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An interpretative study of the perceptions and reactions of spanish-speaking students to motivators and demotivators in the english as a new language classroom.

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AN INTERPRETATIVE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS AND REACTIONS OF SPANISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS TO MOTIVATORS AND DEMOTIVATORS IN THE ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Using a qualitative approach, this study explored and analyzed the experiences of Spanish-speaking students who took English as a second language (ESL) classes during Grades K-12 as well as the experiences of teachers licensed for English as a second language who teach in public schools in Indiana. Data were collected by conducting individual interviews with four teachers and one focus group session with three former ESL students who are Spanish-speaking Hispanics. The analysis of the data resulted in emergent themes that helped to identify specific motivators and demotivators that play a role in the ESL class.

The six main themes that emerged from the data were the language learning environment, the student-teacher relationship, the choice of task or reading material, the use of technology, peer scaffolding, and the difficulty of the task. In addition to these themes, students' perspectives on placement as well as the teachers' concerns and ideal scenarios were also included in this study. All the information provided by the participants can be used to better understand the dynamics of the language classroom and how these dynamics either promote or hinder the students' willingness to learn English.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During the last three decades, the number of Spanish speakers in the United States has constantly increased. As of July1, 2009, the Hispanic population constituted the biggest minority in this country, 16% of the nation's population. This makes the United States the second largest Spanish-speaking country in the world (U.S. Census Bureau News, 2010).

Historically, "immigrants' retention of their native language and slowness in learning English has been a bone of contention since colonial times" (Parillo, 1991, p. 21), and in order to address this situation, it became the job of schools to "Americanize" immigrants by means of teaching them English quickly and keeping them from using their home languages (Daoud, 2003). In this respect, in 1965 the Bureau of Education in the state of Texas was clear to say that

> although a "bilingual person" can speak two languages, . . . it is not the object of "bilingual education" to make school children fluent in two languages. It is intended to permit a limited English-speaking child to develop enough proficiency in English to learn in English. (Moore & Pachón, 1985, p. 154)

This imposition on Spanish speakers to learn a different language and a different culture backfired when some Hispanic groups refused to learn English, claiming that it threatened their cultural identity and heritage, which they did not want to lose. As the number of Hispanics grew, so did their communities. Nowadays there are many areas in cities such as Chicago, Indianapolis,

New York, Dallas, Phoenix, and Los Angeles, among others, where people can get by without speaking a single word in English unless they are enrolled in school, where English remains the only language of instruction.

Learning English will help immigrant children to adapt more easily to the new society to which they now belong and to become successful individuals. Yet, in spite of the benefits that learning English may bring to their daily life, some Spanish-speaking students currently enrolled in English as a second language (ESL) classes in middle school or high school may not be motivated to learn English. This may cause them to be outperformed by their peers.

Several factors can lead to either success or failure when learning a second language. The context, the teacher, the textbook, the materials, and the amount of time of instruction all play important roles within the ESL classroom. However, the students themselves and their motivation to learn English, as well as their perceptions and reactions to motivators and demotivators in the classroom, are perhaps the most relevant aspects for the teaching practice. Here the question remains as to what motivates students and what does not. In this respect, this study aims to better understand the experiences of Spanish-speaking students in the ESL classroom that can either motivate or demotivate them to learn the language.

Purpose of the Study

On May 17, 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren delivered the following message for the unanimous Supreme Court during the *Brown vs. the Board of Education* case hearing:

> Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in

> the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him [*sic*] for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms. (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954)

It was determined that the duty of American schools is to provide equal and appropriate education to all children regardless of their race, religion, and social status. Although this decree was originally made to end racial segregation and discrimination against African-American students, it was later expanded to address and cover the needs of students with disabilities and, more currently, non-English-speaking students. In spite of being granted the same rights and privileges when it comes to education, Hispanic students continue to trail other ethnic groups in high school completion rates at the national level; they also have the highest rate of high school dropouts in the country (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). This is also the situation in the state of Indiana, where Hispanic students had the second largest dropout rate (4.4%) and placed third in graduation rates (68.8%) for the 2006-2007 academic year (Stillwell, 2009). One of the reasons behind this situation could be the fact that some Hispanic students struggle with the language barrier every day because they are still in the process of learning English. In 2008, 76% of Hispanics age 5 and older spoke Spanish at home (U.S. Census Bureau News, 2010). If those Hispanics who are also Spanish-speaking students do not have the proper instruction and motivation they need to learn English, they will not be able to learn in English either. Regarding English language instruction, the state of Indiana passed the House Enrolled Act 1324 (HEA

