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Senior Chinese English as a second language (ESL) learners on their learning
expectations and needs in a communicative-approach-based program in Windsor: A case
study

By

Man Xu

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

through the Faculty of Education

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Master of Education

at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2018

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Senior Chinese English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners on their Learning
Expectations and Needs in a Communicative-Approach-Based Program in Windsor: A

Case Study

by

Man Xu

APPROVED BY:

K. Quinsey

Department of English Language, Literature & Creative Writing

C. Smith

Faculty of Education

T. Sefton, Advisor

Faculty of Education

September 17, 2018

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

This study probes into the learning milieu of a cohort of Chinese senior immigrants in order to inquire into their learning needs and expectations in a communicative-approach-based program. The participants, who acknowledged the importance of learning English as a second language (ESL), nevertheless expressed pessimism about their English learning outcomes. The elderly ESL students expect the curricula to adopt Chinese and English as classroom languages and present more senior life-related topics. A moderate learning pace integrated with recurrent learning cycles is considered appropriate for Chinese elderly ESL learners.

Key words: Learning needs, learning expectations, English as a second language (ESL), Chinese senior learners

DEDICATION

To the holy grace of God,

to my hubby,

to my parents,

to my advisor,

and to all people who supported me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Context of the Study

Canada has become a multicultural country with a swelling aging population in recent years. According to the Canada's 2016 Census, 7.5 million foreign-born people came to Canada through the immigration process, representing 21.9% of the national population (Statistics Canada, 2017b). From 2011 to 2016, the population of people aged over 65 years rose by 5.0% to 5,935,635, composing 16.9% of the national demographics. Furthermore, a large proportion of the growing population of older adults in Canada are immigrants. The population of immigrant seniors above 65 years old is 1,684,890, comprising 28.4% of all Canadians over 65 years of age (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

China is the third most popular birth country of recent immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2017b). An increasing number of Chinese immigrants choose to settle in Windsor, a city situated in southern-western Ontario. For decades Chinese immigrants have chosen to settle in Windsor and now the population has reached 3,800 (Statistics Canada, 2017b). In Windsor, 17.2% of the population is aged above 65 (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

As the global status of the English language is enhanced in every aspect of life, English has been the communication language for many parts of the world. In Canada, English and French are the official languages. Obviously, the ability to communicate in one of the official languages is considered as an important asset for immigrants. Good

language skills not only increase their participation in the Canadian society but also alleviate their uneasiness in the assimilation into the mainstream culture. Not including Quebec, 90.8% of Canadian immigrants use with English as their language of choice. Thus, a mastery of the English language comes top priority for the majority of the immigrant population.

Although Chinese immigrants rank the third most popular birth country of recent immigrants, the language abilities of Chinese immigrants are far from competent. According to IELTS Test Taker Performance 2016, the overall score for test participants, whose place of origin is China, reaches 5.73, and the overall score for test participants whose first language is Chinese reaches 5.8. These scores fall below the qualification for competent user (band of 6.0), as stated by Cambridge English Language Assessment (IELTS, 2016).

Due to low intercultural communication sensitivity, it is challenging for Chinese migrants to improve their language competence to a significant extent during their stay in Canada. Chen & Starosta (1997) define intercultural communication sensitivity as a vital ability to understand and respect cultural diversity so as to generate positive communicative interaction (as cited in Mao, 2015, p. 118). Guo & De Voretz (2006) summarize that language has virtually become a barrier for some Chinese migrants' immersion into the country, which is the result of their habits of acquiring common knowledge and information in Canadian society (as cited in Mao, 2015, p. 125). Many Chinese migrants prefer to seek social resources from Chinese channels even if the English ones are equally accessible (Mao, 2015, p. 125). However, Mao (2015)

discovered that older Chinese migrants feel more secure and comfortable to communicate in English (p. 127).

Mui, Kang, Kang, & Domanski (2007) state that lack of competence to communicate in English can cause a variety of psychological and social problems, such as separation from community and a sense of insecurity. They reveal that Chinese immigrant elders' underperformance of English yields unsatisfactory health conditions (p. 125). Mui, in 1996, found that Asian senior immigrants are reluctant to consult medical service (as cited in Mui, Kang, Kang, & Domanski, 2007, p. 119). Taylor et al. (2008) emphasize the sustainability of delivering health-related content within the language program for Chinese immigrants (p. 223). Several studies carried out between 1990 and 2004 found that women face particular challenges and that immigrant women's low language proficiency, together with their feelings of impotence, generate social isolation and a low sense of self-appreciation (Nimmon, 2007, p. 382). Language incompetence and unease with acculturation also impacted immigrant women's health conditions (Nimmon, 2007, p. 383).

Second language acquisition is a time-consuming process that involves linguistic attainment and cognitive transformation. In addition to the linguistic differences between English and Chinese, Chinese learners also tend to perceive their surroundings in a holistic and relational way, while English native speakers are inclined to organize the world analytically (Nisbet as cited in Ji et al., 2004, p. 57).

Hu (2002) argues that it is important for ESL teachers to reflect on their current teaching pedagogies, and how they might adapt their teaching approach to better serve Chinese learners (p. 103). He also suggests that:

...it is necessary to conduct an audit of the sociocultural factors at work in the language classroom and the philosophical assumptions underlying a pedagogical innovation of foreign origin so as to identify culturally proper points of interface. In the final analysis, it is important for educational policymakers and teachers to take a cautiously eclectic approach and make well-informed pedagogical choices that are grounded in an understanding of sociocultural influences. (p. 103)

General Statement of the Problem

Many immigrant-receiving countries, such as the United States and Australia, attach importance to English language proficiency in the process of migration. Portes and Rambaut maintain that nationally official languages “provide a counterweight to offset the centrifugal force of immigration and its accompanying diversification of cultures, religions, and ethnic backgrounds” (as cited in Hou & Beiser, 2006, p. 155).

The previous statistical data indicates that aging immigrants have been increasing by a significant amount over the previous decade. Despite the growth in population of Chinese seniors, inadequate studies have been conducted to inquire about their needs of life. The language curriculum that is specially designed for senior immigrants is far from effective. In 2003, Citizenship and Immigration Canada launched the Enhanced Language Training, an annual language service, in order to provide professional language guidance to immigrants and refugees in terms of employment. In 1992, Canada

Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) launched Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) whose aim is to contribute to the integration of immigrants. According to the 1994 report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), integration is explained as

Integration implies a political desire and commitment to encourage newcomers to adapt to Canadian society and to be received by Canadians and their institutions without requiring newcomers to abandon their cultures to conform to the values and practices of the dominant group, as long as the adherence to immigrants' cultures does not contravene Canadian laws. (as cited in Guo, 2013, p. 32)

Fraser (2009) points out that adult ESL policies and programs are severely mediocre in that although the adult ESL policies support the perspective of integration, these policies and programs are superficially implemented with insufficient understandings, or even biases of that notion (as cited in Guo, 2013, p. 24-32). Guo (2013) states that a number of adult ESL programs emphasize educating Canadian values and disregard the complicated cultural backgrounds of most new immigrants (p. 23).

A large number of the ESL (English as a Second Language) courses are currently available for either new immigrants or young adults; furthermore, many senior ESL programs turn out to be solely travelling activities with little focus on language training. When enrolled in language courses, mature students, compared with younger or newer students, are usually neglected by instructors during class interaction and remain relatively passive in classroom activities.

Chinese elderly immigrants are negatively impacted by their poor language proficiency as well as low intercultural communication sensitivity. This impact inevitably clashes with their on-going fulfillment in every aspect of life and, thus, deters them from actively integrating into the social mainstream.

In Canada, a remarkable number of immigrants attend ESL classes. In some of these classes students are able to meet with medical professionals when learning about health problems. In 2007-2008, Taylor and her co-researchers launched the ESL programs for Chinese immigrants in Vancouver to address divergent health issues such as Hepatitis B and physiology. These ESL programs were designed to improve Chinese immigrants' knowledge about Hepatitis B as well as physical exercises. Warm-up, vocabulary cards, information-gap, video, jigsaw, guided discussion, and problem/advice cards were implemented in the curriculum, which provides an example for the education of other health issues.

Samuel, in 1987, reveals that new settlers attend language classes on a part-time basis and, on average, are not likely to stay longer than half a year (as cited in Hou & Beiser, 2006, p. 158). Complaints focus on mixing students in the same classroom with divergent levels, implementing ineffective teaching pedagogies, adopting worthless learning materials and failing to offer smaller classes (Hou & Beiser, 2006, p. 158). Hou & Beiser (2006) maintain that the overall unsatisfactory effect of ESL programs in developing attendants' language competence is supposed to be analyzed with expertise and delicacy (p. 157). In addition, more micro-level components should be investigated such as scope of curricula, class schedule and student satisfaction (p. 158).

Although abundant literature on teachers' attitudes towards CLT exists, only a small number of researches explore learners' needs and expectations (Asassfeh, Khwaileh, Al-Shaboul, & Alshboul, 2012; Savignon, & Wang, 2003; Al-Jamal, 2007). Fewer studies choose to focus on senior learners' needs and expectations of their ESL learning. The inconsistency between teacher perspectives and learner expectations impacts learning outcomes and needs to be addressed. According to Savignon (1997), "if all the variables in second language (L2) acquisition could be identified and the many intricate patterns of interaction between learner and learning context described, ultimate success in learning to use a second language most likely would be seen to depend on the attitude of the learner" (as cited in Savignon & Wang, 2003, p. 225). The discrepancy between student expectations and classroom realities may be an indicator that instructors have failed in communicating learning goals to students or that they need to consider redesigning curriculum (as cited in Savignon & Wang, 2003, p. 239). ESL educational practitioners must recognize what content mature learners expect to learn, as well as their specific requirements in different stages of learning process.

Research Standpoint

Education has been my lifelong passion since the very moment I entered the university as a freshman. I have been working as a language tutor and participated in language service volunteering jobs since 2007. Providing language tutorials to people with different ages, jobs and backgrounds, compose my extensive work experiences.

Having accumulated a series of ESL teaching experience for five years, I was motivated to update my career repertoire with academic theoretical knowledge and access

to the latest development within this sphere; so in 2016 I entered the Master of Education Program.

In my view, the aim of education is to change this world into a better place to live. Education is the future for younger generation, and provides infinite possibilities for the senior. I believe, no matter how the world corrupts, education will be the light that dispel the darkness in human beings' hearts.

Bearing this motto in mind, I've been working towards becoming an international educator who distills relevant advancements from research and passionately recovers the mysteries from my personal teaching experiences in this field of study.

The idea of researching into this area occurred to me when I delivered ESL lessons to Chinese senior residents in Windsor. In the fall of 2017, I received an invitation from Windsor Chinese Senior Service Association (WCSSA) to deliver a senior ESL oral class on a weekly basis. There I met with a cohort of senior people, the majority of whom were of an age where they had fulfilled their contributions to society and retired from either career responsibilities or family burdens as well.

This group of people migrated to Canada to accompany their children who now live here. However, most of them were presently not able to communicate in English in their daily lives. They felt isolated and lonely from time to time. They get lost and discouraged in the process of seeking life-related possibilities. I want to work as a torch that lights the path before them.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the present situation of elderly Chinese migrants' ESL learning in a communicative-approach-based program in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, in order to find their learning expectations and needs. From the perspective of that exclusive community, this research hopes to provide insights for both language instructors and administrators into their future ESL curriculum design and policy-making.

Research Questions

This research paper will inquire into the issues of senior Chinese immigrants' ESL learning, in order to discover the fundamental needs and expectations towards future language curricula. I formulate these four sub-questions:

1. *How do elderly Chinese immigrants perceive their ESL learning in Canada?*

Specific questions will be asked in order to discern whether they think their learning experiences have contributed to their English or not. Participants will be invited to recall their past ESL learning experiences in Canada: when they attended ESL lessons, where the language program took place, how long the training continued.

2. *What are the learning needs of elderly Chinese immigrants in the pre-course, in-course and post-course phase of ESL learning?*

I intend to understand difficulties that impede senior Chinese residents from achieving satisfactory learning outcomes before learning, in the course of learning and after learning. These learning obstacles may relate to the following aspects: the proportion of native to non-native teachers, the use of first language (L1) and second language (L2) in the process of teaching, the balance of developing fluency and

accuracy, the percentage of form-focused instruction (FFI) and meaning-oriented instruction (MOI), the adoption of language learning strategy (LLS), learning anxiety and learner reticence, and their perspectives of group work as well as class size.

3. *How are the expectations towards ESL curriculum of elderly Chinese immigrants distinctive?*

In the light of the qualitative data collected from participants, I hope to discover their particular expectations towards ESL training, which may distinguish them from other ethnic groups, and give a detailed account of what they anticipated.

4. *What problems or misunderstandings may occur in the process of ESL learning for elderly Chinese immigrants?*

By launching the study, I expect to reveal possible pitfalls that lie in the course of their ESL learning. I possess curiosity about their misperceptions which may reflect their distinct thoughts about ESL learning acquisition.

These four questions will be asked in order to explore the current milieu of senior Chinese immigrants' ESL learning. I hope to understand how this particular group thinks about their ESL learning experiences in Canada, what they actually demand in divergent ESL learning phases, how their anticipations differ and what probable confusions they hold.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

English as a Second Language (ESL) for Adult Learners

A mastery of language accelerates economic growth, social assimilation and benefits immigrants' lives. A deficiency in the learners' understanding of the receiving country's official language creates a prominent challenge in the process of immigration. Language deficiency prevents new settlers from establishing networking connections, accessing financial benefits, and integrating into mainstream culture (Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003; Shields & Wheatley-Price, 2002; Ying & Miller, 1992, as cited in Hou & Beiser, 2006, p. 135). Chiswick and Miller, in 1995, and Dustmann and Fabbri, in 2003, believe that language inadequacy wastes the receiving country's immigrant human resources. As for Chinese senior immigrants, language underperformance dramatically impedes their process of assimilating into mainstream society. Furthermore, migrants suffering from language underperformance are probable to return to their country of birth (Espinosa & Massey, 1997, as cited in Hou & Beiser, 2006, p. 141).

Hou and Beiser (2006) uncover the drawbacks of existing research overdependence on national census results that merely manifest data on a macro perspective and do not present accurate immigrants' language level on their arrival (p. 136). Senior immigrants' ESL learning is affected by multiple variables, such as age, length of residence, language aptitude, personal investment, opportunities, and incentives. This section will take a closer look at some of these factors.

The overriding concern related to age in second language (L2) ultimate attainment is the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), i.e. a critical or a sensitive length of time for language obtainment, as cited in Munoz and Singleton (2011); which corresponds to the concept that the manifested area of late L2 acquisition differs from that of first language (L1). During this sensitive period, mature L2 learners' linguistic acquisition is automatically activated to the fullest, which is neurolinguistically correlated with the Broca's area in the brain (p. 21). In the process of language learning, L1 grammar is achieved innately and moderated by the human inborn mechanism that is only operated in the critical period, however, the L2 grammar, in the post-critical period, is obtained explicitly from instructional practices and shown in the left area, together with L1 and L2 lexicon (p. 21).

Any version of the CPH that claims that adults lose the ability to acquire syntax, for example, in the way children do, is forced to take the position that apparent L2 knowledge of target syntactic properties absent from or different in the L1 were learned explicitly and are therefore represented differently in the brain. (Rothman, as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 6)

Researchers, who favour Chomsky's Universal Grammar (UG) theory, explain the essential divergence between young L2 learners and mature L2 learners in terms of the biological accessibility where they obtain inborn linguistic acquisition mechanism (Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 6). Chomsky asserts that, UG is innately responsible for language acquisition and that child L2 learners are endowed with access to UG while late L2 learners are not; however, no empirical evidence has justified its reliability (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 6). On the contrary, a significant number of studies suggest

that UG either develops for a short time in post-childhood or keeps dynamic over the entire life (Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 6).

Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson, in 2000, found that late L2 learners are not able to reach nativelike proficiency in their second language communication; a subtle gap exists between early L2 learners and native speakers who converse only in their mother tongue (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 4). In 1996, Flege holds that L2 pronunciation of adult immigrants is more affected by the accent of their L1 in comparison with the cases of child immigrants (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 8). Within the recent two decades, a number of studies have proved that early L2 beginners appear less linguistically competent than monoglot native speakers in terms of lexis, grammatical rules and phonology (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 4).

