectures she reflected on how much she understood and how she could improve the next time. She talked about note taking and how it allowed her to be in the moment, focusing in her class:

I think a lot of stuff. I'm in the lecture or the class. If I don’t concentrate. I can't listen at all right.

Researcher: So you have to focus.

Yeah, in order to be in the present. Yeah.

Researcher: So do you have some strategies for being in the present or….

I just try to be. I just try to concentrate. I would take note cuz if I'm doing other stuff, I can't listen. If it's going, I can’t do both while listening. Yeah, like doing other things. With English, I have to just concentrate. (Jane, personal communication 5a, March 12, 2020)

4.5.3 Narrative of Experiential Learning Cycles

Jane attempted to use one strategy as an intervention that extended the usefulness of her notetaking skills over the course of the experiential learning cycles we engaged in: she agreed to discuss lectures with a classmate after class. This was a strategy she used with some success in the past:

And they started to draw thing like about the geography stuff because I was desperate. So they helped me a lot of time.

Researcher: That's great. That's great. And that's good for them too because they're reviewing and they’re, and you know, I mean teaching someone is one of the best ways to learn something, right?

Yeah. They basically said that yeah. I was like I was very appreciated that one of the friend and I made in anthropology class. She like devote like four hours explaining the whole context of the human evolutions and.

Researcher: My goodness.

> I know. And she said by doing that, I learn it and we became really close friends by just practicing that. And then reviewing all this we did all this. And I got a B or B plus points like the skeleton part. There was one chapter that you have to memorize all of the skeleton like human skeletons. Yes. And then remember the went to the library and where's that? Where's that, the femur, the radius is? And that everything we studied so much. (Jane, personal communication 5a, March 12, 2020)

However, Jane struggled with the move to online studies when COVID-19 hit. She felt like the amount of work that instructors expected of her was overwhelming, and she missed having lectures:

> Because we can't have face to face lectures, he basically sent all the note. But I feel like it's not studying. Like writing thing, like the art, you feel like really energetic. I feel like I get a lot of it by his work. But with just [reading] the note I feel like that's not really fun. (Jane, personal communication 5c, April 7, 2020)

She was also disheartened after a classmate dropped out of one of her classes. This also meant she was unable to engage in communicating with this classmate as her strategy but tried communicating with her professor instead. She was waiting to hear from her prof when we spoke on Zoom for her second interview. Instead, Jane conveyed an experience she had in this class when she was excluded from an online discussion about a documentary because she was late for the class, a class which was scheduled for 3:30 a.m. where she was located:

> So after 40 minutes of watching that we had a discussion. Where she basically ask like. One by one. What do you think about this documentary?

Researcher: And did you talk? Did you get a chance to give an opinion?

No I didn't. No. I was, the class supposed to start at um 3:30 but I join at 4. So I missed part of the, the front part. But I just wrote down my opinion.

Researcher: So did she give you a couple of different ways you could respond?

I guess she didn't ask me cause she thought I. I don't have, I didn't watch enough. To give my opinion. But I was just like, so there. So there are several student who are like answering.

Researcher: Yeah.

I always like listening to them. I just thought about, just thought about it. (Jane, personal communication 5c, April 7, 2020)

Though she was not able to participate fully due to the scheduling of the class, we can see two instances of strategies that Jane used to support communication in class: the first being writing down her opinion and, therefore, actively listening and preparing to be called on. The second is following the conversation and listening to the responses of her classmates, taking the time to consider those responses. Additionally, we can see in her narrative Jane's use of strategies and her ability to choose appropriate tools or modify others.

Jane successfully utilized several strategies before starting this study. Her notetaking was quite artistic as she used color, space, and images to create a very visual record of content, and she had several classmates with whom she could work to clarify comprehension and language. When her classes went online, many of the strategies she had been using were no longer helpful for scaffolding her studies. I think of the five participants in this research, Jane probably suffered the most with the change in course

delivery and scheduling with her return to her home country. This circumstance may have led to Jane's return to her feelings of being "small" during class discussions, and while we discussed other means of support, the timing of the pandemic and the overwhelming nature of change for learners and teachers alike made it very difficult for her to find the support to feel successful.

4.5.4 Impact

Like Batman, Jane experienced a negative change or no change in her language anxiety from the start to the finish of this study: the little anxiety that she had reported initially was mitigated in 2/25 of the statements on the PSCAS, it worsened in 12/25, and it remained constant in 11/25 (see Table 6). She encountered significant positive change in her sense of panic she typically endured when she had to speak English without advance preparation. However, she also faced significant negative change, such as an increase of fear of speaking English including anxiety around waiting to speak English and about speaking English even if well-prepared. She indicated an increased need to compare her skills with others, including feeling that other students speak English better than she does and a confusion around criteria for speaking assessments. Finally, she suffered an increase in physical effects like a pounding heart.

At the end of our interview, the technology that we were using failed; thus, we had to resort to communication via email. This meant that I was unable to ask Jane for her final thoughts regarding whether this study helped her. However, Jane's responses show the significance of context to strategy use, and the fact that context can have such a powerful effect on students' studies and their ability to communicate that no use of any strategy would render them successful.

4.6 Initial Conclusions

Notably the participants who initially reported language anxiety and truly explored their strategy use—Mulan, Churchill, and Bonnie—increased their confidence when speaking English in academic settings. The participants who did not initially relay experiencing language anxiety, and who also did not subsequently explore their strategy use, did not experience a reduction of language anxiety; To reiterate, both Batman and Jane communicated an increase of anxiety. It is possible that this increase is related to the COVID-19 pandemic changing the context that they were studying in – still academic but a significantly different context than what they were familiar with. Every participant experienced this change to one degree or another, but Mulan, Churchill, and Bonnie were invested in reflecting on their language use during the change while Batman and Jane were not. Additionally, Batman was looking to create connections on campus through this study, and Jane had social connections that were broken with the move to online studies.

It is also interesting to note commonalities between the five. There was also a general reduction in communicative fear and panic and the four participants who were able to comment became more certain of their English-speaking ability from the first interview to the last. I think these are positive indications that looking at strategies was a useful exercise—they were a concrete means for participants to empower themselves. However, the interviews also revealed other more socio-cultural and contextual variables around communication that were far more intercultural in nature. For that discussion, we turn to the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Thematic Findings and Discussion

In this chapter I explore some of the themes found in the interviews conducted and I discuss both the literature around those themes and the corresponding analysis. I start the chapter with my Nested Triangles model (see figure 7), including an inner MacIntyre's (1994) Willingness to Communicate (WTC) pyramid inside a middle triangle consisting of individual and small culture, and an outer triangle consisting of situational ecology. The chapter continues as I delve into each of these three paradigms and how they apply to this research. First, I focus on literature and data from specific boxes, essentially aspects of WTC, and how they support student voices here including communicative competence; intergroup climate; intergroup attitudes; and intergroup motivation. Later in the chapter I look at current definitions of culture and how they stereotype, essentialize and marginalize people from specific areas and who share common history. Still later I move to a discussion of Risager's (2020) suggestion that communication between people who share common culture and field is becoming rarer, including in the multicultural mosaic that is Canadian academic culture. This leads me to move toward adopting a definition that includes individual or small culture, noting that this may assuage the use of silence as a face-saving measure, and promote the acceptance of accent as a demonstration of identity. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a discussion of ecology and a significant focus on classroom dynamics as well as course tasks, content and resources, as well as a note on the larger exo and macrosystems that affect students in the context presented here.

However, before I move to these findings and discussion, it is important to highlight that with further reading guided by analysis of the data provided by the five participants, it became clear that Schroeder's (2016) ASESS strategies were a small tool for assuaging language anxiety in academic communication. Instead, as I suggested in my literature review, several of Peng's (2014) theories were evident here including MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) Willingness to Communicate (WTC). However, my findings demonstrate differences in terms of WTC, with communicative competence, intergroup climate, intergroup attitudes and intergroup motivation being more strongly indicated in my data.

Heavily tied to identity and power, culture in my study became a larger theme than what Peng called beliefs. Headings in this section include Stereotype, essentialism and marginalization; Individuals and small cultures; Third space and ELF identity; Community, power and face; Accent, identity and disempowerment.

Aspects of context also came into play. Like Peng's research, my data also found that ecology was a highly significant theme, especially the classroom with the teacher; classmates; and tasks and content demonstrating strong effects. Exo and macrosystems also affected language anxiety, especially during the pandemic, and this theme is also presented here.

However, it is likely differences in context that explain the differences between our two studies. It is important to note that while Peng's research took part in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, mine was in an English as an Additional Language (EAL) context, the difference being the language spoken outside the classroom. In western Canada, the language spoken outside the classroom is English but

this was not true of Peng's context. Thus, there is little in terms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and corresponding power differences in Peng's study, where there is more in mine.

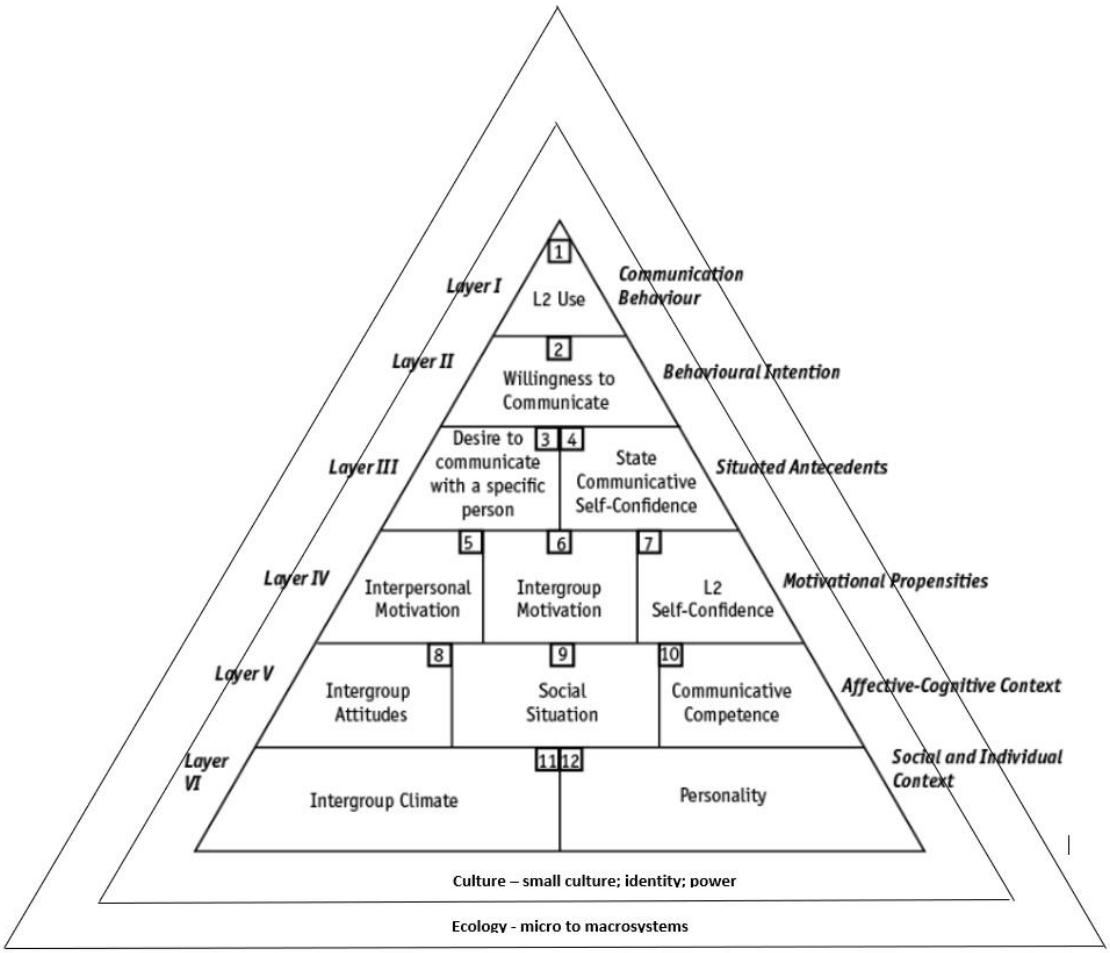
So, to reiterate, upon analysis of the data, and further reading, it became clear that Schroeder's (2016) ASESS strategies were a small tool for assuaging language anxiety in academic communication; the real factors had more to do with intercultural dynamics, culture and context. This resulted in my reworking of MacIntyre's WTC pyramid, nesting it in small culture and ecology. It is to these factors and this new model that I now turn.