Several L2 researchers propose that divergent language aspects have distinctive critical periods, which is definitely possible, but opposes the perspective of a solitary critical period. Johnson & Newport, in 1989, Long, in 1990, state that the critical period begins to terminate around six or seven (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 8). Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson (2005) state that the critical period for phonology ceases within the first year after infants are born, that of syntax concludes after four years old, and that of semantics terminates around fifteen or sixteen (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 8). After that, Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson become skeptical about CPH and theorize that the innate structure of human language learning is genetically programmed to degrade at a high speed after birth. On that account, they assert that it is impossible to acquire native-speaker proficiency in L2 learning (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 8).

There has been considerable controversy and uncertainty about the ending of the critical period. Researchers have placed the termination point of the critical period at various ages, anywhere from infancy to adolescence (Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 8).

Green's convergence hypothesis challenges the CPH in terms of divergent linguistic areas in the brain. Abutalebi (2008) states that L2 obtainment occurs within an innately particularized language mechanism and the manifestations of L1 and L2 will neutrally converge (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 22). As a consequence, the improvement in L2 proficiency will gradually narrow (probably to zero) the gap between native speakers and L2 acquirers neutrolinguistically (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 22).

The "elbow-shaped" speculation explains that L2 learning competence declines as the age increases under the theoretical framework of CPH (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1999; Flege, 1999; Birdsong, 2006). Johnson & Newport, in 1989, report a steep decline in L2 learners' linguistic achievement in the pre- or post- critical period ending point. Similarly, in 2010, DeKeyser, Alfi-Shabtay and Ravid investigate an abrupt drop at eighteen accompanied with a stable period of plateau in terms of morphosyntactic capacities (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 10). In 2005, Bialystok et al. discover a steady linear decrease on L2 learners' language competence while age increases, but no signs of remarkably steep decline at any specific moment (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 10). Flege, in 1999, detects a similar decrease on L2 accent in relation to the age of acquisition (AoA). Birdsong, in 2006, agrees that a linear relation exists between AoA and learning performance over the AoA period; moreover, she suggests

that this age-related decline is more connected with human's cognitive degradation (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 10).

Munoz & Singleton (2011) comment that L2 acquisition is influenced by the complicated interaction of various factors, including AoA. For that reason, it is unreasonable to simply regard this linguistic process as the deterioration of any faculty (p. 10).

In 1972, Selinker describes the concept of fossilization as a widely spread fact that the majority of L2 learners cannot achieve equivalent outcomes as their L1. Selinker and Lamendella, as cited in Wei (2008), clarify fossilization as the following:

...a permanent cessation of interlanguage learning before the learner has attained target language norms at all levels of linguistic structure and in all discourse domains in spite of the learner's positive ability, opportunity, and motivation to learn and acculturate into target society... The most interesting phenomena in interlanguage performance are those items, rules and sub-systems which are fossilizable in terms of the five processes: Language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralization of target language linguistic material. (p. 127)

According to Wei (2008), fossilization is composed of phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic fossilizations (p. 128) and is presented in many forms, such as error repetition and the cessation of one's linguistic capability (p. 127).

Temporary fossilization captures extensive attention from linguistics researchers. According to Sims, in 1989, temporary fossilization refers to the short-term interlanguage

termination that prevents the occurrence of specified target-language characteristics (as cited in Wei, 2008, p. 127).

Fossilization plays a vital role in the language performance of adult L2 learners. By and large, almost all of the studies relevant to language fossilization focus on adult L2 learners. Long, in 2013, reports that no research on fossilization is conducted from the perspective of children. In the same year, Han, uncovers that fossilization is likely to happen at any moment in the learning process of L2 learners (as cited in Xie, 2014, p. 26). Xie (2014) notes that when ESL instructors provide instant feedback to senior learners' language errors, phonological fossilization diminishes (p. 29).

Tittle (1986) holds that female migrants possess greater advantage over vocabulary than their male counterparts, which might make their language learning relatively easier. Hou and Beiser (2006) state that English tutoring and working with language are more rewarding for immigrant women (p. 152). Nevertheless, according to the findings of CTFMH, in 1988, and Dustmann and Fabbri, in 2003, male immigrants achieve on average higher language competence. This inconsistency in research is generated by South-East Asian women's traditionally inferior position in social ranking, finance and education before migration, and their unequal employment treatment, together with unfair language training opportunities (as cited in Hou & Beiser, 2006, p. 138). Hou and Beiser (2006) indicate that marriage prior to immigration negatively impacts language performance (p. 148).

Despite the prominent role of age in the sphere of adult L2 acquisition, an increasing number of studies focus on divergent individual factors that correlate with age effects.

Bylund, in 2009, claims that considerable language aptitude prevents linguistic stagnation on L2 learners (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 5). Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson in 2008 documented a group of late L2 learners, who were born with a remarkable gift for language, and are perceived to be indistinguishable from native speakers. Therefore, they argue that achieving the linguistic competence of native speakers is fundamentally determined by high language aptitude which should not be regarded as an opposition to CPH. In addition, they invite a more specific definition of language aptitude and advocate future research into the ties between L2 nativelike proficiency acquisition in post-mature period and human's inborn language biological apparatus.

No adult learners should be found who are entirely nativelike in the L2 without having a high level of language aptitude and – we may add – without having worked professionally and successfully with the target language for a significant period of their lives. (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 4)

Dozens of studies prove that officially acknowledged educational backgrounds, as well as language learning experiences, smooth the second language learning process (as cited in Hou & Beiser, 2006, p. 140). Carliner, in 2000, de Vries and Vallee, in 1980, Dustmann and Fabbri, in 2003, Mesch, in 2003, concur that the length of residence (LoR) in the receiving country is positively related to migrants' language proficiency (as cited in Hou & Beiser, 2006, p. 141). Hou and Beiser (2006) reveal that employment hours contribute to linguistic mastery (p. 152). However, they also state that the vast improvement, which is influenced by demographic features and pre-migration performance (p. 151), basically appears in the early years of migration (p. 147).

Chiswick and Miller, in 2001, Espinosa and Fu, in 1997, and Mesch, in 2003, highlight the increasing significance of individual investment, as well as chances and motivations to immigrants' language achievement, especially in the long term after migration (as cited in Hou & Beiser, 2006, p. 140). Studies have affirmed that receiving formal education, learning with a personal linguistic instructor, communicating over social media, possessing family members, purchasing private property, and acquiring nationality in the receiving country affect immigrants' second language learning (as cited in Hou & Beiser, 2006, p. 140). Hou and Beiser (2006) note that settlers' language competence in the long term is remarkably intertwined with raising children at home, holding jobs and working in multicultural contexts; they maintain that migrants receiving formal education in Canada possess a significantly higher possibility of linguistic mastery than those without Canadian studying experiences (p. 155).

Contextual variables play an increasingly essential role in adult L2 attainment. Jia and Aaronson, in 2003, suggest that even identical LoR is possibly intertwined with vastly distinctive quantities and intensity of L2 immersion and communication. Compared with the basic calculation of residence in L2 contexts, an examination of language communication (i.e. the usage of L2/L1 besides LoR) appears more reasonably appropriate (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 12). Flege and Liu, in 2001, uncover that length of residence (LoR) is closely interrelated with L2 acquisition performance of participants who are university students but not remarkably associated with the language obtainment of participants who do not communicate frequently in English at work. Flege, in 2009, reveals that the distinctions of LoR yield no dramatically linguistic differences in L2 acquirers (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 14).

Moyer, in 2005, emphasizes the importance of examining the efficacy of L2 communicative experiences outside the class and extent of those interactive activities (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 12).

As for adult L2 learners, either the number of classroom instruction time or the number of L2 use out of the classroom is important to consider. Freed, Dewey and Segalowitz, in 2004, propose that foreign adult L2 acquirers, who reside in the target language speaking country, benefit more from investigating their length of L2 immersion, as well as weighing the actual use of L2 to L1 (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 12). In 2010, Llanes reports that adults spend as little a quarter of the time as children do in interacting with L2 native speakers in the foreign country. Long, in 2005, Birdsong, in 2006, and Munoz, in 2008, maintain that L2 obtainment does not actually take place until learners are thoroughly immersed into their target language environment and conduct meaningful communications (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 14).

Munoz and Singleton (2011) contend that it is unreasonable to equate the age of acquisition (AoA) to the age of arrival in the foreign country, and this has undermined the validity of research outcomes of relevant studies afterwards (p. 14). Hellman (2008) interprets AoA as the moment when participants initiate meaningful communications with native speakers. In this vein, AoA would differ vastly in foreign country and home country. Under the former circumstance, it often takes some L2 acquirers who are stay-at-home parents a long time to start daily exchange with local people (perhaps when their children attend school), and AoA is not identical with the age of arrival; while in the latter environment, AoA is conceived as the beginning of an educational program

delivered in L2, and exposure is optimized when instructed by native speakers (as cited in Munoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 14).

Abundant studies have addressed the significance of analyzing different linguistic aspects in which the L2 is applied. A review of literature by Munoz and Singleton (2011) revealed that communicative exchange is more effective for oral improvement instead of writing and that mature L2 learners who live with native speakers are more likely to show greater linguistic competence in the long run (p. 12).

Chinese Senior Immigrants' ESL Learning in Canada

Over the recent thirty years, the immigrant demographic in Canada has dramatically changed from previous European re-settlers to current Asian migrants. Elderly Chinese immigrants, an important sub-group, are confronted with linguistic barriers in every aspect of life. Poor language competence inhibits senior Chinese migrants' daily commute to utilize government programs as well as social services, and deteriorates the uneasiness from social isolation: They have established broad social networks in China for years, however they solely depend on their children to go around after migration to Canada (Tam and Neysmith, 2006, p. 147). Learning English as a second language (ESL) has been perceived as important socio-cultural challenges by senior Chinese immigrants (Tieu and Konnert, 2015, p. 42). Being vulnerable, older Chinese immigrants have frequently encountered language problems that prevent them from accessing public services.

A large proportion of the literature throughout Canada focuses on the health conditions of senior immigrants. Research on their physiology improvement, as well as

mental health treatments, are constantly implemented. However, few studies have explored the ESL learning of this particular demographic. The participants in my study are adult learners, who started learning English as their second languages after maturity. Due to the exclusiveness of their ethnic community, most senior Chinese immigrants are not likely to learn English. Linguistic separation sets migrant elders apart from their second-generation offspring, and even from the whole society (Beiser, 1999, as cited in Hou & Beiser, 2006, p. 158).

Age plays a role in language performance for immigrants. Hou and Beiser (2006) report that senior re-settlers not only have lower language levels than youth, but also fall behind in language learning (p. 152). According to Hou and Beiser, extensive research has found that immigrant elders obtain language over a prolonged period compared to younger learners. This disadvantage of senior L2 learners is generated by their reduced short-term working memory and lack of interest due to limited motivations from their stages in life (p. 138). Unlike children or youngsters, senior immigrants do not receive formal education in the receiving country, which inhibits extending their social connections with local people and acquainting themselves with mainstream culture.

Low language proficiency is statistically connected to self-reported poor health among elderly female immigrants (Pottie, Ng, Spitzer, Mohammed & Glazier, 2008, p. 508). In Canada, seventy-five percent of the family re-settlers are female, whereas, the same percentage of economically-independent immigrants are male (Simich, Beiser, Mawani, 2003, as cited in Pottie et al., 2008). Hou and Beiser (2006) argue that, for new settlers, the negative influence of age and gender gradually dwindles within the first decade in Canada, and that pre-migration marriage does not become a hindrance to

language sufficiency over time (p. 152). In the long run, the language underperformance of the elderly and females is mainly prompted by inadequate access to a dominant language environment after immigration (p. 155).

Chow (2012) argues that senior centers providing services including language training programs play an essential role in the lives of community-based elderly Chinese residents in Canada (p. 352). Mui, Kang, Kang and Domanski (2007) recommend that professional language training service is needed to upgrade senior Chinese immigrants' quality of life (p. 125). According to Munoz and Singleton (2011), there is no ambiguity in the argument that successful late L2 learners demand an extensive amount of language input and practice (p. 5). Derwing and Munro, in 2009, suggest that it is more significant to enhance senior elderly ESL learners' comprehension of their second language (as cited in Xie, 2014, p. 17). Xie (2014) mentions in her thesis:

As for elderly Chinese L2 learners who are the research subject of this project, their success in SLA does not mean a complete mastery of English or achieving native-like proficiency. Such proficiency is unlikely attained at their age. Rather, the success for them is defined as acquiring some basic English, and speaking comprehensible English so that they can simply interact with native speakers and meet their daily needs, such as going shopping, traveling on their own or dining out. (p. 17)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has had a presence in the field of English language teaching since the 1970s and gained extensive popularity in the early 1980s.

The overarching feature of CLT is communicative competence, which is regarded as the goal of language teaching. In 1980, Canale and Swain put forward the theory that communicative competence includes four domains of competence: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic.

The researchers found that, although with deficiency in language knowledge, language learners are expected to produce meaningful communication in various contexts with different purposes. The superficial transmission of linguistic knowledge to learners is not the prominent teaching objective in the present classrooms, but holistically united with social and pragmatic functions in order to be reconciled with divergent communicative purposes.

According to Rao (2002), linguistic competence is the foundation of communicative competence, i.e. with the absence of linguistic competence, there is no meaning to address communicative competence at all; however, it is important to tell that linguistic competence does not yield communicative competence by itself (p. 98).

CLT strongly encourages teacher and students to apply the target language in the process of language teaching and learning, in order to maximize student-student and teacher-student communications in the classroom. Students are engaged in meaningful classroom activities based on a series of authentic life contexts, furthermore, their language errors, which have been regarded as a necessarily natural part of the acquisition procedure, are not inhibited. As a consequence, learners are able to communicate with increasing fluency and accuracy and gradually achieve communicative competence.

Klapper (2003) recommends two versions of CLT: the strong version insists on students' learning autonomy and opposes teacher dominance in the process of learning; while sharing the same teaching goals, the weaker version acknowledges that modest teacher interference in terms of well-organized, meaningful classroom activities is necessary for increasing students' comprehension and language competence (as cited in Butler, 2011, p. 37).

Derived from a wide range of principles on both language itself and language teaching and learning, CLT broadly entails sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discourse and psychological terms, which, in contrast, develops its generalizability and ambiguity in terms of methodology. Harmer (2003) argues that the concept of CLT suggests divergent notions to different people (as cited in Littlewood, 2014, p. 350). Similarly, Ho and Wong (2004) agree that CLT has been interpreted and implemented in a variety of ways by different practitioners (as cited in Littlewood, 2006, p. 246). This is supported by the prevalence of two lasting uncertainties among English teaching professionals found by Thompson (1996) and C.Y. Li (2003): CLT is merely composed of abundant oral activities; grammar teaching is basically excluded (as cited in Littlewood, 2006, p. 246).

Jacob and Farrell (2003) argue that CLT posits a paradigm shift in the field of language teaching and learning (as cited in Richards, 2006, p. 25). Over the past decades in People's Republic of China (PRC), although CLT was adopted into the syllabus of public schools by the State Education Development Commission in 1992, its implementation was confronted with multiple unexpected obstacles in practice (Nunan, 2003, p. 596). Large class sizes hinder student-centeredness, which is an important part of the CLT approach. Rao (2002) finds that students perceive traditional ways of

language teaching (drilling, repetition, etc.) to be effective in English classrooms (p. 91). On the other, the traditional English language teaching method, which is nonetheless evident in classroom reality, is unsuccessful in building up the communicative competence of millions of Chinese learners. As Hu (2002) claims in his article:

The traditional approach to ELT in the PRC has been a curious combination of the grammar-translation method and audio-lingualism, which is characterized by systematic and detailed study of grammar, extensive use of cross-linguistic comparison and translation, memorization of structural patterns and vocabulary, painstaking effort to form good verbal habits, an emphasis on written language, and a preference for literary classics. (p. 93)

With the increasingly widespread implementation of CLT all over the world, a series of varying criticisms emerged to challenge its practicality. Littlewood (2006) summarizes five practical unsettled problems regarding CLT pedagogy: ineffective “classroom management”, “avoidance of English”, “minimal demand on language competence”, “incompatibility with public assessment demands” and “conflicts with educational values and traditions” (p. 244-245). When engaged in communicative activities in class, learners tend to get immersed into the communication with their partners to the extent that teachers find it difficult to draw their attention back to the lesson at a certain moment. This phenomenon is particularly evident when inadequate human resources as well as materials, and institutional challenges (teachers deal with large class sizes but there is limited time for giving instructions in class) occur. Meanwhile, students are more likely to refer to their mother tongue (L1) as the medium of communication when they are stuck with oral expressions, which reduces opportunities of classroom language input and

output. Obsessed with the completion of communicative activities, learners choose to focus on limited language exchange which merely contributes to the task achievement. In that way, their communicative competence is not developed to a possibly exhaustive level. Learning outcomes of CLT are not consistent with the rubrics of national educational examinations that have long determined student's future. CLT advocates student-centered learning and the mastery of target language by using it in appropriate contexts. These perceptions greatly contrast with traditional educational concepts derived from cultures where teachers exercise absolute control over the class most of the time and learning is considered to be knowledge transmission as well as accumulation.

Despite the adoption of CLT into national curricula for years, teachers possess insufficient understanding of what the CLT practically entails and how the communicative activity is used in the classroom at all. Communicative activities conducted by teachers are not actually communicative but a hybrid of grammar translation and audio-lingual approach (Prapaisit de Segovia & Hardison, 2009, p.158). A general lack of consistent training, professional support and veteran mentors make it difficult for teachers to design effective communicative activities that really develop students' communicative competence. Moreover, current educational resources and materials are characterized with limited authenticity. According to Butler (2011), "What is perceived to be authentic often means materials and activities that accurately reflect the actual use of language and activities in English-speaking countries" (p.41). The contents included in a number of learning materials, such as textbooks and language publications, do not reflect real communicative settings and often appear to be out of date.

Savignon (2005) redefines CLT to a more accurate degree by proposing “what CLT is not” (p. 645): CLT does not simply focus on training speaking skills, nor is it characterized with small group work, nor does it exclude grammar teaching (as Butler cited, 2011, p. 41).

Cortazzi and Jin in 1996 and Hu in 2005 argue that CLT presents a dispute of West-East pedagogical values (as cited in Aubrey, 2010, p. 9). Samimy and Kobayashi in 2004 reveal the cultural incompatibility between CLT and traditional Japanese educational principles and suggest more attention to the process of language learning instead of the construction of extensive problematic learning materials (as cited in Aubrey, 2010, p. 9). Xue (2013) describes that the divergence of West-East educational pedagogies arouses student’s initial disapproval of classroom communication with peers (p. 7). Having been brought up under Chinese educational system which values independency rather than collaboration, Chinese students assume the teaching method characterized of lecture-orientation and teacher-centeredness to be priority, or the mere way of teaching (Xue, 2013, p. 8). Students undergo a period of cultural transfer in order to get accustomed.

Nonetheless, Littlewood in 2000 maintains that Asian learners hold positive views of CLT and are interested in making detailed inquiries both independently and with their peers (as cited in Aubrey, 2010, p. 9); and they “do not, in fact, wish to be spoonfed with facts from an all-knowing 'fountain of knowledge’” (as cited in Aubrey, 2010, p. 42). Audrey (2010) conducts study and makes similar conclusions (p. 42).

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Despite the tremendously various definitions of “task” in literature, they agree to the point that a pedagogical task contains the use of communicative language.

Furthermore, these definitions cast special importance to the receipt of meanings rather than merely grammatical forms. According to Nunan (2004), real-life missions or “target tasks or real-world tasks” (p. 1) are modified into classroom tasks or “pedagogical tasks” (p. 1). These transformative proceedings are accompanied with the change to the real-world tasks. Richards et al. (1986) define a pedagogical task as:

. . . an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative . . . since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake. (p.289) (as cited in Nunan, 2004, p. 2)

Nunan (2004) suggests a task in language classroom settles learners’ attention on negotiating meanings instead of handling pointless language forms by simultaneously requiring them to apprehend, utilize and communicate in the target language; he, nonetheless, acknowledges that meaning and form are closely interdependent because divergent meanings are conveyed in the forms of appropriately grammatical expressions (p. 4). He believes that these types of pedagogical tasks bear a distinctively organic tie to

the reality for the reason that they are designed in order to stimulate learners' integrated language skills, which in fact optimizes their language acquisition outcomes (p. 20).

Based on the previous literature of task components, Nunan (2004) summarizes that communicative tasks are comprised of more than goals, input and procedures, underpinned by teacher/learner's roles and settings (p. 41). Goals are indistinct basic aims embedded in the tasks and regarded as functional when they are established from the perspectives of students and evaluated by visible achievement. Arising from massive amounts of research, input refers to the oral, printed, and visual information provided to learners during their process of task fulfilment. Procedures deal with the missions that are clearly defined for learners to perform with the assistance of input.

Tasks aimed to build up oral skills are sorted congruently with various exchange functions. The first recording of task types exist in the Bangalore project in the 1980s, where three categories of communicative tasks were presented: information gap, reasoning gap and opinion gap. Simultaneously, Pattison (1987) proposes seven task types: questions and answers, dialogues and role plays, matching activities, communication strategies, pictures and picture stories, puzzles and problems, discussions and decisions (as cited in Nunan, 2004, p. 56). Richards (2001) enlarges pedagogical classification by adding jigsaw tasks, information-gap tasks, problem-solving tasks, decision-making tasks, opinion exchange tasks (as cited in Nunan, 2004, p. 58). In addition, communicative tasks can be categorized into cognitive, interpersonal, linguistic, affective and creative according to the language strategies in which they are rooted (Nunan, 2004, p. 59).

Put forward by Wilkins in 1976, task-based language teaching is developed from “analytical approach”, a pedagogical approach in which students analyze the language on the whole and thus acquire their learning (as cited in Nunan, 2006, p.13).

Roles refer to the part that teachers and learners are supposed to act in the process of completing the task. Learner and teacher roles are closely interrelated. An active approach of learner roles advocates that learners are no longer the knowledge receivers but take initiatives for their learning (Nunan, 2004, p. 67). Breen and Candlin in 1980 express that teachers are expected to facilitate the communication, participate in the process at any given time, observe the ongoing learning, and gain novel knowledge and understanding (as cited in Nunan, 2004, p. 67). Clarke and Silberstein in 1977 write about teacher roles:

The teacher as teacher is necessary only when the class is attempting to resolve a language problem, for it is only in this situation that the teacher is automatically assumed to possess more knowledge than the students. This role can be minimized if the students’ attack strategies and reading skills have been effectively developed. If the task is realistic and the students have learned to adjust their reading strategies according to the task, there should be little need for teacher intervention (as cited in Nunan, 2004, p. 68).

McCarthy and Walsh (2003) introduce the classroom context mode that highlights the moderation of teacher interference in the course of classroom conversational interaction; however, they also point out the disastrous consequence of the unforeseen,

unpleasant, and controversial points that might be brought into the lesson (as cited in Nunan, 2004, p. 69).

Setting indicates the classroom environment where the task is deployed. Zhang and Hung (2013) report that, compared with participants who receive traditional language teaching methods, students are likely to take on more favourable attitudes towards language learning and achieve more impressive learning attainments in a task-based language classroom (p. 698).

Due to the extensively heated discussion of CLT over recent years, Littlewood (2014) proposes the Communication-Oriented Language Teaching (COLT) as a substitute (p. 7). As a result of the phase where their interlanguage and learning environment remain and context where their indigenous culture blossoms, Chinese learners' communicative strategies are rather limited to translation and repetition (Wang, Lai & Leslie, 2015).

ESL Learners' Expectations and Needs

Second language learning is fundamentally a learner-oriented process. Learners are thus vital in determining the success of CLT on account of its learner-centered teaching objective. In recent years researchers witnessed the increasing attention on the part of learner in language learning activity in the field of ESL. Among the abundant studies, "learner perspectives on language learning" captures tremendous focus from educational scholars. A thorough understanding of learner attitudes and perceptions towards CLT improves practitioners' comprehension of how this educational pedagogy navigates towards the next step. In 1991, Kumaravadivelus suggests that one of the difficult

missions teaching professionals face in the sphere of TBLT is to decide “how learners perceive and treat the formal and functional properties of language learning tasks” (as cited in Hadi, 2013, p. 300). As for teachers and curriculum developers, it is significant to base curriculum design on learners’ needs and expectations. Savignon (2007) points out that this area of study has not achieved much attention as most research focused on learners’ perceptions of language teaching on the whole instead of specific instructional classroom reality (p. 225).

Addressing learners’ expectations and needs, there are eight aspects to consider: learners’ attitudes towards native & non-native teachers, their needs of the use of L1 & L2, learners’ expectations of fluency & accuracy, their attitudes towards form-focused instruction (FFI) & meaning-oriented instruction (MOI), their expectations of language learning strategy (LLS), learning anxiety & learner reticence, learners perspectives of group work as well as class size.

The number of native teachers worldwide is much less than that of non-native teachers in the English teaching field. Canagaraiah (1999) calculates that a mere 20% of global English language teachers are native teachers (as cited in Wu, 2010, p. 184). By and large, both groups of teachers possess distinctive characteristics of their own. According to Wu (2010), native teachers gain popularity among students as they provide a “foreign model” and create an authentic language context where learners apply English in an effective way; though non-native teachers are not able to give a real model for language learners to follow, they succeed in setting themselves as a “learner model”. This foresees the difficulty from the perspective of students and encourages learners (p. 181-184). Medgyes (1994) argues that either native or non-native teachers are able to grow

into qualified ESL teachers if they are equipped with mastery of the learners' mother tongue (L1) or the English language respectively (as cited in Wu, 2010, p. 181). Either group plays an indispensable role in assist the learning outcome. The co-teaching and instructional collaboration between native and non-native teachers is hence advocated in order to improve students' learning (Wu, 2010, p. 184).

There has been controversy about the proportion of L1 and L2 in language teaching process for years. Krashen, in 1982, presents that adequate and maximized input of the target language lessons fossilization (as cited in Wei, 2008, p. 130). Lightbrown (1991) argues that L2 is important to language learners so instructors are supposed to use as much L2 in teaching as possible. However, Swain and Lapkin (2002) claim that the use of L1 eases the difficulty for students in the learning process (as cited in Wu, 2010, p. 183). Auerbach in 1993 notes that using L1 accelerates student learning (as cited in Xie, 2014, p. 23). Savignon & Wang (2003) notes that senior high school students prefer teachers to use Chinese (L2) when giving classroom instructions (p. 230). Xie (2014) suggests that Chinese is necessary in senior Chinese ESL student learning in that it assist their comprehension of the lesson (p. 23). Rao (2002) discovers students, even with low proficiency, prefer the English explanation of grammatical items in class; English teaching is preferred no matter when it is needed in the process of language teaching (p. 93). Wu (2010) points out it is essential for teaching professionals to coordinate the proportion of L1 based on students' needs (p. 183).

With regard to language fluency, students hold expectations of the level they will achieve by the end of the learning process. The term "fluency" remains a tricky notion for practitioners to define in the field of CLT. According to Wu (2010), fluency means

“effectiveness of language use within the constraints of limited linguistic knowledge” and is utilized to “assess how well learners use their knowledge to achieve their linguistic and communicative goals.” (p. 183) Discussions about the balance between language accuracy and language fluency has attracted increasing attention. Wei (2008) notes that the overemphasis of fluency with ignorance of accuracy will lead to the fossilization of learner language mistakes (p. 129). Krashen in 1985 and Truscott in 1999 insist that teaching should focus on meaning instead of form and no correction should occur in language learning (as cited in Wu, 2010, p. 183). Brumfit (1984) states that accuracy and fluency are not contradictory but interdependent (as cited in Nunan, 2004, p. 56).

Ellis (1994) puts forward the “recast” method which corrects the learners’ mistakes and in the meantime realizes the purpose of meaning orientation (as cited in Wu, 2010, p. 183). Wei (2008) argues that excellent language learning includes both form and meaning. He describes that well-performed learners tend to regard the language as a holistic system and utilize it with flexibility (p. 130). Savignon (1991) uncovers “the integration of form-focused exercises with meaning-focused experience” and asserts that grammar is best acquired in meaningful effective communications (as cited in Wu, 2010, p. 183). In his book *Task-Based Language Teaching*, Nunan (2004) voices that basic language learners can utter form-based expressions which have been accessible to them from different channels (teachers, audios, textbooks, etc.) and they are not capable of producing language that has not been acquired in the process of learning (p. 22). Wu (2008) concludes that CLT should be regarded as an educational pedagogy that embraces communication not as an alternative to form exclusiveness (as cited in Wu, 2010, p. 183).

There has been increasing awareness among educators that students maximize their language acquisition in terms of meaningful communication. Meaning-oriented instruction (MOI), which is a prominent characteristic of CLT, highlights the significance of developing communicative competence. Williams (1995) states that MOI encourages learners to produce language, interact and negotiate with others by focusing on the authenticity and proficiency of language (as cited in Asassfeh, Khwaileh, Al-Shaboul & Alshboul, 2012, p. 526).

Although students are held in form-focused instruction (FFI) in their English learning, they desire a communication-oriented approach to appear in the language classroom. Savignon & Wang (2003) state that participants express intense preferences for meaningful classroom activities and detest excessive explanation of grammatical items (p. 230); they reveal learners approval for meaning-oriented pedagogy and extreme dislike of form-based teaching (p. 232). In addition, most of the participants feel the communicative approach, which values meaning instructional practice, satisfies their learning needs to the highest extent (p. 239). Al-Jamal (2007) discovered the fact that there is incompatibility between teachers' instructional practice and students' learning preferences, and she noted that an overwhelming majority of participants expect an advanced teaching approach (as cited in Asassfeh, Khwaileh, Al-Shaboul & Alshboul, 2012, p. 531). Al-Jamal found that language learners expressed intense demand for developing fluency and communicative teaching pedagogy despite their acknowledgement of the weight of grammar and linguistic knowledge (as cited in Asassfeh, Khwaileh, Al-Shaboul & Alshboul, 2012, p. 533). Baleghizadeh (2010) claims that meaning-oriented instruction (MOI) threatens the long-established status of form-

focused instruction (FFI), which emphasizes language correctness rather than fluency (as cited in Asassfeh, Khwaileh, Al-Shaboul & Alshboul, 2012, p. 526). Rao (2002) notes that the traditional teaching pedagogy prevents students from active participation in communicative tasks (p. 96). In respect to teachers' instruction, research shows that language learners' preferences vary within divergent contexts. Overall, an integration of both types of activities with a tendency towards communication is recommended (Asassfeh, Khwaileh, Al-Shaboul & Alshboul, 2012, p. 526). Rao (2002) proposes an integration of communicative and non-communicative exercises as more beneficial to students' learning demands (p. 94). He proposes no prejudice against either of the two pedagogies, but maintains the combination of communicative and non-communicative tasks (p. 98).

Besides teaching approach, learning strategy plays an important role in the course of learning. Learners often struggle to convey their meanings by means of correct vocabulary, functional sentence structure and appropriate grammar, and hence are possibly confronted with communication deficiency. Wei (2008) argues that effective language learners succeed in adopting strategies with a higher frequency and excellence (p. 130). Al-Jamal (2007) advocates teaching students learning strategies in order to transform them into effective learners (p. 52). Dörnyei, in 1995, recommends teachers integrate communicative strategy into the teaching syllabus because he believes the disregard for teaching communicative strategies, to a large extent, causes learner inarticulacy; whereas, a student's sense of self-assurance and self-esteem will be consolidated through learning communicative strategies (as cited in Mirsane & Khabiri, 2016, p. 401). Moattarian (2012) uncovers that language learners tend to feel pessimistic

about employing language learning strategies despite their particularly habitual behavior; however, they are more convinced of the importance of using strategies in speaking compared with writing (p. 2355). Zheng, in 2004, confirms learner needs of adopting communicative strategies to make oral conversation increasingly effective (as cited in Moattarian, 2012, p. 2349). Mirsane & Khabiri (2016) state that participants are convinced that the communicative strategy supports their speaking by helping them handle unforeseen conversational problems (p. 405). Xue (2013) suggests that participants are increasingly aware of the negative impact of adopting reduction strategies: they avoid unfamiliar contents, give up expressing specific information, and substitute certain language chunks with particularly simple words (p. 11). Participants recall that these experiences destroy the coherence of conversation and, more seriously, prompt misinterpretations (Xue, 2013, p. 11). Language learners are more aware of the use of communicative strategies since they have been taught and therefore are more willing to communicate in English (Mirsane & Khabiri, 2016, p. 405). Wu (2010) asserts that teaching professionals assist learners in formulating divergent language learning strategies (LLS) pertinent to their learning style (p. 184). Wei (2008) suggests divergent strategies are conducive to different attainments in language and students are supposed to choose strategies with flexibility and appropriateness (p. 130). Students obsessed with communicative strategies are likely to stop improving their language ability as they are already satisfied with language exchange outcomes. Wei (2008) notes that learners' linguistic achievement is possibly prohibited by their frequent reference to communication strategies, for instance, oversimplification of the second language (L2). By adopting that type of strategy learners are increasingly disposed to output plain

sentences, which implies the negative outcome of the communicative teaching approach (p. 129). Interestingly, the more communicative strategies teachers uncover, the more insufficient areas to address in the classroom. The application of varying LLS in class motivates active learning and fosters learning autonomy, and eventually further strengthens learners' communicative competence. According to Moattarian (2012), educational practitioners are supposed to reveal learning pitfalls, strengthen learner language weaknesses, and teach students how to effectively employ learning strategies in communication (p. 2356).