5.1 Nested Triangles

Thus, my findings suggest the ASESS strategies were not highly effective in supporting confidence in communication – indeed as most of the strategies were known to the student participants, many chose to engage with strategies they were familiar with, to modify the strategies or to not use them. Instead, ecology that supported culture was found to be a better support for WTC and communication itself. Peng found that culture and ecology affected WTC in an exponential way; I have found that also to be true in my research. Indeed, I found that WTC was so informed by culture and ecology, that the three were nested within each other. Looking at Figure 7 we can see the complexities of WTC are embedded in culture. Additionally, both culture and WTC are affected by ecology or the context that communication takes place in – both at the micro and the macro level. More on each of these are discussed below, starting from the inside out.

Figure 7

Nested Triangles



Note. Adapted from "Conceptualizing Willingness to Communicate in a L2: A Situational Model of L2 Confidence and Affiliation," by P. D. MacIntyre, R. Clement, Z. Dornyei, and K. Noels, 1998, Modern Language Journal, 82, p. 547. Copyright 1998

5.2 Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

5.2.1 Communicative Competence

My focus on strategy use in this study was in response to an issue that English as an Additional Language (EAL) students on campus told me was highly significant: many of them felt anxious when speaking with Native English speakers (NES). I thought that experiential learning might be a means of assuaging this issue and found potential intervention in Schroeder's (2016) strategies, used to support her voice in her own academic studies. Though ultimately, these strategies had a smaller part in this study than I originally intended, some succeeded meeting the aims of experiential learning including "to arrive at recommendations for good practice that will tackle a problem or enhance the performance of the organization and individuals through changes to the rules and procedures within which they operate" (Denscombe, 2009, p. 27).

Box 10 in layer 5 of MacIntyre's et al.'s (1998) WTC pyramid focuses on all aspects of communicative competence. In this study, the strategic interventions I chose to utilize as a means of assuaging language anxiety fit into this aspect of scaffolding communication.

In our first interviews, I soon discovered that participants had strategies before joining this study, and indeed they were familiar with several of Schroeder's tools. This is significant because despite having these, participants were still experiencing anxiety. Therefore, use of Schroeder's strategies was not the scaffold that I hoped for, and the interviews participants and I engaged in revealed a variety of reasons why. For example,

Churchill reported that certain strategies took up her time, and that of the people around her. More on this sense of inconveniencing is found in the section on intergroup climate.

Bonnie reported a second reason - the cognitive load that the strategies added, slowing her ability to join conversation. Listening and participating in a conversation was already a significant task, but selecting and using strategies to manage this became another layer of thought. However, with this research, Bonnie allowed herself to move away from these anxiety-causing strategies with their resulting overthinking and rumination. As we saw in Bonnie's interviews, this focus had previously resulted in shutting down her communication. And while a certain degree of communication is important, the SLA literature pits accuracy versus fluency—a speaking criteria that I would suggest is central to communication. When Bonnie chose not to engage in the strategies she had formerly relied upon, and instead chose to push herself to speak to the class without this preparation, she scaffolded use of her own voice and shared her perspective.

This extensive use of strategies became a source of comparison for Mulan who often envied the perceived ease with which her native English speaker (NES) classmates engaged in academic speaking and listening. Accuracy was at play here, as well, and Mulan shared some of the strategies she used to support her own communication in hopes of not making grammatical and lexical errors. However, some of these strategies are those that NES use when preparing for their own communication, and despite this, spoken English is generally fraught with grammatical errors, though maybe not the kind that EAL speakers make. This is especially true at our institution, where academic English is flattened into something much more informal. Thus, the gold standard of

English speaking is not characterized by lack of errors, but rather lack of certain kinds of errors, or by the identities of the people who make them. This suggests that accuracy is not the goal, but rather familiarity and acceptance of all variations of spoken English—what the literature calls Englishes.

Finally, Schroeder's strategies tend to focus on accuracy of language use, not communication itself, which lead to a kind of silencing of voice based on the anxiety that participants felt as reported by Bonnie and Churchill. Most participants noted the effects of the change from face to face studies to online with the rise of COVID-19 in British Columbia, and certainly this shift caused another in the strategies that participants explored with several switching from speaking strategies to listening strategies – the new medium in effect silencing them further. Issues with listening did not seem to be well-scaffolded by strategies. Indeed, participants who struggled with this skill tended to avoid it altogether rather than engage in strategy use. This suggested that the issues were not strategic in nature, but perhaps more linguistic or socio-cultural in nature. See the section on accuracy for some discussion on the former and the discussion on culture and interculture for more on the latter.

Though Schroeder's strategies were not as supportive as I had hoped, they made a strong talking point and encouraged exploration of strategy use. In fact, when engaging in their experiential learning cycles, some participants chose to utilize modified versions of some of these original strategies. Other participants chose strategies outside the ASESS as their interventions. Finally, still other participants either avoided strategy use, or attempted to move beyond their use, believing that they became less useful with improvement in language skills. Thus, strategy use was situational and

here experiential learning supported "[t]he participants [to] continue to review, evaluate and improve practice . . . [involving] a feedback loop in which initial findings generate possibilities for change which are then implemented and evaluated as a prelude to further investigation" (Denscombe 1998, p. 58). Thus, several participants explored and expanded their strategy use, but few were based directly on Schroeder's (2016) ASSESS.

5.2.2 Intergroup Climate

Box 11 of MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) pyramid focuses on the degree of representation on staff and here on senate, and communication networks and the resulting socioeconomic power. The data suggested a focus on power and its manifestation in academic communication on campus.

The recent surge of interest in identity among applied linguists was instigated by researchers taking poststructuralist critical perspectives, including Block (2007), Norton (2000), and Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), among others. Their theorising is influenced by Bourdieu's (1977) conceptualisation of cultural and symbolic capital, which underlines symbolic imbalances among interactants as well as the notion of the right to speak and be heard. For poststructuralists, language is not a neutral medium of communication, and the value of speech cannot be separated from who uses it. Instead, speech is used and understood with reference to the social positioning of the interactants. Language use is a site of struggle where individuals negotiate identities. Identity, then, is not a product of an individual's mind but is discursively co-constructed through interactions in the social sphere.

Much poststructuralist research has centred on migrant situations, with a focus on how learners struggle to negotiate identities in order to adapt to the more influential host community (Block, 2006; Norton, 2000; Toohey and Norton, 2003). This inequity in power relations is inherent in the learning context as the hosts do not necessarily need to hear the voices of the newcomers, but the newcomers do need to be heard and accepted to be members of the society.

As mentioned above, a major theme that arose in interviews was that of the feeling of inconveniencing NES. This manifested in two distinct ways. As I suggested previously, the first was time. This was particularly significant because it leads to silencing participant voices, particularly outside of scheduled class time. For example, Batman chose to ask questions in the beginning and middle of class time but avoid them at the end. And Churchill found that asking her classmates questions during class was easier than after class. This perceived inability to take up potentially short periods of time suggested a correlation with a lack of perceived power. Indeed, Mulan noted a difference between her and a professor and the status reflected in the differences between these two individuals and the time they are able to take up in a conversation. Not only did Mulan's lack of time lead to silencing, but it also led to an inability to build connections and therefore social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), further disempowering her.

Fear of judgement over mistakes with accuracy also silences EAL speakers. Indeed, several participants reported this was a significant source of language anxiety, resulting in issues with recall including grammar, lexicon and even strategies themselves. This is different than the strategic competency above in that there we looked at how EAL speakers feel about their own accuracy, here we talk about how they think

others perceive their skills. This suggests a similar correlation with power and capital, similar to what was discussed in regard to time, but also face, which will be further discussed under cultural and intercultural factors. Here it is enough to note that fear of being judged over accuracy had significant negative results for these participants.

Finally, Intergroup climate is affected by cultural differences. This lack of common ground can result in miscommunication or a lack of comprehension. It is important to note that coming from different cultural backgrounds, EAL students are not only responsible for learning content during their overseas studies, and potentially improving their language skills, they also must learn a great deal of culture, both academic and otherwise. This can be overwhelming and silencing, as Batman reported to the point where strategy use is insignificant in the face of the differences in world view and ways of knowing and being. However, some strategies have potential for assuaging this issue, including checking understanding or paraphrasing as Churchill explored over the course of her experiential learning cycles. It is important to note that sadly, this work on bridging cultural differences falls primarily on international students due to the lack of value placed on intercultural perspectives and the perception of further inconveniencing NES. Another example of disempowerment, this is particularly unfortunate due to the lack of benefits domestic students experience, not broadening their own perspectives.

5.2.3 Intergroup Attitudes

MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) box 8 of the WTC pyramid includes a desire to integrate and affiliate with the L2 community, degree of assimilation within that community, and motivation to learn the L2 – in this case English. It should be noted

here that the status of English as the language of a majority comes into play here as learning it and assimilating to the community poses far more risk to identity than learning a minority language.

Often, desired identities are not endorsed by host nationals, and the learners must resist imposed identities, often by appropriating languages ‘to legitimize, challenge, and negotiate identities and open new identity options for oppressed and subjected groups and individuals’ (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004, p. 13). These identities negotiated through discourses are complex and multiple, as is demonstrated by Norton’s (2000) study of how immigrant women’s ethnic, gendered, and class identities intertwine with language learner identities in complex ways.

While this is true, it should be noted that the language that participants here alluded to speaking, and indeed spoke with me, was not Anglophone English, but rather International English or one of many now respected Englishes (Jenkins, 2014). Thus, when speaking to fellow international students, grammar, lexis and pronunciation are common to the group and clear, supporting comprehension and communication. However, Churchill reported that NES speakers wanted language that was more frequently used in Anglophone circles, but often having less lexical frequency globally. Churchill stated that she could see this dissatisfaction with the language she shared on the faces of NES. She felt that despite being able to understand her, NES held expectations of what her language use should be.

On the other hand, coming from a British colonial education system himself, Batman found it easier to communicate at our institution which he found less critical. He denied that his disinclination to speak in his home country might have been due to

political reasons but agreed that there was a correlation between language and identity. Batman had no other individuals with whom he could speak his mother tongue on campus. Thus, connection could have been the source of the motivation he felt to speak English here. However, though he was keen to share his culture, he felt that others were not interested in listening.

Batman also shared his perspective on what Que-Lam Huynh, Angela-MinhTu D. Nguyen, and Verónica Benet-Martínez (2011) call bicultural integration. As the researchers suggest, integration of cultural selves varies in depth and which culture the individual identifies with. Batman stated that he felt associated with two identities, that of his cultural background, a minority in his home country, and that of what he called world culture. And while Batman wished to make connections with his fellow classmates, the degree to which he wished to integrate into Canadian culture was small compared to the amount of Canadian content in his courses and the lack of familiarity with content and worldview. This resulted in silencing of Batman's voice both in class and in in small groups. Instead, Batman identified similarities with Canadian First Nations and their sociopolitical struggles, but this was not the perspective and information presented in his classes and thus still rendered Batman silenced.

5.2.4 Intergroup Motivation

MacIntyre's et al.'s (1998) box 6 is defined by the desire to belong to a particular cultural group. It is informed by other areas of the heuristic, including intergroup climate and intergroup attitudes, but is more focused on the desire to connect on the individual level. Thus, Box 6 centers on learning and communicating in the L2 for the sake of friendship (Clement et al.,1984). This can manifest as control of or affiliation

with a specific individual such that it can motivate the interlocutors to push past the silencing of other aspects of the pyramid and communicate to connect on a personal level. Yashima (2002) notes that the more drawn an interlocutor is to international perspectives, the more they will be inclined to learn and speak their L2. I would suggest this goes both ways; hence, the more an NES is interested in international perspectives, the more that individual will want to engage with an individual from another culture and thus initiate and / or scaffold a conversation.

Most participants reported struggling to make these kinds of connections. However, some were successful. For example, Bonnie's classmates supported her here when asking for her specific perspective in small group discussions in an anthropology class. The support that Bonnie felt when her groupmates turned their attention on her and specifically asked for her thoughts and experiences not only scaffolded Bonnie in the small group discussion, but also supported her in sharing her perspective in the ensuing class discussion.

Jane also reported the effects of having one on one connection and support both from a classmate and a teacher. Jane was grateful for the time one classmate put into reviewing a difficult concept with her—noting specifically that the individual had spent four hours working with her. This time investment resulted in a friendship that lasted beyond and outside the class. Indeed, this connection motivated Jane in her future studies, and when her friend dropped a class they shared at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the result was that Jane was devastated. Additionally, Jane reported feeling support from one-on-one time with a professor. Indeed, several participants reported

feeling support from connection with instructors—particularly those with an international background.

5.3 Culture and Interculture

5.3.1 Culture

Initially, I thought of providing snapshots of each of the four distinct cultures represented in this study. It was a daunting task because I realized that while I knew and had taught individuals from similar backgrounds, I did not have any degree of expertise. I might have continued, none-the-less, even comparing cultures with Hofstede's tools, or sharing ethnographies and my anthropological lens. Indeed, all five participants demonstrated worldviews that were shaped by their home cultures—the music that Batman shared with me; Mulan's discussion of Confucianism; Churchill's use of metaphors; Jane and Bonnie's discussion of pedagogy in their respective cultures. But at the same time, each of these participants all demonstrated very individualistic thinking based in their specific life and cultural experiences: Mulan was interested in Western philosophy; Churchill was an immigrant with children in the local school system; Bonnie and Jane found the pedagogy here to be very different from home and had to adjust; and Batman found similarities in indigenous cultures cross culturally and enjoyed exploring Canadian First Nations language and history. This is what the data suggested was the most significant, not an essentialist definition of culture. Thus, I began to search the literature for a different view of culture, and I found several interesting perspectives in The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication (2020).

Holliday (2020) labels this propensity to define and confine cultures and other social structures as the Social Construction of Reality used "for the political purpose of

instilling social cohesion" (p. 41). Contributing to this is Weber's (1964) Social Action Theory which states that while systems like Confucianism or Islam affect the actions of the individual in a dialogic capacity, the specific causes of human behavior cannot be ascertained as:

> coherent ideas about societies should be regarded as 'ideal types'—imagined models or heuristic devices (i.e., for the purpose of investigation)—which might be used to imagine what society might be like but which should never be taken as descriptions of how things actually are (Weber, 1968a, p. 23)).

Thus, while participants in this study are affected by their cultural backgrounds, the literature and data suggested that their shared experience of learning English and coming to the west coast of Canada also affected them significantly. Therefore, in writing this section, I chose to reject essentialism of participant's respective cultures and focus instead on the aspects of individual and small culture that came out of our interviews, moving onto English as the Lingua Franca and the third space that this can create.

5.3.2 Stereotype, Essentialism, and Marginalization

One significant issue with essentialism of culture is that it leads to stereotypes, ethnocentrism and marginalization. Stereotypes are not just ways of thinking, but rather social constructions based in discourse that can become almost prescriptively real (Laadegard, 2020*)*. Ethnocentrism or the 'disquieting tension of the Other' (Bredella, 2003) takes this further in its othering or the use of negative characteristics to define a group (Holliday, 2020). An EAL speaker's inability to imitate and conform to another languaculture affects their communication but no more than in a NES listener's

inclination to respond negatively based on stereotypes and corresponding marginalization and ethnocentrism. We see this in Churchill's complaints that though the native English speakers that she is communicating with can understand her, they often react as though she is deficient in her language and her thinking; this reflects the marginalisation of her culture.

Oyserman and Lee (2008) suggest another issue with essentialism, writing that culture is more of a tendency to a mental habit that influences individuals to think in specific ways, not a rule. But as a tendency, context can potentially affect these habits and so there is variation in thought (Noels et al., 2020) and I would argue corresponding language. Despite this, the theories behind these tendencies support the concept of 'culture-typed identities" (Kim and Hubbard, 2007, p. 231), including the individualism of western cultures versus the collectivism of the east, a notion that is highly problematic in a dichotomy that suggests internal similarities of multiple cultures that are externally different, resulting in the oversimplification of the complexities of culture. Similarly, the complexities of the effects of globalization are also diminished (Ljalikova, 2008) which is apparent when Jane talks about second language acquisition pedagogy and shares that as a teacher she wants to include more of the student-centered communicative pedagogy she has encountered when studying overseas, while respecting the grammar translation methods favoured at home. Essentialism also ignores minorities and other decentered groups (Holliday, 2020). This is reflected when Batman says that he cannot find a cultural community that reflects his, despite being from a country with one of the biggest populations globally.

5.3.3 *Individuals and Small Cultures*

If we only look at the increasingly rare situation of what Risager (2020) calls a convergent situation—one where a speaker communicates with a listener from the same culture and field—then the connection between language and culture is more assured. However, if interaction is attempted in a more divergent situation, intercultural communication is potentially regarding a field or subject matter that is unfamiliar to one or more of the speakers, this leads to complexity that may not support the language-culture connection, creating a specific combination. This is a result of each individual having a specific integration of language and culture which lead to specific construction of meaning. Thus, there is a great deal more to understanding a speech act than knowing the meanings of the words. This is what Churchill suggests when she says she cannot "catch the meaning" as it is buried in the lexis, but also each individual and the community. When Hannerz (1992) writes that 'people must deal with other people's meanings' it suggests two things—the first that communication, especially oral communication, is on an individual level. An interlocutor cannot assume meaning based on the culture, gender or any other identity markers. Additionally, this quote suggests that understanding is an active process that requires some degree of work. In her experiential learning cycles, Churchill explored the utility of paraphrasing as a means to check and expand comprehension. However, she also suggests that native English speakers don't engage in this work, indeed often having unrealistic expectations of the EAL speaker.

5.3.4 Third Space and ELF Identity

A solution is the building of a third space, one that suggests we are all speakers of English Lingua Franca (ELF) The theories around ELF, a language that could be shared globally, have shifted over time. We have seen terms like World English and International English to indicate a standard of the language that is accessible to all English speakers. Indeed, today the term Englishes defines the cultural and linguistic variations of the language that are found worldwide:

> We may, in due course, all need to be in control of two standard Englishes—the one which gives us our national and local identity, and the other which puts us in touch with the rest of the human race. In effect, we may all need to become bilingual in our own language (Crystal, 1988, p. 265).

Risager (2020) suggests that this is also true of languaculture writing that language is "never culturally neutral" and that meanings are therefore culturally specific (p. 114). This includes English and its history of colonialism and control of entire fields like business and science. In one of his interviews, Batman suggests that he feels the requirement for two cultures and thus two identities to be successful; he has his own personal identity and another as an academic and as a world citizen, an identity based in historical and contemporary colonialism. Conversely, Jane's work in her public speaking class could be seen as an example of Kim's (1988, 2005) individualization and universalization of an "intercultural identity" as a result as their proposed stress-adaptation-growth process. Jane engaged in multiple speeches, often reflecting on herself, her experiences, and ultimately her identity. Indeed, this experience can also be

examined through Hecht et al.'s (2005) communication theory of identity where the researchers noted the significance of social connection and interaction in the formation, modification and expression of identity.

Agar's (1994) term Rich Points describes the learning that is accomplished when individuals or groups from two different backgrounds build understanding after initial cultural miscommunication:

> Language, in all its varieties, in all the ways it appears in everyday life, builds a world of meanings. When you run into different meanings, when you become aware of your own and work to build a bridge to the others, 'culture' is what you're up to. Language fills the spaces between us with sound; culture forges the human connection through them. Culture is in language, and language is loaded with culture (p. 28)

Thus, the exploration of culture supports meaning. This is in part what Churchill suggests when she describes catching meaning when listening in a conversation being like catching butterflies; thus, some of the meaning she is chasing is language based, some is linguacultural, but all is cultural. It is also more easily understood if both speaker and listener come from a similar place, whether that sphere is a third space or a sharing of the ELF identity. This can be the result of communication around a rich point if both interlocutors grow with the experience.

5.3.5 Community, Power, and Face

Despite the focus on the individual, there is also a call for the significance of small culture. Carbaugh (2014) and Philipsen et al. (2005) suggest creating a thick description of a community and its languaculture and Noels et al. (2020) suggest that

this is a means to identifying inequities in which ideologies are privileged and which identities are empowered.

Mulan drew my attention to power inequities when she pointed out that she didn't have the power to take time with her communication as my professor did. She could see that her power as an EAL speaker is less than that of professors, and also less than that of native English speakers. This suggests a distinct hierarchy of power on campus. What's more, the consistent face threatening communicative behaviour that participants encounter further promotes this hierarchy. Thus, when Jane's instructor doesn't ask for her participation in class—for whatever reason, whether it be that she thinks Jane comes from a culture that does not participate, or maybe Jane did not understand—it reinforces stereotypes about Jane's culture, reinforces the us and them dichotomy and reinforces the hierarchy.

Cheng and Lam (2020) suggest that avoidance is one means of avoiding face threatening conflict, and thus silence is the result. However, they also suggest that politeness is both universal and culturally specific suggesting that attempts at being polite are warranted, and asking (or educating oneself) about what is appropriate also has merit. Thus, encouraging Mulan to take her time, or asking Jane if she feels strong enough to share may go a long way. Additionally, the universality of politeness suggests that these means of scaffolding conversation can be used with all students.