Language learner's willingness to communicate (WTC) is a professional term that has emerged for a short while. In 1985, McCroskey and Baer frame this concept as the possibility of active participation in language exchange under non-obligatory circumstance (as cited in Aubrey, 2010, p. 7). In addition, Aubrey (2010) finds out that CLT enhances learners' WTC when they hold positive perceptions of it (as cited in Asassfeh, Khwaileh, Al-Shaboul, & Alshboul, 2012, p. 526).

Horwitz et al. (1986) point out that one third of language learners have experienced learning anxiety, described 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" (p. 128). They designed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and since then plenty of studies have been carried out in order to explore the correlation between language anxiety and learning outcomes (as cited in Wu, 2010, p. 174). A consensus view is held among language researchers that language anxiety appears sophisticated and indicates learning attainment. According to Ellis (1994), language anxiety is the major cause of student reticence, i.e. students with serious

language anxiety are inclined to withdraw from classroom communication with peers (as cited in Wu, 2010, p. 176). Tallon (2009) ranks the foreign language anxiety as particularly influential to students' language learning among ESL learning variables (as cited in Wu, 2010, p. 175).

The discrepancy between teacher and learner perceptions of task-based language teaching (TBLT) is narrowing. Divergent opinions of teachers and learners lead to their acceptance and reticence about TBLT. Hadi (2013) indicates that students are more positive towards TBLT than teachers as there are more learners encouraged by the task-based method and teachers facilitating their learning process (p. 309). Nonetheless, she confirms that teachers and learners hold similar awareness of TBLT (p. 310), which differs from the conclusions of previous studies claiming striking disagreement between these two groups. According to Hadi (2013), teachers who refuse to implement TBLT are worried about meeting unsolvable problems as the consequence of their insufficient language ability, inadequate knowledge or unfamiliarity with TBLT; on the other, learners are reluctant to attend task-based activities because they are not familiar with that teaching method and find their teachers not competent in the target language (p. 309). She reports that most of the participants favor adoption of TBLT in the classroom and appear fairly cooperative due to the reason that they are motivated in the context of TBLT as it encourages communication and collaboration (p. 308). Although there are problems to be addressed, she recommends that teachers are supposed to acquire more knowledge about TBLT, mold a positive attitude among students in language teaching, and design task-based activities to encourage student confidence and participation which is the main determinant of the success of TBLT. (p. 309). She summarizes that language

teachers are able to implement TBLT with favourable outcomes in the classroom and simultaneously have students actively accustomed to this innovative way of teaching (p. 309).

Qaddomi (2013) outlines a series of studies exploring the demands of mastering English for either vocational or academic purposes (p. 1111-1112). Among the results of this research manifesting the prominence of learning English, an overwhelming proportion highlights acquiring competent oral skills. For senior language learners, it is more appropriate to focus on their needs in everyday life. Less literature has dealt with this issue.

With the emergence of group work for decades in the field of ESL, many educators maintained the benefit of group work to language learners. Adams and Hamm in 1990 and Bormann and Bormann in 1976 define group work as a cooperative activity between several team members to fulfill a learning task or achieve a learning outcome (as cited in Xue, 2013, p. 3). Johnston & Miles, in 2004, prove that group work can motivate student enthusiasm, nurture their innovative competence and creativity (as cited in Xue, 2013, p. 3). Fearon, McLaughlin, & Eng, in 2012, agree that group work enhances student collaborative thinking and interpersonal skills (as cited in Xue, 2013, p. 3). Aubrey (2010) states that students prefer learning with their peers in the English language classroom (p. 93). Hadi (2013) also shows that learners conceive small group work more suitable for TBLT (p. 310). Li and Campbell, in 2008, report that Asian learners hold favourable views of group discussions due to the reason that they are able to communicate with people from divergent cultures, upgrade their English language abilities and increase their intercultural awareness; whereas, they are extremely negative

about group assignments (as cited in Xue, 2013, p. 3). In 2004, Wong provides the explanation that Asian students feel more comfortable with individual assignments because they are capable of mastering the whole situation (as cited in Xue, 2013, p. 3). Nonetheless, Tiong and Yong, in 2004, indicate that Asian students participate in classroom group discussions with low frequency and like to get involved in group projects in a casual learning atmosphere (as cited in Xue, 2013, p. 3). Holmes in 2004 believes this is caused by Asian student language insufficiency, the impact of their previous learning experiences, the striking distinctions between Western and Eastern educational pedagogies, and their inadequate social capabilities (as cited in Xue, 2013, p. 4).

Xue (2013) agrees that learner standpoints towards group work experience a transformative process: In the beginning phase, both the East-West pedagogical incompatibilities and inadequate English language skills prevent Asian student classroom collaboration with their peers (p. 6); however, the participants begin to embrace learning on a team in six to twelve months (p. 8). As Xue (2013) reports:

They took a proactive role in group work activities by starting a conversation, eliciting information, and offering feedback to group members. They even would like to lead the whole group to finish assignments or tasks. They became aware of the purposes and advantages of group work and found that they had benefited significantly from it in a number of ways, such as development of collaborative spirit and team skills, making friends, broadening and deepening expertise knowledge, as well as improvement of English communicative competence, etc. (p. 8)

Xue (2013) concludes that group work improves Chinese language learners' communicative competence; specifically, becoming involved in collaborative activities with their peers, Chinese students obtain comprehensive awareness of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence (p. 15).

Studies exploring the influence of class size suggest various results. Research by Evertson and Folger (1989) and Glass and Smith (1980) found that large class size impedes the implementation of intended teaching procedures in that students have little chance to communicate with teachers or their peers, and they gradually feel unsatisfied (as cited in Aubrey, 2010, p. 10). Other researchers found that the actual variance is hard to discern (Hanushek, 1988, and Pica, 1992, cited in Aubrey, 2010, p. 10). Interaction between students can facilitate the transformation of learner interlanguage, large classes may provide students with more chances to collaborate, and group work is beneficial to students (Aubrey, 2010, p. 10). Students can acquire ESL advancement from either professionals or beginners; they are able to switch between the roles of a language learner and a facilitator of their own learning, especially when unpredictability is involved (Storch, 2002, as cited in Aubrey, 2010, p. 10). Aubrey (2010) attributes the achievement of classroom interaction to the degree where learners actually communicate (p. 11) and concludes realistic conversational exchange is most valued by learners in either small or large classes (p. 42). Furthermore, he highlights high levels of acceptance towards CLT in large group classes (p. 42). Regardless of class size and format, Savignon and Wang (2003) report that learners expect that teachers correct their oral mistakes when they are speaking (p. 232).

Successful language program should commence with a thorough analysis of learner needs (Khamkaew, as cited in Qaddomi, 2013, p. 1111). Qaddomi (2013) states that needs analysis includes investigation, data collection, examination, and combination of student requirements into course design in order to meet their demands (p. 1111). Furthermore, Al-Jamal (2007) recommends teachers well recognize student learning needs and maintain critical attitude to their teaching (p. 51). With the purpose of promoting students' communicative competence, teachers are encouraged to foster a psychologically secure classroom atmosphere where students are willing to exchange ideas in the target language and are not nervous about making mistakes (Wu, 2010; Asassfeh, Khwaileh, Al-Shaboul & Alshboul, 2012). Audrey (2010) advises teachers to declare the positive effects of CLT to language learners in order to form their confidence towards this pedagogy (p. 42). Deckert in 1987 suggests teachers re-navigate learners to a more comprehensive understanding of the fundamental essence of language, the part of students and the efficacy of a desired language learning process (as cited in Rao, 2002, p. 98).

To conclude, English as a second language (ESL) learning is a time-consuming process for elderly immigrants, whose linguistic performance is hindered by a complicated series of divergent variables. There is uncertainty and controversy about the efficacy of ESL, age and gender play a fundamental part in second language (L2) learning, as well as individual-driven factors, such as language aptitude, educational backgrounds, and learning experiences. Contextual interaction i.e. length of residence (LoR), also influences the L2 learning of this particular group.

Established since the 1970s, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has gained global popularity due to its goal of developing learners' communicative competence by conducting meaningful interactions within authentic environments. CLT is challenged with increasing criticisms about its ambiguity in terms of an educational pedagogy, as well as judgement on its efficacy in teaching practices. ESL instructors are encouraged to develop profound and comprehensive understandings of CLT.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is receiving increasingly heated attention from the scholars within the field of ESL (Littlewood, 2014; McCarthy & Walsh, 2003; Savignon, 1991; Nunan, 2004). Communicative tasks, the essence of the TBLT approach, possess close connections with the real world, transfer learners' focus on negotiating meaning instead of dealing with pointless language forms by simultaneously requiring them to comprehend, utilize and communicate in the target language (Nunan, 2004, p. 4).

ESL learning is fundamentally learner-oriented education. It is important for ESL instructors and curriculum developers to consider learners' needs and expectations in classroom realities. There has been controversy about learners' attitudes towards native & non-native teachers, their needs of the use of L1 & L2, their expectations of fluency & accuracy, and their attitudes towards form-focused instruction (FFI) & meaning-oriented instruction (MOI). Future literature is encouraged to research more specific details from senior ESL learners regarding the balance between native and non-native ESL instructors, L1 and L2, fluency and accuracy, as well as FFI and MOI. There is a call for an increase in the number of educational studies on the issue of ESL class size as prior literature suggests various consequences for the learners.

Language learning strategies (LLS) promote ESL learners' confidence and motivate active learning. The effective implementation of communicative strategies consolidates students' communicative competence and assists them in establishing learning autonomy (Dörnyei, 1995, as cited in Mirsane & Khabiri, 2016, p. 401). Language anxiety causes student reticence and negatively impacts learning attainment (Ellis, 1994, as cited in Wu, 2010, p. 176). CLT enhances learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) (Aubrey, 2010, as cited in Asassfeh, Khwaileh, Al-Shaboul, & Alshboul, 2012, p. 526).

ESL instructors are encouraged to acquire more knowledge about task-based language teaching (TBLT), and design communicative task-based classroom activities, in order to encourage students' confidence as well as participation and narrow the discrepancy between teacher-student perceptions of TBLT (Hadi, 2013, p. 309). Group work contributes to Asian learners' extension of collaborative thinking and interpersonal skills (Fearon, McLaughlin, & Eng, 2012, as cited in Xue, 2013, p. 3) after their transformation. At first, East-West pedagogical incompatibilities and inadequate English language skills prevent their classroom collaboration with their peers; whereas, they start to embrace learning within groups in six to twelve months (Xue, 2013, p. 6-8).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research adopts the case study method. A case study is a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event (Merriam, 1988, Yin, 1989, Stake, 1994, as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). According to Creswell (2014), “Case studies are a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals” (p. 14). Stake, in 1995, and Yin, in 2009, 2012, express that “Case studies are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (as cited in Creswell, 2014, p. 14).

For the convenience of the participants, I concurred with WCSSA that the program site was selected to be in the meeting room of an apartment building where participants resided. I administered a six-week ESL oral program for this cohort of senior residents in the spring of 2018. Participants and sites were selected in order to best understand the central situation. In semi-structured interviews, participants’ responses were encouraged and their views not restricted. Translation was conducted during the semi-structured interviews when necessary. Due to the participants’ limited English abilities, interviews were appropriate in that any instant natural responses generated by the interviewee were captured by the investigator. My related experience and professional background enabled me to select the best questions, and be responsive and flexible to the participants’ answers, so as to explore further into the issue. The results of the study may provide a

channel to ESL practitioners and government policy administrators to “learn” about the unheard voice of this exclusive group.

The Participants

This research focused on a cohort of very senior Chinese residents from the Windsor Chinese Senior Service Association (WCSSA). All were born outside of Canada and are late English (L2) learners. The participants were very senior and had lived in Canada for many years. They were English beginners and perceived that English was very important in their lives. Windsor Chinese Senior Service Association (WCSSA) is a membership-based, not-for-profit organization established and operated by social workers who volunteer to provide assistance to Chinese senior residents in Windsor, Ontario. WCSSA aims to improve senior health care conditions and qualities of life.

According to the data taken in ESL program in the fall of 2017, 93.75% of them are above seventy, 75% have resided in Canada for more than five years, and 68.75% of them have prior ESL learning experiences throughout the country but are basically at the beginner stage. They perceived the English language as a particularly important asset and expected to gain mastery in basic communications in everyday life. The student profile is presented in Table 1 stating variables such as age, gender, overall residence time in Windsor and past ESL learning experience in Canada. This is information gathering from WCSSA 2017 fall ESL program, and so the profile of the research participants may change slightly but I expect it to remain similar.

Table 1: Student Profile Table (WCSSA 2017 Fall ESL Program)

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	AGE	OVERALL RESIDENCE TIME IN CANADA	ESL LEARNING IN CANADA
1	F	72	11	Ouelette 660, YMCA (The Young Men's Christian Association), W5 (Windsor Women Working With Immigrant Women)
2	M	79	10	YMCA
3	F	76	10	YMCA
4	M	77	15	ESL training for new immigrants
5	F	70	5	YMCA
6	F	73	7	YMCA
7	F	78	NA	None
8	F	76	12	Mason School
9	F	82	12	None
10	F	78	28	None
11	F	75	NA	Mason School
12	F	80	18	YMCA

13	F	80	5	YMCA
14	F	74	18	New Canadians' Center of Excellence
15	F	72	15	None
16	F	56	NA	None

As most of the participants had attended my ESL program in the fall of 2017 and the winter of 2017, the recruitment was conducted by word-of-mouth. Presentations were delivered in Chinese in order to provide details of this research program (such as interview time restraints and the purpose of the research). The recruitment notice, including purpose of the study as well as contact information, was written in traditional Chinese characters and displayed on the bulletin board on the first floor of 255 Riverside Drive East. All of the participants were recruited on a voluntary basis and reserved the right to withdraw at any stage of the research. A background questionnaire was administered to the participants, including questions of gender, age, resident status and the status of English learning in Canada. Sixteen participants were recruited and the minimum was ten for the research to start.

The Program

A six-week ESL program aiming to enhance oral skills was provided on two weekdays in the meeting room, at 255 Riverside Drive East, Windsor. WCSSA contacted the apartment administration for negotiating the program site. Participants were invited to attend two types of classes on a weekly basis: a two-hour face-to-face with the maximum

of six people as well as a two-hour workshop with the maximum of sixteen people. In face-to-faces, participants learned vocabulary and daily expressions, performed controlled practice and received instant teacher feedback by the end of the class. In workshops, I designed interactive practice for learners to apply what they had acquired in face-to-face. Pair work, cross-group work and class mingling were employed there. This program adopted task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach in terms of the classroom activity design. In face-to-faces and workshops, students were asked to complete a communicative task which was an authentic simulation of real life. For instance, in the face-to-face of *going to the doctor's*, students roled play patients and doctors at a clinic, utilizing the lesson target language to negotiate meaningful conversations. More various communicative activities were integrated into the curriculum, such as questions and answers, information gap, reasoning gap, dialogues and role plays, matching activities.

Literature reveals that few researchers have addressed ESL program length and intensity for adult learners. Mercer (2001) suggests that two periods of two hour classes throughout five days a week is ideal for low performance students in a topic-based intensive program whose duration can be two weeks (p. 72). Consequently, the total instructional time would be forty hours. This cohort of senior learners attended the ESL program in the fall and winter of 2017, with an accumulative instructional guidance time span of thirty-six hours. This research program offered four hours of classes every week and lasted six weeks. The overall length of instructional practice is twenty-four hours, which, in addition to their previous programs in fall and winter of 2017, is adequate for contributing to their ESL learning.