5.3.6 Accent, Identity, and Disempowerment

The perception of the gold standard of a native English speaker accent was a common theme in this study. However, Risager (2020) writes that the correlation between accent and identity:

> is related to the social and personal variation of the language in question, not least its pronunciation. With a specific accent, for instance, you identify yourself and make it possible for others to identify you according to their background knowledge and attitudes.

But despite the empowering direction in which the literature around accents is changing, recognizing the positive significance that accent has on identity, the strategies that some respondents chose to engage in demonstrated their continued feelings of inadequacy. Bonnie's use of reading aloud from texts was a means to correct her perception that her vowel sounds were incorrect; Churchill wanted to talk with more NES so that she can hear and benefit from their speech, rejecting the communication with her international classmates as reinforcing poor language habits. These are examples of rejecting their own skills and their identities, despite having the language to be able to attend university in Canada—skills confirmed by marks on a standardized English test like the IELTS. Thus, despite having the degree of skill including the degree of intelligibility, some students still feel deficient. I would suggest this has a great deal to do with the ecology in which they are studying and communicating. It is to that context that we now turn our attention.

5.4 Ecology

If we return to the literature review of this study, we recall that the definition of ecology that we are using is one that combines several complexities. Van Lier (2002) writes that ecology includes organisms, environment and the relationships between them; Lantolf (2000) and Vygotsky (1978) include sociocultural theory; Atkinson (2002) adds sociocognitive theory; and Tudor (2001) includes individual perceptions

and worldviews. This latter aspect of the definition is highlighted by Noels, Yashima and Zhang (2020) who suggest that the context and the individual are inseparable in every communication interaction. This further suggests the highly specific nature of each interaction, affected by the perspectives of both interlocutors and the micro to macro environments in which they are attempting to communicate. We can see these complexities in Mulan's experiences in her Western philosophy class, with a content with which she struggles but finds highly interesting. We see it in Jane and the experiences she has in different classes, and the changes that occur in the same classes with the move to online studies and with the loss she feels when one of her classmates drops a class they share. We see it in Batman's confidence to speak English in Canada, a confidence he lacked in his home country, but a confidence he also lacks around engaging in discussion around Canadian content.

Theories around multiple identities correlate identity and context; however, defining ecology is more complex (Noels, et al., 2020). Giles et al. (1977) suggest that one method of defining the term includes describing macro social factors like representation, support and privilege associated with a thriving culture. As I have written elsewhere, there is very little representation of international cultures at our institution, and here participants suggested repercussions of that in their ability to exercise their voices. This is significant because as I wrote in the literature context theory informed the WTC pyramid (Clément, 1980, 1986; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985). However, while several boxes in the WTC model are social in nature, this theory that confidence and motivation around communication in L2 were rooted in the multi-cultural community was lost; vitality of ethnolinguistic individuals and groups includes

status, support and representation is key, as is connection within the community (Peng, 2014). Peng and Woodrow (2010) state that a learning environment that feels safe and comfortable lowers language anxiety. Thus, if students feel silenced, some of these contextual supports must be missing; and my data suggested they were. For example, Batman had no members of his home community on campus and felt alienated by the Canadian content in his classes. Mulan, Churchill and Bonnie all felt their language skills were judged by NES. Ultimately all five respondents reported feelings of disconnection.

But the opposite was sometimes true as well. Peng (2014) found that classroom context supported the communication confidence with its strength of effect on WTC. Though complex, this suggests that one micro context, the classroom, is possibly the most significant in terms of supporting student voice. We saw examples of that here as well including Jane's success and confidence gained from her public speaking class, and Bonnie' success in speaking in class with the scaffolding her teacher employs. Just as significant are the connections respondents made with individuals, like Jane and her friendships with classmates, or Churchill and her relationships with her International Academic Support tutors.

It is also important to note that this correlation with context is not culturally specific. As stated in the literature review, language anxiety was affected by context in Canadian French immersion middle school students (MacIntyre, 2000); Korean EFL university students (Kim, 2004); Turkish college students (Cetinkaya, 2005) and more. These studies all had something in common: their student populations were relatively culturally homogeneous. In this study we see that context had effect on EAL university

students at a Canadian university, but the students were from a range of cultural backgrounds, and despite their backgrounds, they experience situational silencing. This further suggests that despite their culture and experiences as individuals, their feelings of competence, context impacts WTC and L2 communication; therefore, my data analysis shows the significance of ecology and its relationship to language anxiety.

Several aspects of the classroom feature significantly, including the instructor, the tasks given, and the classroom community.

5.4.1 Classroom Community

5.4.1.1 The Teacher / Instructor. Instructors and advisors are some of the individuals that make the biggest impact through their connections with students on our campus. And if WTC and the resulting act of communication is the primary goal in the language classroom (MacIntyre et al., 1998), and if we also pedagogically believe that this is a significant goal in the academic classroom, and we agree with Dorman (2003) who suggests that a huge variable for creating this sharing of voice and perspective is support from instructors demonstrated by their attention, their trust, their affability, and their assistance, then we have to highlight the absolute importance of connections between students and instructors. Participants in this study discussed this in their interviews: both Churchill and Jane reported feeling supported by instructors when they reached out and met one-on-one and felt a genuine connection. Sadly, Churchill commented that she felt unusual in her emotional connection with instructors. Batman also noted his feeling of connection with an advisor with whom he met before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and seemed at a loss when this face to face connection was no longer available to him. This is not surprising, however, as the perceived closeness

with instructors that Wen and Clement (2003) note is a highly significant factor in student success. And if we listen to participants here, relationships with instructors and other academic support are significant in lowering language anxiety and supporting student voices.

5.4.1.2 The Student / Classmates. Interconnection between classmates was also found to be highly significant in this study. Indeed, when participants said that they wanted to be able to speak to NES, they often meant their classmates. As Peng and Woodrow (2010) write, cohesion between students leads to psychological connection resulting in the perception that the community is enjoyable, improving classroom behaviors; minimizing anxiety; and supporting learning (Zhang & Oetzei, 2006b) and WTC (Peng, 2007).

And while several researchers suggest exercises in group dynamics in language class to support this cohesion (Clément et al., 1994; Dörnyei, 1997; Dörnyei, 2007a; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003), some participants in this study found this connection in academic classes by working together with their classmates, fostered through their instructors' teaching methods. As I have discussed, Bonnie's experience in the classroom with small group discussions helped her feel the support of her classmates, ultimately supporting her voice in class. Thus, teachers have a role to play in the classroom dynamics that occur in class, and by supporting classroom cohesion, they support the voices of their students

Another significant example of connection and its effects was Jane's experience in class. Jane reported initially feeling "small" and disconnected when she first started her studies at our institution. But when a classmate took her time to help Jane study a

concept that Jane was struggling with, the result was a friendship between the two students that supported both in their studies. And when that same individual chose to drop a class that the two shared, a class that had moved online with Covid-19, Jane felt the effects in her own motivation, including her motivation to speak. Thus, students also have a role to play supporting each other. The relationships they build inside the class and out can help provide mutual support in terms of academic success and in terms of sharing perceptions.

5.4.1.3 Tasks, Content, and Resources. Not only do instructor behaviors shape perceptions of context and ultimately oral participation, but so do the tasks that learners are asked to engage in. Indeed, Peng and Woodrow (2010) suggest that the student's perception of task usefulness plays a big role. Churchill's perceptions and behaviors support this. When I suggested that joining a speaking group like Toastmasters might be a useful strategy for her to get speaking practice, Churchill commented that she did not have the time for that. Instead, she commented that her coming courses included group work and she felt that this task type would provide her with the practice she felt she required. Another example of task as a motivator can be found in Bonnie's experience sharing her cultural perspective in class when her teacher engaged her students in small group discussion before opening the question up to the class. This meant that Bonnie was able to formulate her answer and communicate it with a small number of classmates before sharing with the larger group. Also, Bonnie was further motivated to share because the topic was individual experiences and her perceptions were valued.

Indeed, topic and content are also highly significant when it comes to WTC. Batman's experience with Canadian content suggests that subject matter also needs to be

useful to students. Not only was Batman unfamiliar with the Canadian systems and examples he was taught in class, but he felt that they were of little use to him. Similarly, Mulan's experience with western philosophy was so outside her worldview and understanding, she was rendered silenced in class. Like Batman, she found the subject she studied highly challenging and did not want to sound unintelligent in class. None-the-less, she was motivated by this challenge, and interested in the contrast between the content she was being taught in contrast to her own cultural worldview. Thus, while the literature suggests that stimulating content can support academic performance, motivation and perceived competence (Wu, 2003), it also needs to include significance to the individual to support communication (Kubanyiova, 2006). But as we see here, the balance between these characteristics can promote voice or stifle it. Therefore, what we teach and how we teach it greatly affect the communication that happens in the classroom. And if students are silenced, altering these aspects of the class can make a difference.

Finally, the lexis and structure of the field of study is also significant in terms of promoting communication. Indeed, Peng (2014) writes that lessons in the language class based in form including collocation, structure, and discourse support WTC more than those based on specific subjects. While this could be situational and cultural as language students given structures may have less cause to make mistakes and ultimately to lose face, it still supports the notion that familiarity with field-based language will support oral communication within a community of practice. Thus, if a business pitch is structured a certain way, or certain phrases are used in health, teaching this language is highly significant in supporting student oral communication. Bonnie recognized the

significance of lexis, pronunciation and structure before the start of this study; she had already engaged in practicing the language in her field by reading her textbooks aloud, but was an intervention she returned to in her experiential learning cycles.

5.4.2 Exo and Macrosystems

Jane's experience is also an example of the effects of the move to online studies and the stress caused by this and other extraordinary events around the Covid-19 pandemic. These aspects in life and student life played a significant role in Jane's shift from relative communicative confidence to lack of WTC, resulting in her silence in one or more of her online classes. Some of this was undoubtedly the scheduling of classes; when Jane went back to her home country, afraid that boarders would be closing and when post-secondary education in BC went online, at least one of her classes occurred synchronously at 3:30 AM. This alone could have rendered her silenced as she struggled with this schedule. And as instructors struggled with their methods in an online medium many were unfamiliar with, teaching strategies changed radically overnight. Jane found these changes difficult as did Batman, who found studying from his dorm room to be very distracting. The lack of people and services on campus also greatly affected Batman, and he felt very disconnected. He found the methods that his teachers used, often asynchronous in nature, to be vastly different from what he had experienced in his previous studies. Indeed, the resulting disconnection that many participants felt online certainly affected their motivation and WTC. However, participants like Churchill, who had previously experienced online studies, seemed to fair better. Indeed, as a mother, Churchill found studying from home both supportive of her work and her participation

in class, but also difficult as she now had her son's studies to manage, as well as her own.

Another result of Covid-19 was that most participants reported that a substantial amount of their attention was now on the news, taking information in as it unfolded around the world. Our interviews often included time spent discussing and sharing information and connecting over our experiences. The events around Covid-19 and the feelings that participants struggled with undoubtedly had an effect on their studies, including their oral communication in class.

On a positive note, several participants found the leadership of the Trudeau government to be a source of comfort and strength during this difficult time. Indeed, when our interventions changed with the move to online studies, several participants chose to listen to the news as a means of supporting their oral skills, and some, like Mulan, chose to focus on Trudeau's daily messages, revering his speaking and leadership style.

Thus, Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1993) theories of levels of ecosystems and interconnection was played out in an unprecedented way over the course of this research. Indeed, here we see support for Peng's (2014) findings that these interactions were far more complex in their synergy. Thus, interactions in the classroom affected participants here, but so did the medium and methods of online classes, and the political situation, both within Canada, and internationally.

This discussion synthesizing willingness to communicate, languaculture and ecology with some degree of second language acquisition demonstrates the complexities that affect oral communication between Native English and English as Additional

Language speakers in an academic setting. Indeed, these interactions are so complex, it is seemingly impossible to mitigate the issues that arise. However, there are actions that can be taken to support what amounts to intercultural communication in academic setting. I now turn to the conclusion of this paper which includes a brief outline of some potential actions.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Before we get to the implications and recommendations supported by this research, it is important to review how this research addressed the aim and the objectives originally presented. This includes brief discussions of the effects of situational factors, and a recognition that participants here were familiar with strategy use before the start of this study. Limitations are also noted, focusing on COVID-19 and researcher bias. Finally, implications and recommendations are shared including how and on what research could be conducted in this area in the future, as well as encouraging professional development for intercultural communication on my campus and maybe others.

6.1 Meeting Research Aim and Objectives

The focus of this study is the use of strategies to mitigate the language anxiety ESL students may experience when engaging in oral communication at our English-speaking post-secondary institution. The aim behind this focus is to scaffold discussion and dialogue in the academic classroom, and in our campus community with interventions from Schroeder's (2016) Academic Spoken English Strategies Survey (ASESS). Thus, the specific aim here was to assess the effects of ASESS strategy use on language anxiety in academic situations in our context. Objectives were to assess the presence of language anxiety, find situational causes, and explore strategies participants used before and during the study. In line with these goals and methodology, the research question I explore is the following:

How does the adoption of the Academic Spoken English Strategies Survey (ASESS) as a framework affect the participants` self-perceptions and feelings about using ESL in academic communication?

1. What are the participant's self-perceptions and feelings about the use of ESL in academic communication?
2. In what circumstances do the participants experience language anxiety in academic communication?
3. What strategies have the participants used to cope with their anxiety in academic communication?
4. How effective are strategies in the Academic Spoken English Strategies Survey (ASESS) in reducing the participants` perceived anxiety in academic communication?

In the end, the data that was collected proved inconclusive in terms of strategy effects; instead, participants suggested that language anxiety was highly situational with ecology and individual identity as significant factors.

6.1.1 Initial Self-perceptions and Levels of Language Anxiety

One of the major objectives was to assess and identify initial self-perceptions and corresponding levels and effects of language anxiety. This was done by asking participants to engage in Yaikhong and Usaha's (2012) Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) and interviews based on these results.

Mulan reported significant language anxiety despite using pre-communication strategies. She reported the greater ease as she perceived her native English-speaking classmates doing. Indeed, Mulan highlighted the comparison she made with her

classmates in her initial interviews, noting the extra time she put into her studies to keep up.

Churchill's responses on the PSCAS suggested that she harbored a significant amount of language anxiety as well. Churchill noted that her language anxiety sometimes resulted in an inability to recall vocabulary. Like Mulan, Churchill reported the regular use of pre-communicative strategies, but she also noted that she wanted to move beyond the use of these strategies to be able to speak freely and to "catch" the meanings of her native English speaking instructors and classmates. She also reported a lack of confidence and like Mulan, compared herself unfavorably to other students.

Though she reported strengths like having confidence in her body language and on speaking tests, Bonnie reported language anxiety that she noted was more extreme than many of her classmates. The results of this anxiety included physical effects like having cold hands and difficulty breathing, as well as cognitive effects like inability to recall content and vocabulary. For Bonnie, the consequence of these effects includes wanting to speak less, silencing her.

Unlike Mulan, Churchill and Bonnie, Batman reported speaking with confidence. However, though Batman did not report a sense of weakness in his first interview, on his PSCAS he reported a lack of confidence while speaking English. When asked to clarify this, Batman noted the difference he experienced when speaking the language in academic settings his home country versus our shared institution, saying that the degree to which accuracy was expected varied in the two settings. And while Batman initially reported speaking up in class, later in our interviews he also reported being silenced, not by his language skills, but by his lack of understanding Canadian

content. Finally, Batman reported feeling isolated at our institution as there were no instructors or students who shared his cultural background. His sense of isolation seemed to grow as the pandemic struck. This seemed to fuel his lack of WTC academically, though he was interested in sharing his culture with me throughout our interviews.

Like Batman, Jane reported having little to no language anxiety at the start of this research. Instead, she reported self-confidence and comprehension while speaking English, even volunteering to speak first, and refraining from comparing her skills with others. Jane credited her confidence in oral communication at our institution with a public speaking class she took in her second year. She reported feeling "small" and isolated before taking the class but regained herself confidence and leadership skills through the language practice and sense of community she experienced in public speaking. However, when COVID-19 hit, Jane's confidence wavered with the move away from lectures and amount of work expected of her. When a friend of Jane's dropped a class they had shared together, she felt demotivated, losing a connection with a person with whom she often studied.

6.2 Situational Factors

Another objective was to find the situational factors around language anxiety. Here I found situational factors around LA had a great deal to do with ecology and culture, specifically the nature of the relationships that students made, and the nature of the tasks and content found in class. Mulan noted a power differentiation between herself and others, believing that she did not have the respect enough to take up too much of other's time when communicating in class.

Mulan reported feeling judged and inconveniencing others in past classes with the time it took her to formulate her ideas and the language required to communicate, causing language anxiety and ultimately silencing her. However, she also reported gaining confidence during her studies as she moved from a goal of accuracy to one of fluency and communication. She did note, however, that if she wasn't familiar with the content discussed in class, she chose to listen rather than actively participate.

Churchill also reported feeling judged, noting a substantial difference in her experience when communicating with domestic versus international students. She described the impatience she often sees in NES listener faces, despite feeling that she has adequately communicated her meaning, in contrast to the comfortable nature of conversations with other international students. However, Churchill does note the connection she feels with instructors who have a background in international education, valuing their experience with language education and culture.

Despite generally having a significant amount of language anxiety around class discussions, Bonnie reported having had a positive experience with local classmates over the course of this research. In one class the instructor asked a question based on culture and gave students time to discuss their answers in small groups before reporting to the whole class. Bonnie's groupmates specifically included her in the conversation, and she was later able to report her perspective to the larger group. This combination of valuing her perspective and allowing time to practice the content and language in small groups, also supporting connection, was one that ultimately helped Bonnie be successful.

Conversely, organizing desk space in the classroom for small groups was something Bonnie found anxiety causing as she felt watched by students across the table from her. Thus, it is interesting to note that even altering the physical space for conversation can have negative effects.

Like Mulan, Batman's participation in class could be content driven. Indeed, the amount of Canadian content in his program silenced him as he struggled with understanding what was presented in class. Like Churchill, Batman often reported feeling like he was inconveniencing others using their time. Though he stated that he was comfortable communicating in his classes, he noted that he kept his speech fast and concise not to bore others. He also adopted a strategy of asking questions at the beginning and middle of lectures to not take up classmates' time at the end of class. And also like Churchill, he noted listeners' body language as a means of managing the use of their time and attention. Finally, like Churchill, Batman found connection with staff, in his case an advisor. However, when Covid meant that classes went online, and he was unable to maintain face to face communication with this and other individuals, Batman felt severely disconnected. Like Bonnie, Batman was motivated in part by his desire to share his perspective, but he struggled to find the setting and the individuals with which to share his thoughts and experiences.

Jane found connection with classmates and instructors, and this vastly changed her experience in her classes, giving her a voice. Her experiences with one-on-one support with instructors, community in the public speaking class, and the time and corresponding help she received from classmates in other classes gave her the

confidence and strength to speak out. However, the move to online classes with Covid-19 and the resulting loss of connection silenced her again.

6.3 Strategy Use Pre-study

A third objective was to identify strategies students use to mitigate their LA pre-study. All participants demonstrated significant strategy use before experiential learning cycles. Participants were given the choice of skill focus on the ASESS; two chose to complete the listening portion of the survey, two chose the speaking, and one chose both. Major themes included building skills and comprehension through interactions with and emulation of others; engaging in pre-communicative strategies; reflecting on language use; and needing to fully concentrate in lectures and discussions to support understanding and participation.

According to her answers on the speaking portion of Schroeder's (2016) Academic Spoken English Strategies Survey (ASESS), the strategies that Mulan used most frequently were related to her classmates and specialists in her field and their use of communication as well as their reactions to hers. Pre-communicative preparation was also a theme in her results. Finally, practice of language skills was something Mulan still engaged in at this advanced stage of her studies, concentrating on academic vocabulary and pronunciation.

In her use of speaking and listening strategies, Churchill also reported focusing on preparation including previewing and predicting content and vocabulary before lectures. Further, she reported rehearsing presentations and adjusting her speech according to her audience's reaction, celebrating her successes. Also, like Mulan, Churchill reported learning a great deal from classmates, instructors and experts in her field of study, inferring meaning or looking up words to support comprehension and

refocusing her concentration if need be. Thus, the aid of others to support skill development and the struggle to focus on speech were two themes for Churchill.

Bonnie also brought several strategies into her oral communication on campus before the start of this study, several around improving her skills and learning from others. One strategy that she used that was not as prevalent was her tendency to reflect on her language use after a presentation or class discussion, however, later Bonnie also noted that this reflection could become less of a tool and more of a detriment as sometimes it resulted in rumination and further language anxiety.

Like his fellow participants, Batman also used several speaking strategies around interactions with others on campus and pre-communicative tools. However, Batman also utilized strategies that supported the strength of his voice in class discussions like encouraging himself to speak and continuing to put his hand up in class. Finally, like Bonnie, Batman reported reflecting on his language use in class, but found this a useful tool for improvement.

Unlike other participants here, Jane did not tend to engage in pre-communicative strategies, instead focusing more on those she used in situ. She relied on the speaker's voice and body language for comprehension, bringing her mind back to focus on other's words and reflecting later what was said and how she could improve. Like others here, Jane reported needing to focus deeply in class.

Notetaking was also a major tool that Jane relied on, using her iPad to write and draw, incorporating language and images in her recording and response to lectures. Additionally, Jane found success around comprehension through discussion of content

with classmates after lectures. Thus like many other participants here, Jane was also aided in her interactions with others.

6.4 Strategy Use during Study and Impacts

The final objective was to assess impacts of ASESS strategy use on LA, which is summarized here through presentation of the strategies that participants utilized during the study and their effects.

For Mulan, the effects of ASESS strategy use demonstrated an improvement in her experiences with language anxiety. The strategies that Mulan chose to use centered on scaffolding oral communication through reading and writing. Specifically, the first strategy that Mulan engaging during her experiential learning cycles was that of reading texts aloud for pronunciation and lexis. The second was reading around one specific topic for vocabulary, and the third was practicing this vocabulary in conversation. The results on Mulan's second PSCAS indicated that her language anxiety decreased, regardless of whether she had prepared for communication or not. Mulan's results also showed that her inclination to compare herself to her classmates also declined, along with her thoughts of judgement by others. Finally, when asked whether the research process was helpful to her or not, Mulan reported valuing the ability to speak with someone about her experiences and reflections.