The curriculum focused on improving students’ spoken language skills. Students learned a series of particularly useful vocabulary as well as common daily expressions in divergent situations with specific communicative functions. By the end of the program, this cohort of senior learners was expected to understand basic conversations and be able to use the target language in relevant contexts appropriately. As a distinctive attribute, the curriculum was carried out in an English learning environment and pedagogically implemented through Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach.

During the fall of 2017 program, a survey was conducted to determine interests of students. Five topics with the highest preferences were selected according to participants learning needs and interests: seeing the doctor, body and health, transportation, food and drinks, habits and daily routines (Table 2). Each topic was meaningful to the lives of participants and catered to their desire to connect to the local community. Furthermore, the proportion of content was arranged in a humanistic way: two weeks were spent to address the topic “seeing the doctor”, occupying one third of the whole program, as an overwhelming majority of senior learners expected to receive massive professional language training on how to utilize public medical services.

Table 2: Rankings of ESL topics among senior participants (WCSSA 2017 Fall ESL Program)

ESL LESSON TOPICS	PERCENTAGE OF INTEREST (%)
Seeing doctors	93.75%
Body and health	87.5%

Transportation	75%
Food and drinks	62.5%
Habits and routines	56.25%
Tourism	43.75%
Family	43.75%
Weather	37.5%
Sports	31.25%
Festivals	31.25%
Interest and hobbies	25%
Work	18.75%
Movies and television	18.75%
Art and music	18.75%
Animals and nature	18.75%

Students' interest in topics about health and wellness is well found. Health literacy refers to "the ability to read and comprehend prescription bottles, appointment slips, and other essential health related materials or the capacity to obtain, interpret and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions" (Dowe, Lawrence, Carlson, & Keyserling, 1997; Roman, 2004, as cited in Nimmon, 2007, p. 382). As Wilson claims, in 2003, the linguistic competence to access daily medical service and products demands a ninth-grade reading comprehension level, which creates a threshold measure for language insufficiency. He also holds that poor health literacy impacts patients' quality of medication and results in an increased incidence of

deaths from chronic and infectious diseases (as cited in Nimmon, 2007, p. 382). In the same year, Simms states that language incompetence of female immigrants prevents them from utilizing medical amenities and services (as cited in Nimmon, 2007, p. 393). Taylor et al. (2008) propose that the development of ESL training courses includes a part of health literacy that entails infinite possibilities (p. 217). They highlight that adult ESL curricula realize immigrants' expectations that medical educators are accessible in the course of their learning. In ESL classes, mature students feel secure and are willing to reflect on their body situation and medications in a reality-simulated environment (p. 218).

All the classes were strictly delivered in an English-speaking environment and adopted the monolingual principle. Despite the fact that most of the participants were English beginners, I delivered the lesson content in English throughout the program so as to maximize teacher-student communication in the English language. Only if adequate input was supplied in the process of learning would students bolster their comprehension of the language.

Classroom activities were communicative tasks that carried authenticity. For the reason that communicative competence emphasizes the ability to exchange information within various settings, vocabulary and grammar were tailored to meet the demands of different conversational functions. Particularly, grammar was not purposefully taught in class, but integrated into the communicative missions that fostered the linguistic setting of a particular grammatical concept. Every lesson was presented in P (Presentation) - P (Practice) -P (Production) cycle. Moreover, classroom materials originated from authentic contexts and thus students were more able to build connections with reality.

Collaborative learning was encouraged; student pair work and group work were encouraged in the classroom by participating in learning activities.

Data Collection

The data collection procedures in this qualitative study consisted of one mid-way focus group seminar and semi-structured individual interviews.

The two-hour mid-way focus group seminar were held to address any problems or issues in the program and elicited learners' feedback to their ESL learning. All participants were provided with translations regarding the nature of the research. They were informed that their participation before the mid-way focus group seminar was completely voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time. They signed a standard consent form and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. A thorough discussion was initiated about their learning difficulty and problems (APPENDIX A). The mid-way focus group seminar was recorded with the consent of participants.

A great rapport with the participants had been well established for a year. A majority of the participants had attended the ESL curriculum I taught in the fall and winter of 2017. They thought learning English was important in their lives and most of them possessed ESL learning experiences in Canada. This cohort of seniors were willing to speak and shared their personal experiences, as well as opinions. They often asked me questions when they were not sure that they could comprehend the lesson content. They read the lesson conversation many times and finished assignments punctually. In addition, they usually discussed their problems with others in order to seek possible

solutions from divergent perspectives. I was impressed by their meticulousness and their desire to learn.

Six participants were invited to participate in the fifteen-minute semi-structured individual interview upon the completion of the program. In contrast to pure observation, interviews provide detailed personal data and investigators will be able to manage the information in a more effective way (Creswell, 2012, p. 218). Interviewees were provided with translations regarding the nature of the research and informed that their participation before the interview was completely voluntary and that they had the right to terminate the interview at any time. Interview protocol was administered in their choice of language, either Chinese or English. Interviews were audio recorded with the consent of interviewees and transcribed into document files. Questions for the semi-structured interview consisted of twelve general questions and four open-ended questions (Appendix B). Interviewees were asked about their place of birth, their length of residency in Canada, their ESL learning experiences, and the situation of their using Chinese and English in life. In order to explore senior Chinese immigrants' learning needs, they were invited to give opinions about the following issues: the proportion of native to non-native teachers, the use of first language (L1) and second language (L2) in the process of teaching, the balance of developing fluency and accuracy, the percentage of form-focused instruction (FFI) and meaning-oriented instruction (MOI), the adoption of language learning strategy (LLS), learning anxiety and learner reticence, their perspectives of group work as well as class size. By the end of the interview, interviewees were encouraged to provide more other specific answers. Creswell (2012) states that open-ended questions in interviews release participants from the researcher's

standpoint and the results of previous studies (p. 218). Instead of being constrained within anticipated feedback, interviewees generated open-ended responses to questions. The data was primary material in that all the information was directly collected from the people or situation under the study. Notes were taken by the investigator during the interview. Conducting one-on-one interviews is the most time-consuming approach, but it is the most appropriate for this study.

As the program instructor, I took detailed teaching journals throughout the program, in order to solidify my thinking, which may include reflection on research limitations and proposal of further questions. Furthermore, I stepped back when necessary to grasp the whole milieu of their ESL learning.

Data Analysis

In this study, a series of interrelated steps were employed for data analysis, whose procedures were specified as follows: Together with data collection, interpreting data was employed simultaneously. Bogdan and Biklen (2006) suggest that “analysis and interpretation are concurrent with data collection and are more or less completed by the time the data are gathered” (p. 160). Creswell (2014) advocates the compatibility of gathering data and composing research findings in a qualitative study (p. 195). Due to the large quantity of text data in this study, the researcher winnowed the data, i.e. explore some of the information and took no account of other segments that could not be used in a qualitative research. The researcher tried to grasp the whole picture by reflecting on the overall depth, credibility and use of the information.

Rossmann and Rallis, in 2012, state that “coding is the process of organizing the data by bracketing chunks (or text or image segments) and writing a word representing a category in the margins” (as cited in Creswell, 2014, p. 197). Creswell (2014) notes that segments of the data (sentences or paragraphs) are categorized by labelling a term, which is often obtained from the actual expression of the participant (called an *in vivo* term) (p. 198). Themes were identified through this coding process. The interpretation was accomplished by presenting the inquirer’s personal understandings derived from an individual background, or drawing conclusions from the comparison with literature, or discovering further questions that may emerge in the data (Creswell, 2014, p. 200).

Validity and Reliability

Creswell and Miller, in 2000, articulate that “validity is one of the strengths of qualitative research and is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account” (as cited in Creswell, 2014, p. 201). The adoption of multiple validity strategies strengthens the investigator’s capacity to evaluate the accuracy of research discovery and convinces readers (Creswell, 2014, p. 201). A summary of the findings were posted on the University of Windsor REB research site. A written summary in Mandarin was submitted to the WCSSA. Furthermore, as the researcher, I kept a reflection journal to clarify bias brought to this study. According to Creswell (2014),

Self-reflection creates an open and honest narrative that will resonate well with readers. Reflectivity has already been mentioned as a core characteristic of qualitative research. Good qualitative research contains comments by the researchers

about how their interpretation of the findings is shaped by their background, such as their gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin. (p. 202)

As the researcher, I spent a prolonged time span of eight months in the field, i.e. delivering this ESL program in the fall of 2017, as well as the winter of 2018, and participated in community service provided by WCSSA. The value of primary material and my extensive field experience enhanced the validity and accuracy of the study.

Ethical Concerns

The participants were senior Chinese immigrants in Windsor and were vulnerable group of people. According to Tri-council policy statement: Ethical conduct for research involving humans (TCPS2 2014), vulnerability is defined as the following:

A diminished ability to fully safeguard one's own interests in the context of a specific research project. This may be caused by limited decision-making capacity or limited access to social goods, such as rights, opportunities and power. Individual or groups may experience vulnerability to different degrees and at different times, depending on their circumstances. (p. 210)

The proposal for this study was submitted to the Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University of Windsor. The study was launched once the research ethics review was completed. Accordingly, the participants were informed of their rights to voluntarily participate. They made decisions based on clear information about the foreseeable risks and potential benefits of the study and were not coerced or influenced. Participants' autonomy was completely respected and the anonymity of participants was assured.

The risk of slight discomfort was present when participants either communicated their feelings or suggested negative feedbacks during the learning process. At the focus group and interview, they were invited to provide their opinions about the program and were not asked with any sensitive questions that would cause pressure. They were informed that they had the right to stop the interview if they felt uncomfortable with the discussion. As the instructor of this research program, I had been acquainted with the participants since the fall and winter of 2017 in Windsor Chinese Senior Service Association (WCSSA) programs. The participants and I shared the same cultural background: we spent most of our lives, more than two decades, in China. During the research, I had a close relationship with the class throughout the program, from the mid-term focus group to the end of the program when they were recruited for the interviews.

I hope that one potential benefit of this study to the participants would be to improve their oral communication skills and bolster their confidence in everyday lives in Canada. Furthermore, I expected that as a result of participating, they would increase their understanding of Canadian culture and society, and experience less difficulties in different aspects of life. The confidentiality of the research data was guaranteed. In order to safeguard the privacy of participants' views, each participant was referred with code number rather than their names.

Definition of Terms

L1 & L2. In this study, first language (L1) of the participants refers to the Chinese language. Since the program aims to improve students' oral skills, the first language that

participants communicate in life is Mandarin. Second language (L2), refers to the English language.

Late L2 learners. Due to the massive controversy and uncertainty about the critical period, the late L2 learners in this research refers to adult students who begin to learn English after eighteen years old. Early L2 learners are defined to be students who receive English training prior to the age of eighteen.

Senior ESL learners. In this study, senior ESL learners are identified as late L2 learners who begin to learn the English language at a relatively mature age. They were born and grew up in the context of L1 for a considerable period of their life path, and acquired a limited access to the L2 environment in Canadian society. Their L2 exposure is restricted by language underperformance in their lives.

Learning expectations and learning needs. Many studies address the ESL learners' perceptives, needs and attitudes (Al-jamal, 2007; Asassfeh et al., 2012; Hadi, 2013; Moattarian, 2012; Qaddomi, 2013; Rao, 2002; Savignon & Wang, 2003). Nunan, in 1994, claims that "teachers should find out what their students think and feel about what they want to learn and how they want to learn" (as cited in Savignon & Wang, 2003, p. 226). In this study, learning expectation refers to ESL learners' thoughts, feelings or even preferences about a specific content or item that they can acquire from ESL programs. Learning needs are identified as requirements or desires observed in ESL learners that will contribute to their language learning and performance.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This qualitative research is conducted with a mid-way assessment as well as post-program semi-structured interviews. Ten participants joined the mid-way focus group seminar and discussed their senior ESL (English as a Second Language) learning in Canada. At the seminar, ten questions were addressed in great detail in order to explore the learning needs of the senior Chinese migrants. In the process of coding qualitative data, three themes emerged: their perceptions of individual linguistic performance, expectations of ESL facilitator-student interaction, as well as requirements for ESL learning contexts. A semi-structured post-program interview was conducted with six individual participants in order to further explore their ESL problems, demands and expectations.

The program site is located in the meeting room of a downtown apartment building. The classroom is rectangle-shaped and spacious with three sash windows. Walking into the room, a projector screen hangs on the wall to the right. From the windows of the room, the beautiful vista of the river is visible. Ten minutes before the lesson started, several senior students arrived and began to set up the desks and chairs. After they organized the classroom, they seated themselves and got ready for class. Most of the class attendants took out a notebook and a pen; some put thermoses on the desks to drink tea or water during class. Several participants carried portable electronic dictionaries so as to look up new vocabulary when necessary.

Mid-way Focus Group Seminar Findings

During the program, ten participants were willing to take the mid-way focus group seminar as a mid-term assessment. Student profiles are demonstrated in Table 3 introducing variables such as age, gender, overall residence time in Windsor as well as past ESL learning experience in Canada. As expected, the participant data changed only slightly from that of 2017 fall ESL program and remained considerably similar.

Table 3: Participant Profiles

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	AGE	OVERALL RESIDENCE TIME IN CANADA	ESL LEARNING IN CANADA
1	F	78	18	None
2	F	85	15	None
3	F	74	14	Ouelette 660
4	M	81	14	Ouelette 660, W5 (Windsor Women Working With Immigrant Women)
5	F	77	16	Mason School
6	F	80	30	None
7	F	72	6	YMCA (The Young Men's Christian Association)
8	F	75	19	Ouelette 660

9	F	74	9	W5, YMCA (The Young Men's Christian Association)
10	F	76	15	Manson School

Based on the participants' feedback, I categorized three main themes that depicted the ESL learning milieu of this exclusive group in Canada: how they comprehensively perceived their ESL learning outcomes, what characteristics of teacher-student interaction they expected, and what specific features they required for an ESL classroom.

Chinese senior immigrants' perceptions of ESL learning outcomes.

Accuracy is prioritized over fluency for oral competence. At the mid-way focus group seminar, every participant regarded accuracy as primarily important in their learning. In the lesson of going to the doctor, Participant 1 got stuck at the word "temperature." She leaned her head forward and watched me attentively in order to catch everything I said. After I demonstrated the pronunciation of "temperature" to the class, I asked everybody to read the word and corrected their wrong pronunciations. When it came to Participant 1, she tried hard to open her mouth and uttered the word with difficulty. I asked her to repeat, and she endeavoured to pronounce the first two syllables of the word. We looked at each other and smiled. Then I told her to say after me and we practiced together twice. Due to tremendous mental pressure, Participant 1 decided to withdraw from this program after three weeks of learning and consented that her data could be analyzed in this study. She attended my ESL program last fall. Her attendance

rate was outstanding among the participants. She tried to persuade her husband, who is in his seventies as well, to attend the ESL program but failed.

During the program, students' oral skills are prioritized. Purposeful oral training in specific phonological phenomena, such as stress, linguistic alternation, even intonation, had been gradually introduced during the lessons. In the lessons about seeing the doctor, attendants had a difficult time with pronouncing "examination" as well as "cardiogram." The stress in the word "examination" falls on the fourth syllable where the vowel phoneme is "a." However, several participants mistakenly pronounced it with the stress on "e," which is a first vowel phoneme. Similarly, attendants wrongly vocalized the stress on "i," the second vowel phoneme in "cardiogram." Those words with more than three syllables appeared to be a remarkable challenge for senior students, in that they were usually confused with the placement of the stress.

presentation

I take Chinese herbal medicine.