Churchill explored the utility of paraphrasing through her experiential learning cycles, a modification of one of the ASESS strategies, discussing lectures after class. The first time Churchill engaged in this strategy; she chose to confirm the parameters of a new assessment that her professor was introducing. The second time she uses paraphrasing to expand and deepen her understanding of a specific topic. The third was classmate describing a term and asking her classmate if they remembered the vocabulary

indicated. Churchill found these variations of this strategy useful, allowing her the time for understanding and communicating of specific thoughts on a given topic.

Like Mulan, Churchill's results on the PSCAS indicated a vast reduction in her experiences of language anxiety. With her new tools, Churchill's language anxiety decreased significantly including feelings of panic with or without preparation and comparison of her skills with those of her classmates and feelings of judgement. Indeed, her test results also indicated that her confidence had risen and that her enjoyment of communication in English had as well. Finally, when asked specifically if she had found the experiential learning cycles useful, she said that the research process supported her in her self-reflection.

Bonnie demonstrated improvement in her scores on the PSCAS. In her choice of strategies, she chose those that would help her move away from what she perceived as her tendencies to ruminate. The first was to make a goal of speaking up in class, and then celebrating her success. She then moved away from the strategies outlined by the ASESS, choosing instead not to specifically preplan her communication, noting her tendency towards "overthinking", but instead practicing in a small group first to help her formulate her ideas. With Covid, Bonnie reverted to strategies she used previously, choosing to practice her pronunciation and lexis though reading texts aloud, reading being a favorite skill, and thus allowing herself to return to the familiarity of focusing on accuracy of her language use over and above the fluency. However, with her last interview, Bonnie reported using another ASESS strategy, rewarding herself for speaking with her house mates. Thus, Bonnie moved from regular reflection on her

mistakes, to much more of a positive empowerment of her experiences with communication.

Like Mulan and Churchill, Bonnie's results on her exit PSCAS suggested a reduction in her feelings of panic with and without pre-communication preparation. Her results also suggested an increase in confidence around communication and resulting recall of content and vocabulary. Bonnie's somatic manifestations of language anxiety also decreased including physical tenseness, rigidity, trembling and pounding of heart.

Batman's PSCAS revealed a same to slightly negative change from beginning of study to end. Though he reported feeling strong about his language skills initially, Batman came into this study wanting to make connections. He chose to try interacting with classmates and instructors in the class as his first modified ASESS strategy and chose to try specifically sharing notes and summaries after class. However, with Covid, his motivation waned, and we moved to sharing aspects of culture between the two of us, focusing on music as our common medium and communicating with some depth.

With his final PSCAS, Batman reported holding the same to slightly more levels of language anxiety. Indeed, he indicated both significant positive change, feeling less fear and more sure of himself, but also feeling more forgetfulness as a result of experiencing more language anxiety and less enjoyment when speaking English. However, Batman's increasing anxiety and lack of motivation had less to do with the study than the greater context that we were conducting our action cycles in, one highly affected by Covid. And while he was finding his studies, and the strategies of this research, hard to engage with, he was keen to meet for interviews and connect academically here.

Jane's second responses to the PSCAS reflected vastly negative changes in her level of language anxiety. She came into this study with confidence in her skills that she had built with the experience and support of connections she made with classmates, and one semester of a public speaking class. She also came to our research with strong notetaking skills, and her first ASESS strategy was to share these notes and discuss lectures with classmates – a tool she had used successfully in the past. However, with Covid and the move to online studies, this was more difficult, and though she tried to share notes with an instructor, at the end of our interview cycles, her attempts at this had been unsuccessful. Other ASESS strategies she did use successfully included writing her response to a discussion in preparation for sharing, and actively listening to classmates, taking time to consider their comments.

While Jane experienced a reduction in panic when speaking English without preparation as reported on her final PSCAS, her anxiety around speaking prepared English increased as did that around waiting to speak. She also experienced a rise in the sense that her language skills were being judged and physical effects like the pounding of her heart. Finally, she reported experiencing a reduction in her understanding of the criteria around spoken assessment.

Again, strategy use seemed to have little correlation with Jane's increase in language anxiety. It is true that she had regularly engaged in reviewing lectures with classmates in the past as was unable to do this with Covid, however Jane reported missing the connection she shared with a classmate who dropped a class, not for their study sessions, but for their camaraderie. Additionally, the move online was a very different academic context for Jane, one that did not support her learning style.

6.5 Limitations

6.5.1 COVID-19

There is little doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the data collected here. Indeed, data collection moved from face-to-face to online which made scheduling somewhat easier, but connection with participants somewhat more difficult. What was going on in the background could sometimes take away from our discussion with noise or interruptions for example. And while this was a minor issue, participants moving to online classes was a major disruption for some as the pedagogy employed changed drastically, and the connection with classmates that students could make online was greatly reduced. Additionally, the pandemic affected participant language anxiety as their general anxiety went up with the fear of the disease and the disconnection with classmates' family and friends. It is possible, therefore, that some of the data was so affected as to be unreliable. However, the inclusion of this factor in the research discussion provided mitigates some of the effects. Certainly, the ecology of student experience becomes a clear variable with these drastic changes in context.

Additionally, encouraging participants to stick strictly to the research design was difficult as photos of the academic context were more difficult online. I was also inclined to support participants in steering the study to suit their needs, especially given the difficult context in which we were working. However, despite these issues, the data and corresponding analysis here does provide a window into strategy use and its utility as well as several other factors that affect language anxiety, particularly culture and ecology.

6.5.2 Researcher Bias

It is significant to note that my perspective on the issues presented here is biased. I have been in international education for more than 20 years and as an instructor I often look for things that I can teach to support my students. Strategy use is clearly something tangible that I brought to this research. something applied that is designed to scaffold voices in class. However, I do think that including exploration around the situational nature of language anxiety provides a broader discussion about supporting students. Additionally, the researcher who provided the ASESS used these strategies in her own studies – thus the student perception was included in the research design.

My bias is also affected by my native English speaker identity. This is another reason why I supported participants in their flexibility with research design here and have repeatedly provided opportunities for feedback on analysis and conclusions. It should also be noted that many of the studies that I used in my literature review and research methods are from international perspectives, an aspect of this study that I thought in that my goal was to support a range of voices both in our class settings and in academic discussion in general.

Finally, my bias is strongly influenced by my background in social justice. My Master's research found that international student reading skills were stronger in middle class individuals. I have taken course work in social justice theory and sat on several boards and committees supporting issues in this area. The data here pointed to an issue around power between teacher and student and between native English speakers and those who speak English as an additional language. However, I do think that better methods could be designed to explore this issue further.

6.6 Contributions to knowledge and practice

Reflecting on this work, I see how it has affected me both widely and deeply. Recently, I was in an intercultural communications class, and the scenario we were analysing was one of a student communicating the judgement they felt working in groups in academic classes – that all international students had nothing to say and that their language skills were poor so they were a detriment to team based tasks. This thinking is not uncommon on my campus and others. And it gets to the very heart of the silencing of ESL speakers as they are "saving face in the face of essentialism" (Holliday, 2018).

While this research is meant to be read as an exploratory study of the language anxiety students experience in the academic context that we share, there are several contributions to knowledge that can be further examined and certainly I will alter my practice resulting from the findings in this research.

Extending MacIntyre's (1997) Willingness to Communicate (WTC) model is particularly significant as the lack of which results in the silencing of students. Ryan (2011) writes that there has been a phase of ideology around 'fixing' students and then 'fixing' teachers, aspects of which we can see in the boxes in MacIntyre's work, and has now moved to a 'fixing' of curriculum. Ryan further writes that this 'deficit' mentality around students with an ESL identity is out of date and lacking in innovation and sustainability. Ryan also writes that aspects of context are also missed, and the cross cultural, academic nature of the institution in this study is an example that would not be represented in MacIntyre's work.

Or perhaps it is the why of WTC rather than the how that we need to focus on. Ryan recommends a shift in ideology that rewrites the definition of international students as a minority to one of the significant role they can play in communities of practice. I would suggest that this idea of community is one that the research presented here supports. I suggest that context that promotes community across interests and perspectives of individuals might scaffold voices at the institution studied. To me the value of this includes supporting students and teachers by broadening their perspectives, but the ripples of this could extend to these CoPs, affecting communities immersed in fields like business and science in diverse and meaningful ways. All this from a shift from culture to individual, as well as individual to community.

Another contribution to knowledge and practice includes appreciating the value of applications of the theory of small cultures to promoting community and connection, ultimately scaffolding students voicing their perspectives in the context represented in this study. Of utmost significance to this study was the damage that that Western definitions of culture like those provided by Hofstede (1991) are causing (Ryan, 2011). This understanding of culture emphasizes static differences and essentialism (Clark and Gieve, 2006). Indeed, Holliday (2018) suggests that these definitions create "essentialist cultural blocks" which leads to discourse comparing one block to another without noticing "common threads" between individuals, threads that foster a sense connection. Ryan (2011) also suggests that this essentialism also ignores the inevitability of change and diversity within culture, variations that can also foster a sense of similarities between individuals. Indeed, respect for cultural change is scaffolded by the very act of developing a new identity in response to context and experience (Clark and Gieve, 2006) – a lesson

that individuals from the whole community or institution can engage in, beneficial in that this creation is empowering in its agency. Holliday (2018) reminds us that making personal space counteracts prejudice and indeed the strategy of self-othering in the face of essentialism, and Clark and Gieve 2006 write of this 3rd space between culture of home and abroad potentially effects WTC and can also foster understanding for all members of the community, changing us all.

However, it is true that this move from essentialism can foster a struggle between what Holliday (2018) calls "cultural disbelief" and "cultural belief" or prejudice and understanding. However, I am reminded of Agar's (1994) thoughts on such struggles as rich points and their ability to provide the space for communication and insight. That is not to say that these instances are not uncomfortable. I certainly experienced moments of discomfort during this research, instances when I was corrected for my initial constructs of individualism versus collectivism, or instances when I knew so little of a culture's political history that I struggled to make sense of the interview. But further questions and conversations taught be a great deal, changing my perceptions in meaningful ways. In fact, Holliday further suggests recognizing the effects of our own personal life experiences, and I would suggest that this act scaffolds both awareness and connection.

A third contribution promotes valuing the perspectives of all individuals, which might sound like the 1990s where social globalization was valued over economic internationalization (Knight, 2003). Indeed, Ryan's (2011) promotion of culturally inclusive teaching and learning in the classroom might sound a little like old wine in new bottles though it resonates with me as he suggests evolving from problematizing international inclusion to valuing it as a means to new knowledge. Ryan further suggests

a shift towards transcultural curriculum, pedagogy, and epistemology; however, this promotion of big block culture fails in the face of the shift towards small culture.

Instead, I want to promote a different shift, highlighting the combination of the individual combined with situational basis for language anxiety, here represented in the context of academic English – often the classroom. Clark and Gieve (2006) highlight the effects that specific cultures have on students who speak English for Academic Purposes:

> The transition from the relatively secure dedicated EAP setting to full integration to the undergraduate system may well force thelearner to question their own position. Equally, a student with good schematic knowledge in a particular subject, gained in their home institution, may be able to mobilise this knowledge to forge a new identity in one class, whereas a lack of knowledge, or motivation in a another subject may contribute to an entirely different identity. Thus identities are not homogeneous across different class-rooms (p. 66)

These researchers further find that the degree of silence varies across contexts and individuals with their ability to negotiate 'insider status' (p. 65), an identity that promotes full participation in a given community. Here, in this study it is a result of language anxiety and a tool of agency for protecting identity, or saving face in the face of essentializing (Holliday, 2018). Thus, like personal experiences affecting individual culture, specific contexts can also have significant effect. I see this with Jane when she switches from face-to-face to online studies, but not Churchill who is already familiar with online studies. It is also in the levels of support that different instructors and classmates offer as we see in Bonnie's face to face classes, or the lack of which Batman seems to find in his classes.

While these aspects may hold true, this research also fits with what Clark and Gieve (2006) suggest that each classroom is its own small culture that is co-constructed with the instructor and learners and that this context affects the identities of the individuals within. Indeed, new identities are available for students in academic settings, including but not limited to friend; student and classmate in a specific field; house or dorm mate; advisee or tutee; research participant; graduate; and member of community of practice. If these identities are the focus, a greater sense of connection can prevail. When discourse community (Morita, 2004) is the focus of identity in the classroom, I suggest it promotes the valuing of individual perspective, and creates a context in which all voices are valued, and that the transformation of all is the goal.

Finally, all of these implications have significant effect on me and my work. I learned a great deal over the course of this research, including affecting my understandings of culture and revealing ways to improve my interactions and teaching in the academic classroom.

I went into this work with the goal of supporting international, ESL voices on campus. Initially, I had the notion that I would include two or more student participants from each of six or seven of the major cultures represented in this academic context. And while a range of cultures is represented here, it is not what I originally intended, and I am glad for it. I believe that seeing past that cultural grouping allowed me to see past the essentialist notions that Western definitions of culture promote. Indeed, the very grouping of students into international ESL and domestic native English speakers is an essentialist grouping itself. Holliday (2018) defines culturalism as “any thought or act which reduces

people to something less than what they are on the basis of an essentialist view of culture" (148).

While my intentions were good, I have been essentializing students, and the definitions I have been using are ones of deficit. That is not to say that my years in International Education have not been characterized by finding ways to scaffold student learning and building classroom community. And I have certainly been treating learners as individuals in my classes. However, on occasion those classes still had students who demonstrated their discomfort through their own silence – a tool they may have employed as a face saving measure in the face of my essentialism. And here, the research design that I had in mind at the start of this work, and some of the rich points that I experienced in the interviews, show me that I still have work to do in this area. I too need to consciously move beyond Holliday's culture blocks and continue to find the threads that link me with the individuals around me, recognizing that our cultures shape us, but they are dynamic; we are also greatly affected by our experiences and the situations that we find ourselves in.

Based on all of this, I am shifting my teaching pedagogy to one that is based in communities of practice (CoP) and in universal design for learning (UDL). While I do not have space to fully examine each of these pedagogical methods, providing definitions and briefly rationalizing their use is both possible and beneficial. Lave and Wenger (2004) write about the value of communities of practice whereby with the support of the group, the focus is on a movement towards full participation in a field's communal activities. And according to Novak and Tucker (2021), the goal of universal design is promoting ownership and empowerment of learning towards expert practice. I now believe that

creating community in class based on CoP highlights the threads of similarities that students share, and that UDL provides the tools, the tasks and the flexibility for learners to explore their interests within these communities, and support themselves in their growth. My colleagues and I are currently doing the curriculum work to bridge these two approaches, curriculum that involves a wide range of perspectives and voices. We are aiming for what the student participants voiced in this study: the need for connection and student empowerment.

Appendix A

Preliminary 25-Item Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS)

(5) Strongly Agree

(4) Agree

(3) Undecided

(2) Disagree

(1) Strongly Disagree

1 I never feel quite sure of myself while I am speaking English.

2 I tremble when knowing that I am going to be called on to speak English.

3 I start to panic when I have to speak English without a preparation in advance.

4 In a speaking class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.

5 I feel confident while I am speaking English.

6 I feel very self-conscious while speaking English in front of other students.

7 I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English.

8 I am afraid that other students will laugh at me while I am speaking English.

9 I get so nervous when the language teacher asks me to speak English which I have prepared in advance.

10 I have no fear of speaking English.

11 I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on.

12 I feel relaxed while speaking English.

13 It embarrasses me to volunteer to go out first to speak English.

14 I face the prospect of speaking English with confidence.

15 I enjoy the experience of speaking English.

16 The more speaking tests I have, the more confused I get.

17 Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while speaking English.

18 I feel anxious while waiting to speak English.

19 I want to speak less because I feel shy while speaking English.

20 I dislike using my voice and body expressively while speaking English.

21 I have trouble to coordinate my movements while speaking English.

22 I find it hard to look the audience in my eyes while speaking English.

23 Even if I am very well-prepared I feel anxious about speaking English.

24 I keep thinking that other students are better at speaking English than I.

25 I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.

Appendix B

Modified Academic Spoken English Strategies Survey (ASESS)

For the following scales, 1=never or almost never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always or almost always, please circle one.

Academic English Listening

1) I try to relax before the class (presentation) so I can concentrate later.

2) I arrive early for classes or presentations and choose to sit where I can hear the speaker (instructor) better.

3) I check the meaning of key words or concepts before a lecture.

4) I decide in advance what my listening purpose is and I listen with that purpose in mind.

5) Before I listen, I try to predict what new things I might learn, based on what I already know about the topic.

6) I infer (guess) the meaning of unknown words from the contexts of the speech.

7) If I don't understand a word or something else that I hear, I use my laptop to check about it online.

8) As I listen, I make predictions about what the speaker will talk about next.

9) While I listen, I periodically check whether the information is making sense to me.

10) As I listen, I will adjust my understanding if I realize my understanding is not correct.

11) I pay attention to the speaker's facial expressions, gestures and voice changes.

12) I encourage myself if I feel frustrated because I cannot understand certain parts of the speech.

13) When my mind wanders, I try to get back on track and recover my concentration.

14) When I have difficulty understanding what I hear, I keep concentrating without giving up.

15) If I hear a word that I do not know, I quickly judge whether I need to check its meaning, without losing track of the speech.

16) I identify what I don't understand about the speech, and ask a precise question to solve the problem.

17) I summarize (in my head or in writing) important information that I have heard.

18) After the lecture (presentation), I reflect on how much I understood and how I can improve next time.

19) After a lecture or presentation, I discuss with the lecturer (presenter) or somebody else.

Academic English Speaking

1) I pay attention to my pronunciation and try to sound as clear as possible.

2) I read aloud materials in my field to practice speaking in academic English.

3) I deliberately try to expand my academic vocabulary in English.

4) I pay attention to how people in my field explain complicated ideas in English.

5) I seek opportunities to interact with classmates, professors and others in academic settings (classes, conferences, group activities…)

6) I try to learn from good presenters or classmates who speak clearly and convincingly.

7) I prepare key points to share in class.

8) Before I speak in class, I think about how to make my message clear and precise.

9) I volunteer to answer teacher’s questions in class.

10) During class discussions, I listen attentively to what my classmates say in order to join the conversation.

11) I build upon what my classmates have said and join in the class discussion.

12) When I speak, I put the stress on important words (speak them louder or for longer time).

13) I pay attention to how people agree and disagree with each other in classes and at academic conferences.

14) If I raise my hand and fail to get the chance to speak in class, I will raise it again without giving up.

15) Although I know my English is not perfect, I encourage myself to speak up when I have something meaningful to say.

16) I seek opportunities to present (such as at conferences).

17) I rehearse before presenting in class or at a conference.

18) I pay attention to my audience's reactions while I speak and adjust accordingly.

19) After a class (or a presentation), I reflect on how I participated in the class or how I presented, and think about how to improve.

20) If I feel satisfied with my class participation or presentation, I will praise or reward myself.

Schroeder, R. M. (2016). The Development and Validation of the" Academic Spoken English Strategies Survey (ASESS)" for Non-Native English Speaking Graduate Students. *Journal of International Students*, *6*(2), 394-414.

Appendix C

Ethics Approval ·

2019-080-VIUS-JOHNSON

Research Ethics Board

Mon 11/4, 2:17 PM

Dawn Johnson; josemanuel.reisjorge@online.liverpool.ac.uk ·

Dear Dawn Johnson,

The [nstitution's]Research Ethics Board (REB) has reviewed your revised Application for Ethical Review for the project entitled "We all shine on: Supporting international student voices at a small teaching university in Western Canada."

Thank you for your attention to the comments made by REB reviewers. I am pleased to relay that your application is approved as resubmitted.

For your records:

REB Protocol ID: 2019-080-VIUS-JOHNSON

Date of Approval:

November 4, 2019

Expiry Date: November 3, 2020

We wish you the very best with your research!

Sincerely,

p.p. VIU Research Ethics Board

Marina La Salle, Chair

VIU Research Ethics Board

Appendix D

Ethics Amendment Approval

2019-080-VIUS-JOHNSON

Research Ethics Board

Reply|

Today, 5:46 PM

Dear Dawn Johnson,

The [institution's] Research Ethics Board (REB) has reviewed your revised Application for Amendment for the project entitled "*We all shine on: Supporting international student voices at a small teaching university in Western Canada.*"

I am pleased to relay that your application is approved as submitted.

For your records:

REB Protocol ID: 2019-080-VIUS-JOHNSON

Date of Approval: March 25, 2020

Expiry Date: November 3, 2020

We wish you the very best with your research!

Sincerely,

p.p. VIU Research Ethics Board

Marina La Salle, Chair

VIU Research Ethics Board

Appendix E

University of Liverpool Ethics Approval

Dear Catherine Dawn Johnson	
I am pleased to inform you that the EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.	
Sub-Committee:	EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC)
Review type:	Expedited
PI:	
School:	HLC
Title:	We all shine on: Supporting international student voices at a small teaching university in Western Canada.”
First Reviewer:	Dr. Kathleen Kelm

Second Reviewer:		Dr. Dimitrios Vlachopoulos		
Other members of the Committee		Dr. Crosta Lucilla, Dr. Yota Dimitriadi, Dr. Mike Mimirinis, Dr. Iona Burnel		
Date of Approval:		17/01/2020		
The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:				
Conditions				
1	Mandatory	M: All serious adverse events must be reported to the VPREC within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the EdD Thesis Primary Supervisor.		

This approval applies for the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Sub-Committee should be notified. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Sub-Committee by following the Notice of Amendment procedure outlined at http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/researchethics/notice%20of%20amendment.doc.

Where your research includes elements that are not conducted in the UK, approval to proceed is further conditional upon a thorough risk assessment of the site and local permission to carry out the research, including, where such a body exists, local research ethics committee approval. No documentation of local permission is required (a) if the researcher will simply be asking organizations to distribute research invitations on the researcher's behalf, or (b) if the researcher is using only public means to identify/contact participants. When medical, educational, or business records are analysed or used to identify potential research participants, the site needs to explicitly approve access to data for research purposes (even if the researcher normally has access to that data to perform his or her job).

Please note that the approval to proceed depends also on research proposal approval.