 <i>cough</i>	 <i>urine examination</i>	 <i>Chinese herbal medicine</i>
 <i>cough syrup</i>	 <i>cardiogram</i>	

Figure 1: Vocabulary – Lesson Classware of Seeing the Doctor

For instance, in the lesson about seeing the doctor, I asked the class to practice the dialogue by reading after me sentence by sentence. When we moved to the sentence “your body temperature is normal, but your blood pressure is high,” many students could not read it and got stuck at “temperature” as well as “pressure.” I addressed the pronunciation of these words and checked student by student. After that, I asked the class to read after me one more time. Most of the students succeeded in articulating this sentence without stammering.

practice

Tom: *Good afternoon doctor Ryan.*
Doctor Ryan : *Hi Tom, what's wrong with you?*
Tom: *I feel dizzy. My chest is aching.*
Doctor Ryan : *Ok. Your body temperature is normal. But your blood pressure is high.*
Tom: *Yes, and I often have nosebleed in the morning these days.*
Doctor Ryan : *I want you to take an X ray chest next week. Did you take the body check up this year?*
Tom: *Ok, I'll make an appointment for X ray chest. I will take the body check up next Wednesday.*
Doctor Ryan : *Good. Drink water, eat healthy food and get enough sleep. Hang out with friends and stay happy.*
Tom: *Thanks, I see.*




Figure 2: Conversation - Lesson Classware of Seeing the Doctor

In the mid-way focus group seminar, Participant 3 argued that she would not be understood by people without being able to speak accurately. Participant 8 emphasized the prominence of accuracy by giving an example:

I think fluency is indispensable. It's just like how toddlers learn to speak: they try to make some utterances and see whether people will understand. If they can be understood, this way works. The essence of language is communication. Many of us

have a big vocabulary, but become too timid to talk in English with local people. I think we need the courage to pour our words out and not be nervous if we are not understood. I value accuracy over fluency as accuracy is always the foundation.

Participants 3 and 7 held the opinion that accuracy made up the foundation of fluency, which could be developed over time.

Pessimistic perceptions of linguistic achievement are epidemic. In the mid-way focus group seminar, only Participant 4 argued that his language performance was satisfactory as he was of a very senior age. Participants 3, 5 and 8 maintained that they were not satisfied with their linguistic proficiency. Participant 8 claimed people's diverse intonations often impeded her from communicating effectively, which aroused her anxiety, and stated: "I don't think my vocabulary has met the standard of making daily communications and I need to improve my oral skills." Recalling past ESL learning experiences, Participants 5 and 9 stated that the disproportionate relationship between investment and obtainment generated their lack of confidence:

I lost my confidence in my previous ESL learning as I found the proportion of time I invested and my learning achievement was not positive. The reason why I insist in going to English school is that it has become part of my daily routines. I've got no pressure for learning English and I just tried my best to learn. However, I think we should be confident for ourselves and the teacher should have confidence in us too. I'd feel more motivated when I learn if my peers were more optimistic. I can ask my children to accompany me to see the doctor, but I'm not willing to burden them as

they've already been very busy. Although we're well-educated, it's hard to start over in learning English. (Participant 9)

I'm not satisfied with my current English level but I can do nothing about it. I've been to Canada for a long while and attended English school, but ended in vain. My memory is poor, and my pains and gains are disproportionate despite the considerable time and energy I have invested. I can only read about but cannot speak out the things I've learnt. Nor can I understand what others talk about. My reading skills are fine, but my listening and speaking are poor. I didn't know how to ask questions in class because the teacher didn't speak Mandarin. I've got some confidence after I attended this program. I enjoy learning with Chinese teachers in this program. The lesson was not confusing to me and thus I was able to comprehend quickly. I found the lesson knowledge easier to remember. I feel delighted about my improvement in this program. However, my achievement doesn't live up to my expectation as the program span is not long enough. (Participant 5)

The strong willingness to communicate in English is compromised by language deficiency. Participant 3 held that “In a country where people speak English, I'm willing to speak English as well. But I often couldn't because it's really hard for me to open my mouth” and further maintained the prominence of facilitators in their oral output. Participant 5 expressed that she was impressed with Participant 4's explanation of the reason for Participant 3's absence from class:

I'm impressed that Participant 4 managed to speak English to explain when Participant 3 was absent from the program due to her fever. I remember that

Participant 4 said to the instructor in class: “she is sick and she’s got a body temperature of 38 degrees Celsius.” He applied what we’d learnt in class in real life.

I was amazed that I could understand it all. If this program were to last longer, I think I would master the language more quickly.

Chinese senior immigrants’ expectations of ESL teacher-student interactions.

The ESL facilitator’s ability to be able to communicate in Mandarin is valued. In the operation of the program, the majority of participants experienced struggles with an English-speaking environment. Participants often asked for more repetition or explanations when I talked too fast as well as when they did not understand my instructions.

In the mid-way focus group seminar, Participants 6 and 8 expressed their affection for Chinese teachers who can speak some Mandarin (L2). Specifically, Participants 1 and 6 explained that they would be able to ask questions immediately in class. Participant 7 stated that it was hard to follow the lessons in which the facilitator could not speak any Mandarin (L2) when necessary. Participant 1 recalled the program instructor using some Mandarin (L2) to assist her learning in class:

My English performance has been rather terrible, however, the instructor often assisted me in marking some Chinese characters so that I could be able to make clear utterances. It worked on me and I’m really grateful.

In the classroom reality of the program, I adopted Mandarin as the instruction language when necessary. When students put forward complicated questions, I would either type some Chinese or explain in brief Mandarin in order to make the answer more

understandable. In the lesson about talking about our body and health, Participant 3 asked about the differences between “ache” and “pain.” I first answered her questions in English but she was still confused. The whole class seemed to not understand as many frowned and kept looking at me. I then typed Chinese on my laptop and presented that information a second time. Participants immediately nodded their heads and confirmed that they were not puzzled any more.

In the mid-way focus group seminar, Participants 1, 2 and 5 advocated a bilingual ESL classroom where English (L2) and Mandarin (L1) are used as the classroom language:

I think Chinese teachers can deliver the lesson in English as well, which is advantageous to the improvement of my listening skills. I can definitely communicate in Mandarin with Chinese teachers about some complicated questions. In my opinion, my learning outcome is developed to a better extent in a bilingual (English and Mandarin) classroom.

Participants 3 and 5 recommended that Mandarin be used to give explanations to class under necessary circumstances:

In some cases, the question put forward by somebody in class might cause confusion among others. Therefore, the teacher is expected to further explain in some Mandarin.

The teacher can explain in some Mandarin if students don't understand what he/she says. In that way, it would be easier and faster for students to accept the knowledge.

Students whose language proficiency are insufficient are very likely to get confused if the lesson is completely delivered in English.

Participants 2 and 8 held the opinion that the proportion of Mandarin (L2) in their ESL classes was determined by the language levels of students. Participant 8 argued that the ESL facilitator “delivers the class in English if students are stronger as students will be able to ask questions if they don’t understand what the teacher says” and it is definitely reasonable to believe that “the class has understood if nobody asks.”

Participant 3 suggested that the ESL facilitator was supposed to deliver the lesson in English most of the time in that the target language was English.

In the very beginning of the program, many students expressed that they could not understand what the instructor talked about in class, in that their English vocabularies were rather limited. In the week one lesson, I said: “Read after me.” Everyone stared at me and did not know what to do next. Participant 3 then asked me in Mandarin to pause for a moment and explain the meaning of the English sentence I had just said. She stated that it would be much easier for her to follow the lesson if she had been informed of the meaning in Mandarin as well as English. Although participants were able to understand the teacher’s language and did it with little hesitation, they are comfortable with making small talk in Mandarin, which is their mother tongue.

-
- **Move.** 动起来。
- **Try the dialogue with your partner.** 和搭档朗读对话。
 - **Pass the handout.** 传手头资料。
- **Mime the words.** 用哑剧表演单词。
 - **Fill in the blanks using the words in the box.** 选词填空。
-

Figure 3: Program Lesson Classroom Instructions (English to Chinese)

The method of the facilitator's instruction is based on learning content and student variables (age, linguistic level, etc.). Participant 8 stated her preference for the teacher giving meaning-oriented instructions (MOI), which highlighted student comprehension in comparison with form-focused instructions (FFI). She mentioned her experience of learning the present perfect tense:

I tend to think over problems, like the structural foundation of the sentence, such as the present perfect tense, as I was long puzzled after my teacher had addressed that in class. I was confused about the definition of “starting in the past and continue until the now,” because I thought the action happened in the past which has nothing to do with the present. Afterwards, I gradually figured it out by listing examples, such as “He has been living in Beijing for three years.” I analyzed this sentence and was able to comprehend: he moved to Beijing three years ago and lives there now and probably will live into the future. The present continuous and the present simple are

inappropriate here. I believe grammar is used more often in writing and reading, rather than oral English. Therefore, I like MOI as students will think over the question and gradually comprehend by listing examples.

Participant 2 expressed the inclination towards form-focused instruction (FFI) due to the aging brain mechanism:

As I'm very elderly now, what I tried is just to accept the knowledge from the teacher as much as possible. I'm comfortable with FFI. I will be familiar with those grammatical items by giving examples and comprehend by writing them down.

Interaction, in order to push me to think about, sounds like the way that adolescents learn. It's not suitable for me who is of a very senior age.

Participant 5 held the opinion that she was likely to get confused if the exemplification was delivered concurrently with presenting knowledge. Participant 3 pointed out that age was not completely decisive in the choice of classroom instruction. She maintained that it was a matter of language performance: elementary students acquired the information in a gradual way, while advanced learners desired to be challenged more in their process of learning.

Learning strategy plays an indispensable role in the process of learning. All participants hoped to obtain some learning strategies from ESL classes. Participant 9 stated a learning demand for lexical learning:

I often go back to China and I am learning English with low consistency. I think strategy is rather important. When I learn a new word, I can master several words at

a time if the teacher teaches about its similar words. These words include synonyms as well as those that share the same pronunciations but different spellings.

Participant 3 expressed the necessity to know oral strategies by giving the example of her asking for directions.

The learning process is expected to be uncomplicated and enjoyable. At the mid-way focus group seminar, Participant 9 emphasized her appreciation of an easy and interesting class: “I like the program instructor’s way of teaching. She teaches with delight, and we learn with fun.” Participant 5 stated that she was motivated to learn more in a lively classroom atmosphere:

I didn’t get tired or sleepy in this program. I enjoy the lively atmosphere and didn’t feel exhausted. When we learnt about the word “examination”, I felt a little tired, the instructor asked us to clap our hands at the word stress. I immediately awoke and remembered the word pronunciation.

Chinese senior immigrants’ requirements for ESL learning contexts.

Collaboration is highly appreciated. Every participant approved of the prominence of pair work and expressed their affection toward working with partners in class.

Participant 8 mentioned that pair work forced her to conduct more oral communications in class:

Working in pairs pushes me to open my mouth. A large proportion of Chinese immigrants to Canada are well-educated, diligent in their studies and have decent comprehension abilities. I’m very senior and my language level is poor, so I’m rather

shy to initiate talk with others. Working with a partner forces me to speak out and it's okay to say it wrong, just like singing a song off key.

Participant 9 agreed and maintained that her partner helped to correct her mistakes. Participants 2 and 8 stated that they felt comfortable with pair work in class. Participants 3 and 7 held the opinion that pair work elevated the classroom efficiency in that they were able to obtain more by interacting with peers.

With an average capacity of ten attendants, diverse types of classes are required to meet various learning needs. Participants 3 and 5 concurred that the program size had met their expectations of ESL contexts. Participants 2, 4 and 7 argued the importance of different class types and suggested that the class accommodate no more than ten students.

I expect the class size between four and eight with a maximum of ten. The English schools I used to attend usually had large classes with a capacity of more than twenty students. In that way, I've got little chance for class interaction and my speaking skill was underdeveloped. Most of us are not afraid of making mistakes. (Participant 4)

I think it would be beneficial for me to attend both the face-to-face class and workshops in this program. In the face-to-face, the instructor delivered the lesson with more details and gave us a lot of opportunities to practice. We were asked to speak English for the rest of the time and I could practice my oral skills a lot. This is an oral skill improvement program and we're supposed to talk much in class. It should be a reading class if we're told just to read. I expect four to six students in the face-to-face and I hope that we'll have a lot of chances to exercise reading the dialogues in pairs...I believe eight to ten students will make the workshop work best.

Acquiring different language levels, workshop attendants can get inspired and learn from each other. (Participant 2)

Participant 7 elaborated on her preference for attending face to face classes throughout this program:

I like the face-to-face class of this program very much. In workshops, I couldn't keep up with the learning pace because my English basics are not strong. I feel that workshops are more profound as students are forced to speak more sentences. In the face-to-face class, I can learn the fundamental vocabulary. I expect the capacity of the face-to-face class to be four to six students, with a maximum of eight. For the present, I prefer face-to-face classes to workshops (laugh). I'd love to attend the workshops if I can learn vocabulary and mingle in class.

By the end of the mid-way focus group seminar, several participants visualized a series of features for the ESL program they demand: practical learning content that is related to daily life, appropriate learning pace that encourages knowledge consolidation, and moderate repetition of key information. Participant 9 shared her expectations in great details as follows:

As for senior English learning curriculum, I hope the learning contents will be specifically tailored for us elderly people. Besides, the teacher is supposed to have some experience working with senior learners. I want to learn the knowledge that is of remarkable use in life and have it consolidated well because I don't go to work. I hope that I'll get to know how to express common medicines, diseases and side effects. In that way, I'll study with motivation. I think it's not that practical for us to

primarily study history, election and crime. These issues are not closely related to my life so I'm not eager to learn. The teacher is supposed to know the seniors' learning needs and pace, which is not as fast as the youngsters'; otherwise, learning would be like pouring water into a bucket with a hole in it. I'm motivated to learn more after I've got a sense of achievement. Self-study at home is another choice for some of us, but language study is an interactive process of learning. I would not make myself understood by people if I studied English at home, which is a waste of time and energy. I need to learn practical skills, such as going to the bank and paying taxes. Paying taxes is not complicated, but I cannot do that if I don't know the process. This will stimulate my learning motivation. I would be happy if the teacher can guide me to learn and play. I can learn new knowledge and make progress. Actually, I think it's good for senior ESL (English as a Second Language) learning to go over and over key vocabulary and sentence structure. If I were asked to take an assessment, I probably would not be able to pass as I need adequate repetition to have the knowledge consolidated.

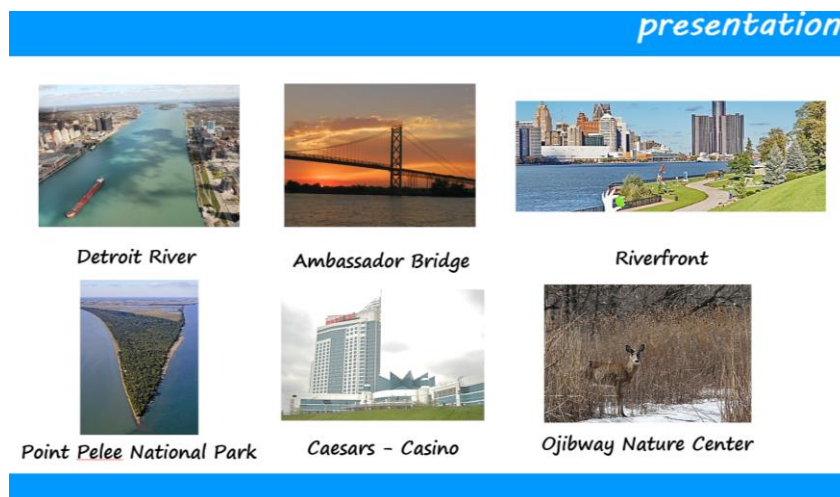


Figure 4: Vocabulary - Lesson Classware of Travelling

At the beginning of the program, several participants were overloaded with the study pace. When it came to the end of lesson two, several students expressed the need for a review session of the contents they had learned. Participants 3 and 10 stated that the learning pace was a bit faster than they were able to manage. Participant 10 expressed that although she was able to speak some basic English in daily life, it was challenging for her to follow the syllabus. I adjusted the syllabus from then on and added a review session every two or three lessons. In the review sessions, participants reviewed all vocabulary and dialogues by conducting plenty of reading exercises, which the students felt very comfortable with.

As time passed, participants learnt to be adaptable to this pace of ESL study. They successfully transformed from passive listeners to active questioners. In the second review session, Participant 2 asked questions about the usage of prepositions in the English language, for example, in the phrase “I like the sunset at the Ambassador Bridge.” Participant 2 wondered what the meaning of this sentence actually was and asked why we did not say “I like the sunset on the Ambassador Bridge.” When I was ready to explain to her in detail, Participant 4 contributed his opinion. He thought “on” would be used if the person was standing on the bridge. Then the whole class burst into discussion. Her question caused me to address the class about the differences between “on” and “at.”

In the lessons about travelling, I asked the class to do gap-filling exercises, using the vocabulary they had just learned to complete a short passage about their lives in Windsor. Many participants found this exercise challenging. They read the sentence, thought for a moment, and began seeking the vocabulary handout in their file organizers. It took

Participant 4 a while to locate the word that he intended to write in his pile of handouts. He wrote down every two letters, checked the spelling, and continued finishing the word. I walked by and asked him if he had finished. He said yes and showed his writing to me. I said: “Can I take a look?” He agreed. I held the exercise handout and saw that his writing was tidy and in good format. No mistakes were found.

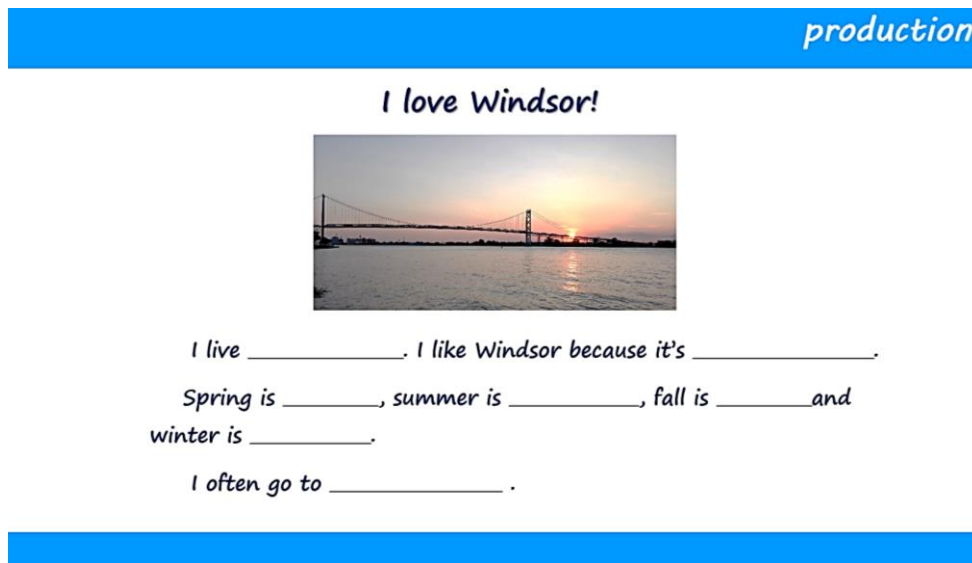


Figure 5: Gap-filling Exercise - Lesson Classware of Travelling

At the mid-way focus group seminar, Participants 2, 3 and 8 stated their ambition for more challenging exercises, such as Chinese-English translation and declared their readiness to increase the number of program assignments.

In summary, in this six-week program which emphasized the development of speaking skills, although participants possessed strong communicative desire, they were inclined to appear pessimistic about their overall ESL learning performance as a result of their inadequate language proficiency. Every seminar attendant confirmed the overwhelming weight of accuracy over fluency in their speaking as the fundamental

learning objective. Participants expected the ESL facilitator to be able to communicate in Mandarin (L2) and give appropriate instructions to meet their divergent learning needs. They maintained high hopes of mastering effective learning strategies in the process of language learning in an uncomplicated and enjoyable context. Seminar attendants desired to learn English, with a preference for group work, in an ESL classroom under ten students.

Interview Findings

Six participants received the semi-structured interview upon the completion of the program: five females and one male. The majority of the interviewees migrated to Canada fourteen years ago, participated in ESL classes, and their average length of Canadian residency was approximately fourteen years. Five attendants went to local ESL schools, while one participant did not possess any ESL learning experience in Canada. In the interview, six questions were precisely addressed in order to explore the individual learning situation of the elderly Chinese learners. The process of coding data generated three themes: bilingualism of classroom language, the appropriateness of learning content (moderation of learning speed combined with the repetition of key information, and the practicality of lesson topics), as well as the impact of the ageing process on learning achievements.

The expectation of a bilingual ESL classroom. Three interview participants argued that their learning performance would be enhanced in a classroom where the facilitator was able to communicate in Mandarin. They felt that their questions would be better addressed. Two of them had previously suffered from lack of confidence as well as fears

of attending ESL schools, which resulted in damages to their health and departure from the class. They concurred that monolingual teaching undermined their satisfaction, and a bilingual classroom improves their ESL learning. Participant 5 recalled her previous unsatisfactory ESL learning experience, the result of monolingual class, which was a challenge for her:

I could barely understand the contents the teacher wrote on the whiteboard, nor could I understand anything the teacher said. That learning environment was particularly challenging for me...I wanted to learn the language well. However, I think my pains are much more than my gains. My learning outcome was not as satisfactory as I had expected. I was still unable to understand or communicate. After I withdrew from the school, I self-studied at home when I had questions.

Participant 3 held that the facilitator's inability to speak Mandarin impeded her from obtaining more information in her past ESL experience:

Compared with teachers who speak English all the time, I prefer teachers who can speak Mandarin because I'll gain more knowledge from the latter's class. I used to attend curricula where a foreign teacher spoke English but I couldn't understand what he said. I tried to ask questions, but failed because I couldn't speak much English. If I spoke Mandarin, the teacher wouldn't understand me as well. This is another obstacle to me...The truth is that I couldn't understand when the teacher spoke only English in the classroom. Neither could I understand him nor communicate with him. Therefore, it turned out to be a waste of time.

Participant 9 maintained that she was satisfied with her ESL learning achievement, but she expected the facilitator to understand some Mandarin: “I hope that the teacher can speak some Mandarin so that I can ask questions when I am confused. I could ask questions about the challenging words, grammatical rules and passive voice.” Participant 5 stated that her past ESL learning experience caused her to feel nervous and her husband’s health condition deteriorated:

I got nervous about learning English from then on. Every time the teacher asked me questions in class, I was extremely afraid and wished I could have hidden at the back of the classroom. I tried to avoid answering questions as I didn’t know how to answer...Not long afterwards, my husband felt great pressure. It was the fourth semester, after one week of learning, and he felt extremely nervous about attending class. As a result, his blood pressure rose. He tried to lower it but failed. He thus withdrew from the class due to his health condition. From then on, he began to self-study at home when he had questions. His blood pressure gradually dropped back to normal.

In the meanwhile, Participant 5 emphasized learning with a teacher who could speak some Mandarin boosted her ESL learning results:

I think my questions were better solved after I attended this program, which was just like spring rain to a dry farmland (smile). I think Chinese teachers are probably more suitable for Chinese students. Under some cases, one sentence of the program instructor’s comment would immediately solve my puzzle and dispel my mystery. This is particularly advantageous to my understanding of the word as well as the

grammatical rules, and thus enhances my memory. My memory will not last long if I'm confused and I will forget about everything soon. This is because I didn't understand or digest things I've learnt. As a consequence, I'm very likely to fall behind my classmates. The knowledge was there, but it's not mine. I'll quickly forget about it if I recite it without understanding it.

The demand for a moderate learning pace integrated with recurrent learning cycles as well as practicable learning content. Four interview participants expressed the eager wish to study life-related information, which they could apply in authentic contexts. Several mentioned in the interview that they expected to obtain more knowledge about medications from ESL classrooms. They failed to remember content that is distant from their daily lives in that they were not able to use it. The demand for a moderate learning pace, which was characterized by a cyclical presentation of key language, was popular in the interviewees' responses. Participant 9 maintained that she was comfortable with the moderate learning pace, which was not as intensive as classes for younger people: "As for senior ESL learning, I hope the learning pace is not that fast. Besides, I want to have my learning consolidated with authentic sentence examples. If I recite the example, I would probably speak it out next time." Participant 2 suggested that this program should offer differentiated classes according to students' linguistic levels and maintained that associating beginner with advanced learners in the same classroom was not an effective way:

Mingling students with different linguistic levels doesn't work well for me. I hope the program will be able to offer differentiated classes for the students. Essentially, senior people usually cannot afford too much pressure. Well, I can give it a try if you

push me to catch up with the advanced students, but it would be demanding as I would exhaust myself. It would require me excessive effort to study with high-performance students.

Participant 9 recalled her previous learning experience in which she was provided with a great deal of information about employment, and her learning outcome was therefore far from pleasant: “My teacher didn’t speak Mandarin and taught a great number of employment vocabulary terms. I had been quite familiar with a certain word, but when I saw it the following day, I was unable to recall its meaning.” Furthermore, Participant 9 asserted practical learning topics were prominent in her ESL learning:

Moreover, I hope lesson topics are essential as well as practical, such as seeing the doctor, paying taxes and going to the bank. I want the teacher to expand my knowledge about medication, tell us the names of medicine and its side effects so that I would be able to understand when I saw the pharmacy labels. I’ve learned a good deal of knowledge about history and geography in previous curricula. Although I passed the exam, I forgot about it all very soon. I expect to learn topics such as going grocery shopping, shopping online and purchasing flight tickets.

Participant 10 maintained that inappropriate learning content as well as fast learning pace resulted in her unhealthfulness and withdrawal from the school in the past:

... the learning content, such as interviews and driving on highways, didn’t meet my learning needs that emphasized solving practical problems. Besides, I was not comfortable with the fast learning pace as I was the most elderly student in class. At first, I didn’t want to fall behind so I spared no effort to catch up with my young

classmates, which turned out to be a vain attempt. As a result, I got sick. After I took the exam nervously, my blood pressure rose dramatically...Although the learning contents were fine, I couldn't use them in my life. I eagerly demand the lesson content to be closely related to my life-related issues. I can solve my problems with what I've learnt from the class.

Participant 3 provided suggestions for a specially-designed course for senior ESL learners: "I propose that the government establish specially-tailored curricula for students who are from divergent backgrounds. In that way, our learning outcomes will be improved a lot and it will save the government's energy as well as expenditure."

Participant 2 responded that practical learning materials were of much value to her ESL learning:

...Now I think learning English is particularly necessary in my life, but I don't intend to achieve outstanding language performance. I just want to learn some practical expressions...In my opinion, it's beneficial to me to learn some commonly used English expressions in different aspects of life. I still need to learn English even though I'm very senior now....

Participant 3 claimed that she was not that likely to forget about information if she was able to apply what she had learned:

In Canada, I live in the Chinese community and communicate in Mandarin most of the time. Therefore, I've got little chance to apply the English I've learned, which is also a problem. It would be better if I could put it into practice, for example, by

participating in community service and gradually learning the language from work fellows by listening and talking.

The influence of the ageing process on senior's ESL learning perceptions. Three participants maintained that the ageing mechanisms made it overwhelmingly difficult to achieve sufficient ESL knowledge despite their strong wills to master the English language. Participant 3 stated that fading memory drastically impacted her learning outcomes:

Senior people usually have poor memory and tend to forget the previously-acquired knowledge after they just learnt new information (laugh). Because of that, I feel the teaching outcomes may not be very satisfactory... I've got a big learning difficulty due to my age. I'm almost 75 and approaching my eighties. This is the time when people can quickly forget about things. Now I'm learning new things and feel it is hard. I'm willing to learn more but will forget quickly. This is the greatest challenge for me.

Participant 4 expressed that his learning achievement was satisfactory, but was considerably compromised by his poor memory: "During that time, I was pretty satisfied with my learning outcomes. However, the process of aging slows the mechanism of my brain (laugh) and thus degrades my memory, which makes it harder to learn a new language." Participant 2, who was the eldest in the program, mentioned that long distance commuting between ESL school and her apartment posed a challenge for her very senior age:

My legs are not flexible enough and I cannot walk for long. Consequently, I didn't attend the ESL curricula at YMCA (The Young Men's Christian Association) and some other locations in Windsor. What's more, a large number of these classes are mainly available to new immigrants, not for citizens. I heard about an English class provided for citizens, but it's too far from the place where I live. Therefore, I decided not to commute.

In summary, a bilingual ESL classroom in which the facilitator was able to communicate in Mandarin when necessary benefited senior students' comprehensive learning outcomes. Due to the impacts of the ageing process, elderly ESL learners expected to repeat consolidating the fresh information at a moderate speed as well as during regularly recurrent intervals. The ageing mechanisms impeded them from achieving satisfactory learning performance and negatively impacted their perceptions of ESL learning.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Research Findings

Adopting a case study method, this qualitative study aimed to explore the current learning milieu of a cohort of senior Chinese immigrants in a communicative-approach-based ESL (English as a Second Language) program in Windsor, Canada and gain some insight into future ESL curriculum design and policy-making. Research data were collected from two sessions: a mid-way focus group seminar as well as post-program semi-structured interviews. In addition, I, the program facilitator, managed to keep a teaching journal to further solidify my thinking, reflect on limitations and discover upcoming questions to be addressed. In order to discover elderly Chinese immigrants' ESL learning needs and expectations, this research was conducted to discuss the following four questions:

- 1. How do elderly Chinese immigrants perceive their ESL learning in Canada?*
- 2. What are the learning needs of elderly Chinese immigrants in the pre-course, in-course and post-course phase of ESL learning?*
- 3. How are the expectations towards ESL curriculum of elderly Chinese immigrants distinctive?*
- 4. What problems or misunderstandings may occur in the process of ESL learning for elderly Chinese immigrants?*

Senior Chinese immigrants' perceptions of ESL learning in Canada. From the research, participants asserted that ESL learning was particularly necessary in their lives

and that they were confronted with a variety of difficulties and challenges. This is compatible with the research findings of Tieu and Konnert (2015). During this six-week language program, the elderly Chinese immigrants, by and large, held pessimistic perceptions of their ESL learning in Canada. Despite the willingness to make a satisfactory effort, their recognitions of linguistic achievements were overwhelmingly undermined by the impacts of the ageing process. This confirms the research conclusion by Hou and Beiser (2006). The students' widespread discontent as well as despondency was mainly generated by the disproportion between investment and benefit.

Senior Chinese immigrants' ESL learning needs and expectations. In this program, participants expressed their needs for ESL facilitators who are able to communicate in Mandarin (L1) as they experienced struggles with an English speaking environment. As the program instructor, I was constantly asked by students to repeat my words when students could not understand. The ability of ESL teachers to speak some Mandarin when necessary improved their overall comprehension of the lesson and maximized their ESL learning outcomes. This demonstrates the indispensability of Chinese teachers in assisting senior Chinese ESL learners, and is consistent with the standpoint of Wu (2010).

Participants expressed their approval of a bilingual ESL classroom where English (L2) and Chinese (L1) are used as the classroom languages according to learners' language performance and believed that the proportion of L2 and L1 was determined by the linguistic levels of students. This is compatible with the findings of previous research (Wu, 2010; Xie, 2014; Savignon & Wang, 2003).

According to the participants, accuracy plays an indispensable part in the development of oral skills. They approved the primary importance of accuracy over fluency in their ESL learning. Participants maintained that fluency could be acquired over time. Those opinions do not contradict the previous research outcomes.

Participants held divergent views of instruction-giving. Participant 8 expressed her preference for meaning-oriented instruction (MOI) in that this way of teacher-student interaction motivated her to undertake more active thinking in the process of ESL learning. This is consistent with the results of previous study (Williams, 1995, as cited in Asassfeh, Khwaileh, Al-Shaboul & Alshboul, 2012; Savignon & Wang, 2003; Rao, 2002). Participants 2 and 5 insisted that they were more comfortable with form-focused instruction (FFI) in the ESL classroom. Participant 3 argued that various linguistic levels, and ages probably, resulted in the difference of their requirements for ESL instructions. Their standpoints are compatible with those from Rao (2002) as well as Asassfeh et al. (2012).

Every participant believed that it was necessary to obtain learning strategies from ESL classes, especially that the facilitator could introduce similar words that include synonyms, homonyms as well as homophones. This is in harmony with the research findings by Dörnyei (1995).

There was remarkable despondence among participants about their ESL learning achievement. This is particularly compatible with the viewpoint of Horwitz et al. (1986). The majority of participants were not satisfied with their ESL learning outcomes except one, who was satisfied mainly due to the senior age. Several participants felt depressed

and anxious over the disproportionate relationship between investment and accomplishment and reticent about their ESL learning and thus withdrew from ESL classes. Their experiences confirm the research results by Tallon (2009). Despite widespread learner anxiety and learner reticence, participants' willingness to communicate (WTC) remained normal. One participant maintained that she was willing to speak English although she constantly found it hard to open her mouth.