Kind regards,

Lucilla Crosta

Chair, EdD. VPREC

Appendix F

University of Liverpool Ethics Amendment Approval

Centre for Higher Education Studies

Doctor of Education (EdD) in Higher Education Programme

Candidate: Catherine Dawn Johnson

Student Number: 201151540/H00043246

Provisional Title of Thesis: We all shine on: Supporting international student voices at a small teaching university in Western Canada

Primary Supervisor: Jose Reis Jorge

Secondary Supervisor: Martin Gough

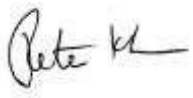
Dear Dawn

I am pleased to inform you that the amendment to your prior approved ethics application for your thesis research on the EdD in Higher Education now been approved. You should include this letter as an appendix to your final thesis to be submitted. It is important to point out that the process undertaken to grant approval is a governance process, ensuring that you are aware of aspects of your research study which have, or may have, ethical importance. In other words, it is expected yet that you proceed ethically in all your research actions. You must raise such incidents and circumstances immediately with your Primary Supervisor and together report back details as soon as possible to the EdD programme administrator docedd@liverpool.ac.uk, and marked for the attention of the EdD Ethics Review Coordinator.

We recognise that research does not necessarily follow exactly any plan made in advance. If you find that you need to make a further amendment to your research plan, you should notify the programme. Where this is Major, and your research requires actions such as further data collection not envisaged at the time of applying for ethical approval, there is another form to submit in the VLE. Your Review Panel will need to approve the amendments before you can

proceed again. More detail on the above procedures is in the EdD research ethics approval applications guidance document.

Please note that this confirmation is a reissuing of an earlier approval notification that was first provided by the University of Liverpool in Spring 2020. Yours sincerely



Dr Peter Kahn

Director of Studies, Doctor of Education (EdD)

12th January 2022

Appendix G

Participant Information Sheet

Title of project: We all shine on: Supporting international student voices at a small teaching university in Western Canada – An arts-based action research study

Investigator: C. Dawn Johnson

January 31st 2020

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in research I am conducting as part of my Doctorate of Education at the University of Liverpool.

Recently there has been a wave of international students at universities in Canada, many of them English as a second language speakers. Research shows that ESL students often feel situational anxiety when speaking with native English language speakers in academic settings. Although there is a lot of information on the anxiety students feel in the second language class, there is very little research on supporting English as a second language students in the communication of the academic classroom. To mitigate this problem, I plan to employ arts-based action research to explore a range of strategies to support oral communication at our school. Additionally, my goal is to collaborate with international student participants at this institution so that this research is a platform for their voices and perspectives to be heard.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

Why have I been chosen to take part? Do I have to participate?

You have been chosen for this study because you speak English as a second language and have expressed feelings of language anxiety when speaking English at VIU. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without explanation and without incurring any disadvantage.

What are you asking me to do?

I am asking you to engage in a minimum of 3 interviews to a maximum 5 depending on your needs and your schedule. Each interview is 30 minutes long and takes place in a mutually agreed upon location. The purpose of the interviews is to discuss your experiences communicating in the classroom and your use of the communication strategies.

Action research involves solving a problem using action, research and reflection. Specifically, I am inviting you to engage in the following activities:

Interview 1 Start: Before using strategies, participants use the Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) to assess their level of language anxiety.

I. Initial reflection

8) Participants take photos based on their experiences of oral communication in the academic classroom.

9) Participants reflect on their art in written form.

Interview 2

II. Discussion and Planning

10) Participants share their reflections in an interview with the researcher.

11) Participants choose one or more strategies to put into use.

III. Action and Observation

12) Participants try strategy in their classes; Participants create art reflecting these experiences and further reflect in writing

Interview 3 Finish:

13) Participants share their reflections in an interview with the researcher.

At final interview, participants use the Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) to assess the level of language anxiety.

Can I review interview transcriptions and research analysis?

With your permission, I will record the interview and use your direct quotations in my research analysis and writing, being sure to maintain your confidentiality. Additionally, if you permit the use of your photos and your written reflection in this research, they will remain anonymous in any presentations, reports and publications.

Shortly after each interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and so that you may add or clarify any points that you wish. I also plan to send you my work at the analysis and writing phases so that you can give feedback at those stages as well.

How will you protect my identity and ensure confidentiality?

All information you provide is considered completely confidential - your name will not be written on, or in any way associated with data collected in this study as I will use codes and pseudonyms to protect your identity. I have purchased a computer specifically for this research which is password protected. All information will be treated as confidential – indeed I am planning to use sync.com to store and help code

information. This program stores encrypted data on Canadian servers. I will put backup files on a USB which I will store in a locked file cabinet. Data and recordings used in this evaluation study will be retained for a period of seven years and then destroyed. Paper will be shredded and USBs will be crushed.

What are the risks? What are the benefits?

Because of this confidentiality and the careful consideration of ethics, I have identified no foreseen risks involved in this research. I believe that benefits will include an increased confidence when communicating orally in English in the classroom and on campus. Please be aware that there is no compensation provided to research participants.

What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting me at catherinedawn.johnson@online.liverpool.ac.uk or my supervisor Dr. Josè Reis Jorge at josereisjorge@online.liverpool.ac.uk and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact LOREC at liverpoolethics@liverpool-online.com When contacting LOREC, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

This study has also been reviewed and received ethics approval through the [The [The institution's] Research Ethics Committee. If you have questions for the committee, please contact Marina La Salle at: reb@viu.ca

For all other questions, and to participate in this study, please contact me at: catherinedawn.johnson@online.liverpool.ac.uk

Yours sincerely and thank you,

C. Dawn Johnson

Appendix H

Amended Participant Information Sheet

Title of project: We all shine on: Supporting international student voices at a small teaching university in Western Canada – An arts-based action research study

Investigator: C. Dawn Johnson

January 31st 2020

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in research I am conducting as part of my Doctorate of Education at the University of Liverpool.

Recently there has been a wave of international students at universities in Canada, many of them English as a second language speakers. Research shows that ESL students often feel situational anxiety when speaking with native English language speakers in academic settings. Although there is a lot of information on the anxiety students feel in the second language class, there is very little research on supporting English as a second language students in the communication of the academic classroom. To mitigate this problem, I plan to employ arts-based action research to explore a range of strategies to support oral communication at our school. Additionally, my goal is to

collaborate with international student participants at this institution so that this research is a platform for their voices and perspectives to be heard.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

Why have I been chosen to take part? Do I have to participate?

You have been chosen for this study because you speak English as a second language and have expressed feelings of language anxiety when speaking English at VIU. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without explanation and without incurring any disadvantage.

What are you asking me to do?

I am asking you to engage in a minimum of 3 interviews to a maximum 5 depending on your needs and your schedule. Each interview is 30 minutes long and takes place in a mutually agreed upon location. The purpose of the interviews is to discuss your experiences communicating in the classroom and your use of the communication strategies.

Action research involves solving a problem using action, research and reflection. Specifically, I am inviting you to engage in the following activities:

Interview 1 Start: Before using strategies, participants use the Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) to assess their level of language anxiety.

I. Initial reflection

1) Participants take photos based on their experiences of oral communication in the academic classroom.

2) Participants reflect on their art in written form.

Interview 2

II. Discussion and Planning

3) Participants share their reflections in an interview with the researcher.

4) Participants choose one or more strategies to put into use.

III. Action and Observation

5) Participants try strategy in their classes; Participants create art reflecting these experiences and further reflect in writing

Interview 3 Finish:

6) Participants share their reflections in an interview with the researcher.

At final interview, participants use the Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) to assess the level of language anxiety.

Can I review interview transcriptions and research analysis?

With your permission, I will record the interview and use your direct quotations in my research analysis and writing, being sure to maintain your confidentiality.

Additionally, if you permit the use of your photos and your written reflection in this research, they will remain anonymous in any presentations, reports and publications.

Shortly after each interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and so that you may add or clarify any points that you wish. I also plan to send you my work at the analysis and writing phases so that you can give feedback at those stages as well.

How will you protect my identity and ensure confidentiality?

All information you provide is considered completely confidential - your name will not be written on, or in any way associated with data collected in this study as I will use codes and pseudonyms to protect your identity. I have purchased a computer specifically for this research which is password protected. All information will be treated as confidential – indeed I am planning to use sync.com to store and help code information. This program stores encrypted data on Canadian servers. I will put backup files on a USB which I will store in a locked file cabinet. Data and recordings used in this evaluation study will be retained for a period of seven years and then destroyed. Paper will be shredded and USBs will be crushed.

What are the risks? What are the benefits?

Because of this confidentiality and the careful consideration of ethics, I have identified no foreseen risks involved in this research. I believe that benefits will include an increased confidence when communicating orally in English in the classroom and on campus. Please be aware that there is no compensation provided to research participants.

What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting me at catherinedawn.johnson@online.liverpool.ac.uk or my supervisor Dr. Josè Reis Jorge at josereisjorge@online.liverpool.ac.uk and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact LOREC at liverpoolethics@liverpool-online.com When contacting LOREC, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

This study has also been reviewed and received ethics approval through the [institution's] Research Ethics Committee. If you have questions for the committee, please contact Marina La Salle at: reb@viu.ca

For all other questions, and to participate in this study, please contact me at: catherinedawn.johnson@online.liverpool.ac.uk

Yours sincerely and thank you,

C. Dawn Johnson

Appendix I

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: We all shine on: Supporting international student voices at a small teaching university in Western Canada

Research participant(s):

	Please initial box
1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated January 31st, 2020 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time up to publication without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.	☐

3. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish. ☐

4. I understand that confidentiality will be maintained, and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications. ☐

5. I understand and agree that my participation will be audio recorded /video recorded and I am aware of and consent to your use of these recordings for the collection of data arising from one-on-one interviews. ☐

6. I understand and agree that my responses should protect the privacy and of any third parties. Thus any photographs that I take or any oral or written statements I make will not contain means of identifying other individuals or even this institution or community. ☐

7. I understand that I must not take part if I plan to take the TESL certificate at [this institution], the course which this researcher currently teaches. ☐

8. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for the researcher to have access to my alpha-numerically coded responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. ☐

I agree to take part in the above study.

Participant Name	Date	Signature
Researcher	Date	Signature

Principal Investigator:

Name C. Dawn Johnson

Work Address […]

Email catherinedawn.Johnson@liverpool.ac.uk

[Version 3.0 – January 15th, 2020]

Appendix J

AMENDED PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: We all shine on: Supporting international student voices at a small teaching university in Western Canada

Research participant(s):

	Please initial box
1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated March 25th, 2020 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time up to publication without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.	☐

3. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish. ☐

4. I understand that confidentiality will be maintained, and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications. ☐

5. I understand and agree that my participation will be audio recorded /video recorded using a tablet device and an SD card for storage. I am aware of and consent to your use of these recordings for the collection of data arising from one-on-one interviews conducted online. ☐

6. I understand and agree that my responses should protect the privacy and of any third parties. Thus any photographs that I take or any oral or written statements I make will not contain means of identifying other individuals or even this institution or community. ☐

7. I understand that I must not take part if I plan to take the TESL certificate at [this institution], the course which this researcher currently teaches. ☐

8. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for the researcher to have access to my alpha-numerically coded responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. ☐

9. I understand that my identity will not be available through any of the programs used for data collection, storage or analysis as the researcher and I will avoid using identifiable information such as course names, names of individuals or images of individuals on Zoom.us. See https://eclipse.zoom.us/privacy for more information. ☐

I agree to take part in the above study.

Participant Name	Date	Signature
Researcher	Date	Signature

Principal Investigator:

Name C. Dawn Johnson

Work Address […]

Email catherinedawn.Johnson@liverpool.ac.uk

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