Participants suggested that an ESL class accommodate fewer than ten students in order to improve their learning outcomes. Several participants believed that they would have more chances to interact with the class instructor as well as their peers if the class capacity fell between four and eight, with no more than ten attendants. This is congruent with the research by Evertson and Folger (1989) as well as Glass and Smith (1980), who revealed that considerable class size undermines both teaching outcomes and learners' learning performance together with their satisfaction (as cited in Aubrey, 2010, p. 10). Three participants concurred that they benefited a great deal from divergent class types during the program. Face-to-face classes maximized their learning efficiency so that they successfully strengthened language underperformance. The instructor's instant feedback in the face-to-face class assisted students' acquiring learning fundamentals correctly, which established a solid foundation for attending workshops later to communicate effectively with peers. This confirms the findings of previous research (Aubrey, 2010; Savignon & Wang, 2003). Participants maintained that working with their partners is conducive to increasing learning performance. This is consistent with the outcomes from prior research (Aubrey, 2010; Xue, 2013).

The learning needs and expectations of elderly Chinese immigrants in Canada appear strikingly distinctive from children, young adults and middle aged language learners. In the program, Chinese senior participants highly valued the ESL instructor's ability to communicate in Mandarin (L1) and advocated a bilingual ESL classroom where Mandarin is utilized appropriately to better facilitate their learning. This is not encouraged in the ESL classroom of children and young adults, who are far more likely to prefer English as the instructional language throughout their learning process. As for senior learners, the classroom instructional practice is expected to be generally interactive and meaning oriented, shifting promptly to focus on form when necessary, whereas young adults usually feel more comfortable with meaning-oriented instruction (MOI). The research participants suggested that they obtain life-related information, such as about medication and public transportation, from ESL classes in order to assist them in solving problems in authentic life contexts. They preferred a moderate learning pace, not as intensive as that of young people, integrated with recurrent learning cycles that present key lesson knowledge at regular intervals, which consolidated their learning obtainment and maximized their learning outcomes.

Senior Chinese immigrants' ESL learning problems.

Struggles with English-speaking environment. Throughout the program, most of the participants experienced difficulty with adopting English as the exclusive classroom language. As the program instructor, I was constantly asked by the participants to repeat or explain my classroom language. Due to their linguistic deficiency, participants felt it challenging to understand an English-speaking educational environment and thus were

far more likely to fall behind. They felt frustrated, which likely discouraged them from attending ESL classes and negatively impacted their perceptions of ESL learning.

The impracticality of learning information. Participants showed satisfaction toward the program learning content and stated they were eager to acquire practical information from ESL classrooms. It is increasingly probable that elderly ESL students will achieve unsatisfactory learning outcomes if the lesson knowledge is far from their daily life. They frequently forgot the class information in that it is virtually impossible for them to apply unrealistic learning content in authentic life contexts. This degraded their learning efficiency and limited their learning motivations.

Intensive non-repetitive learning pace. At the beginning of this program, most participants experienced excruciating uneasiness and considerable pressure due to intensive learning content as well as rapid study pace. Before they had consolidated the learned information, they found it hard to acquire new knowledge in that their memory would deteriorate under tremendous pressure. The intensive learning speed characterized with new knowledge impacts elderly students' learning performance.

Low self-perception of ESL learning achievement. In this research, participants were commonly despondent with their previous ESL learning experiences in Canada. The influences of the ageing process, monolingual classroom language, unrealistic learning content as well as intensive learning pace accelerated their pessimism about ESL learning. They believed that their learning obtainment was not as satisfactory as they had expected and were dispirited by the disproportionate correlation between ESL investments and benefits.

Discussions

The bilingualism of senior ESL classroom. I advocate an elderly ESL classroom where English (L2) and Chinese (L1) are adopted as the classroom languages. A monolingual ESL class will possibly discourage to deteriorate Chinese elderly migrants' ESL learning. In the program, as most learners were language beginners and of a very senior age, it was a considerable challenge for them to participate in lessons in which English was the exclusive classroom language. When senior learners fail to understand a facilitator's language in class, it is recommended that the facilitator provide further explanation in very succinct Mandarin sentences. The appropriate proportion of English (L1) and Chinese (L2) in class is determined by the correlation of students' linguistic levels and specific learning situations. Chinese language (L1) is encouraged to deal with complicated questions that are associated with elusive grammatical items as well as abstract vocabulary.

Practical ESL learning information. I recommend elderly ESL curriculum contain as many life-related topics as possible. According to the previous data (see Table 2), going to the doctor, body and health, food and drinks, using public transportation, and habits and routines received widespread affection from senior ESL learners. In addition, going to the bank, reporting taxes, and the communication with repair people were popular. Senior ESL learners would be able to contextualize this knowledge into moments of their everyday reality in order to solve daily problems.

A moderate ESL learning pace integrated with recurrent learning cycles. Empirical data proved it demanding for senior learners to master intensive information in

a limited time duration. I suggest senior ESL learning pace be moderate, i.e. not as rapid as that of the young learners', with repetitive presentations of key knowledge at regular intervals. In the program, a review session was thus generated every two or three weeks in order to help senior learners better consolidate their learning. They confirmed that they did not feel overloaded with a maximum of eight new English words and two situational dialogues in a lesson. In the rest of the proceedings of this ESL program, the majority of participants gradually adapted to this learning syllabus that optimized their learning potential.

Specially-tailored senior ESL curricula. I propose that ESL schools, senior centres as well as non-profit organizations upgrade senior ESL curriculum design in order to emphasize the elderly's specific learning needs that appear strikingly divergent from other demographic groups. Elderly learners suggested that differentiated classes be offered to accommodate students with divergent English levels. The ESL curricula for Chinese senior ESL learners are expected to be effectively synthesized with life-related learning content, moderate learning pace, recurrent learning cycles, a beneficial combination of meaning and form instruction-giving pattern, and an appropriate proportion of Chinese (L1) and English (L2) classroom language. In addition, class drilling, which is primarily valued by most senior learners in the program, is frequently encouraged in ESL classrooms.

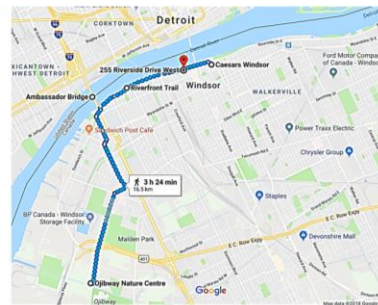
Linda: Hi, Tom. It's spring in Windsor. Let's go out and have fun!
Tom: Shall we go to the Ojibway Nature Center on Thursday?
Linda: Good idea! I want to see the deer? Do you want to take a walk by the Detroit River in the afternoon?
Tom: Yes, let's go to the riverfront and the sunset at Ambassador Bridge is beautiful.
Linda: And you can see the geese and squirrels!
Tom: Shall we go to Caesars Windsor in the evening?
Linda: No, I don't gamble. And it's too late.
Tom: Have you been to Point Pelee?
Linda: No, is it a park?
Tom: Yes! It's the most southern place in Canada!
Linda: That's great!

Figure 6: Conversation - Lesson Classware of Travelling

Reflections

As the program instructor, the researcher is impressed by participants' meticulousness and grit in their ESL learning. In the beginning of the program, the majority of the participants experienced considerable challenges and pressure due to the overload of learning. After they gradually adapted to the program's learning pace and intensity, this cohort of elderly students manifested the desire to further challenge themselves. The program participants attended the classes with concentration and constantly initiated discussions. During the program, a series of communicative tasks were conducted, such as gap-filling and conversation role-playing. Participant 3 proposed that they were ready for more complicated communicative tasks and even Chinese-English translation exercises. In addition, Participants 2, 3 and 8 suggested that the facilitator assign related homework to them after class in order to strengthen their learning.

Tom and Linda are talking about travelling in Windsor...



1. Where do they go on **Thursday**?

Go to **Ojibway Nature Center**.

2. What **animals** can they see at riverfront?



Squirrel
Squirrels



Goose
Geese

3. Order **the places** they will go in Windsor.

Ojibway
Nature Center



Riverfront



Ambassador
Bridge



Point Pelee
National Park

Figure 7: Lesson Tasks - Lesson Classware of Travelling

Working with senior ESL learners is far more meaningful than expected. Due to the deficiency in the previous literature, the learning problems of this exclusive ethnic group remained unsolved in their language learning process, which influenced their perceptions of attending ESL classes and undermined their ESL performances. Throughout the program, the facilitator-student interaction was characterized with vigorous collaboration and yielded inspiring outcomes: this cohort of learners was comfortable with the communicative language approach, which encouraged them to exchange meaningful communications and achieve some confidence that assist them in overcoming upcoming obstacles.

Suggestions for Future Research

This research enquires into a senior ESL program in order to know the perceptions of Chinese elderly learners. Increasing probing enquiries are advocated to further explore

the ESL learning dynamic of this exclusive group. There exists a few areas that require attention from scholars and educators for future study:

1. What specific learning needs do Chinese senior learners possess in the ESL classroom in Canada?
2. How should facilitators effectively integrate communicative language teaching (CLT) into Chinese senior immigrants' ESL classrooms?
3. Are there any ESL teaching pedagogies that are appropriate for Chinese senior learners? Why are they conducive to their ESL learning success?

Significance of the Study

This study examines the present situation of ESL learning from a cohort of elderly Chinese learners in Canada and explores their perspectives. There has been limited prior research that explores senior ESL learners' needs and expectations, so this research bridges the gap in literature within the field of study. Canada has been validating cultural diversity as a national awareness since 1971 and initiated a multiculturalism law in 1988. From then on, a variety of language programs, as well as legislations, were launched by the government in order to preserve ethno diversity, encourage equality, eliminate hindrance and promote integration.

The findings of this research may provide empirical data to ESL practitioners, non-profit organizations as well as senior service centres in the future proceedings of curriculum design as well as policy-making. The conclusion of the study should be of significance to policymakers and practitioners to acquire a thorough understanding of the social milieu that characterizes Chinese elderly immigrants' ESL learning in Canada.

This may help policymakers to issue more effective policies to encourage the sustainable development of immigrant seniors' ESL learning. Practitioners will be more aware of their own responsibilities and hence launch pertinent language programs in order to better accommodate this community. The recommendations of this research may contribute to transformation, within the sphere of ESL, which will yield benefits for an increasing number of Chinese elderly immigrants in the Canadian society.

Limitations

The overall limited number of participants, as well as one participant's withdrawal from the program, may decrease the applicability of the research. Due to the constraints of resources, this short-term program merely lasted six weeks. The qualitative data collected throughout a prolonged time span will possibly present the participants' ESL learning situation in a more comprehensive way. Adequate time duration is likely conducive to a more thorough enquiry into the perspectives of this exclusive group.

Conclusion

This research makes an enquiry into the distinctive needs and expectations of Chinese senior ESL (English as a Second Language) learners in Canada in order to explore their current ESL learning milieu. Although this cohort of Chinese elderly participants concurred with the prominence of ESL learning in their lives in Canada, they were commonly pessimistic and discontented with their ESL learning outcomes, which was the consequence of ageing impacts as well as the disproportionate correlation between their investment and accomplishment.

A bilingual ESL classroom is expected in which Mandarin is adopted as the classroom language when necessary. The facilitator's ability to communicate in Mandarin is valued in order to maximize learners' learning. Accuracy, as the fundamentals of speaking skills, gains more weight than fluency, which could be developed over time. The diversity of learners' linguistic levels results in their divergent requirements for instruction-giving method. Learning strategies are expected in their process of ESL learning, and small class size, together with various class types, is advocated so as to secure facilitator-learner interaction as well as learner-learner communication.

This cohort of senior learners were confronted with a variety of problems in their ESL learning experiences. Their learning was, more often than not, challenged by the monolingual classroom communication, undermined by impractical learning information, and obstructed by intensive non-repetitive learning pace. Therefore, a specially-designed ESL curriculum is advocated to satisfy the distinctive learning needs and expectations of senior learners. The senior ESL environment is suggested to adopt English (L2) and Chinese (L1) as the classroom languages, which efficiently assists senior learners in comprehending complicated questions and elusive lesson information. Senior ESL learning content is expected to relate to their life issues. A moderate learning pace, integrated with recurrent presentations of key knowledge, is highly recommended.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Mid-way focus group seminar questions

Questions on ESL Learning Needs

1. Do you prefer native speakers as your instructor or non-native speakers? Why?
2. Do you want teacher to use any Chinese (L1) in the class? Why?
3. Which is more important to you in ESL learning, fluency or accuracy? Why?
4. Do you prefer FFI (form-focused instruction) or MOI (meaning-oriented instruction)?
Why?
5. Do you think teacher should teach some language learning strategies in the process of learning? Why?
6. Are you satisfied/anxious about your present English performance? Why?
7. Were you willing/comfortable/reluctant to speak English (L2) during the program?
When did it happen?
8. How do you feel about the working in pairs or within groups?
9. Do you think the current class size is suitable for you?
10. Any other suggestions?

Appendix B: Semi-structured interview questions

General Questions

1. Please say something to introduce yourself.
2. When were you born? How long have you been living in Canada?
3. Did you attend any ESL training in Canada?
4. Do you speak English most of the time?

Questions on ESL Learning Expectations

1. What ESL program do you expect to attend? Any details?

Questions on ESL Learning Problems

1. Did you have any problems or could you not understand anything in this program?
When did this happen?
2. Any other problems?

Appendix C: Recruitment notice



关于“加拿大中国老年英语学习者对于英语作为第二语言学习的期待和问题”的研究

参与者招募启事

为了更深入地了解加拿大中国老年英语学习者对于英语作为第二语言学习的期待和问题、以及这一群体在加拿大英语学习的现状，本人学术研究项目即将启动，现公开招募研讨会和访谈参与者若干人。

如果您已定居加拿大多年，对于学习英语有自己的经历和感受，年龄超过 65 岁，且参加过温莎华人敬老协会英语会话班，欢迎您的参与。

研讨会和访谈会在 6 月举行，具体时间经和参与者协商后确定。

地点：21 层会议室，255 Riverside Drive East, Windsor, ON。

研讨会时长 2 小时，访谈时间为 15 分钟。

如有您对此感兴趣，或者有任何疑问，请联系研究人：

电话：1-226-975-6363 邮箱：xu1111s@uwindsor.ca。

Appendix D: Consent to participate in research



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are asked to participate in a research study titled “Senior Chinese ESL learners’ perspectives on their learning expectations and needs in a communicative-approach-based program in Windsor: A case study” conducted by Man Xu from Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor and Dr. Terry Sefton.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Man Xu,

Terry Sefton

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate the present situation of elderly Chinese migrants’ ESL learning in a communicative-approach-based program in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, in order to find their learning expectations and needs. From the perspective of that exclusive community, this research proposes insights for both language instructors and administrators into their future ESL curriculum design and policy-making.

PROCEDURES

A two hour mid-way focus group seminar as well as 15 minutes semi-structured individual interview in the 21 floor meeting room at 255 Riverside Drive East, Windsor.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORT

There are no known risks associated with this study. A slight discomfort might arise when participants communicate their feelings in the learning process.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/TO SOCIETY

This study improves your oral communication skills and may bolster your confidence in everyday lives in Canada. Furthermore, you are likely to gain a profound understanding of Canadian culture and society, and be face with less difficulties in different aspects of life.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no compensation for participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to ask questions about the research. You can ask the researcher to explain any questions you may have. You can choose to sign the consent form or not. Your names will not be shown during the interviews in the research. The raw data will be stored in a secure computer file and only the researcher and supervisor have access to it. The data will be destroyed when it not needed any longer after the research is completed.

PATICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You have the right to withdraw at any time during the interview. Any information collected in the interview will be kept by the researcher.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

The findings of the study and all relevant information will be provided to you. The results of the study will be posted wherever the researcher recruited participants.

Dates when results are available: approximately 2018/08/31

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, publications and presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; email: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study *Senior Chinese ESL learners' perspectives on their learning expectations and needs in a communicative-approach-based program in Windsor: A case study* described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

—

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Signature of Investigator

—

Date

Appendix E: Program syllabus

Week	Topic	Face to Face	Workshop
1	Talking about weather	Thursday	Friday afternoon
2	Our body and health	Thursday	Friday afternoon
3	Travelling	Thursday	Friday afternoon
4	Living in Windsor	Tuesday	Wednesday afternoon
5	Going to the doctor's I	Tuesday	Wednesday afternoon
6	Going to the doctor's II	Monday	Tuesday afternoon

VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Man Xu

PLACE OF BIRTH: Beijing, China

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1988

EDUCATION: The experimental high school attached to
Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China,
2003
Beijing International Studies University,
Beijing, 2007
University of Windsor, Master of Education,
Windsor, ON, 2016