1324) in 1976, whose main objective was to "carry out a bilingual-bicultural program for the improvement of educational opportunities for non-English dominant children" (HEA 1324, 1976, p. 461). The Act also stated that its goal was to "place the bilingual-bicultural student in the regular course of study as expeditiously as possible" (HEA 1324, 1976, p. 462) at the same time that it emphasized the need "to preserve an awareness of cultural and linguistic heritage" (HEA 1324, 1976, p. 465). However, it was not until the year 2001 with the No Child Left Behind Act that most states started to pay closer attention to their limited English language learners (ELLs) and reinforced their ESL programs for K-12 (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, 2003). Yet there is still a lack of information about how those students perceive and react to the motivators and demotivators they encounter in the ESL classroom. It is believed that knowing what motivates or demotivates Spanish-speaking students to learn English will help ESL teachers to make their language instruction more meaningful and significant for this specific population.

Statement of the Problem

The present study aimed to explore the experiences of Spanish-speaking students to determine how they perceive and react to the specific motivators and demotivators that are present in the ESL class as well as the extent to which these motivators and demotivators either inhibit or increase Spanish-speaking students' willingness to learn English. The main objective of this study was to explore the experience of Spanish-speaking students who took ESL classes in Grades K-12, now called English learners (EL) in Indiana, and were enrolled in Indiana State University (ISU) during the 2010-2011 academic year. Particular attention was paid to the students' reflection on their motivation to learn English as well as the motivators and demotivators that they encountered. The specific motivators and demotivators that emerged from

the data collection were identified for analysis, including how students perceived them and reacted to them.

Significance of the Study

By learning more about what motivates and demotivates this group of students, it is believed that further knowledge will arise regarding how to help this specific population to learn the target language and how to improve their academic performance altogether. Doing this is essential not only for the future of this specific population but also for the future of the U.S. economy. Because the Hispanic population is not only the biggest but also the fastest growing minority in the country, all decisions made regarding this minority group and their education are certain to have an effect in the future of the country.

Qualitative Methodology

An interpretative approach was used to explore the experience of Spanish-speaking students in the ESL classroom. In this qualitative study, a focus group was used in order to get a better understanding of how students perceived the motivators and demotivators present in the class and how they reacted to them. In addition, individual interviews were conducted with ESL teachers in order to obtain their opinions and provide a broader understanding of the topic.

Research Questions

The main research question for this study was the following: What motivates or fails to motivate Spanish-speaking students' willingness to learn English? Secondary questions for this study included

1. What do Spanish-speaking students identify as motivators and demotivators in the ESL classroom?
2. What are the experiences in the class that lead to motivation and demotivation?

3. What do the students construct as the reasons for being motivated or demotivated by those experiences?

Definition of Terms

Listed below are the definitions of the main terms and acronyms that were used in this study, but some of the terms listed here may be further described in later chapters.

Motivation. The general desire or willingness of someone to do something; drive, enthusiasm.

Motivator. The specific element or factor present in the classroom that promotes or increases motivation.

Demotivation. The condition or fact of being demotivated; loss of motivation.

Demotivator. The specific element or factor present in the classroom that hinders or decreases motivation.

ESL. English as a Second Language. The name denoting the learning of English for people who speak a language other than English.

ENL. English as a new language. The name denoting the learning of English for people who speak languages other than English.

L1. The language a person speaks from infancy to childhood. In this study, L1 is Spanish.

L2. The target language being learned. In this study, L2 is English.

INTESOL. Indiana Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. A professional organization for K-12 and higher education teachers of English language in Indiana.

LAS Links. Language Assessment Scales Links. The only instrument approved for initial placement/screening of new language minority students in Indiana.

Code-switching. The concurrent use of more than one language, or language variety, in a conversation.

It is pertinent to clarify here that most of the literature reviewed uses the terms ESL and ENL interchangeably. Additionally, the Indiana Department of Education changed the classification of their non-English speaking program from English as a second language (ESL) to English as a new language (ENL) and more recently to English learners (EL). For the purpose of this study, the term ESL was used when referring to the class or the instruction received by the students, and the term English language learners (ELL) was used to refer to the students receiving language instruction. Both acronyms, ESL and ELL, are considered accurate and internationally accepted in the field of study. Additionally, it needs to be noted that the terms limited English proficient (LEP) and fluent English proficient (FEP) are considered outdated in the field. However, the Indiana Department of Education still uses these terms to describe their student population and their level of proficiency in English. In this study the terms LEP and FEP were only used when quoting the Indiana Department of Education, the literature reviewed, or the participants. The terms LEP and FEP were not used to describe the students who participated in the study or the students currently taking ESL.

Assumptions

Spanish-speaking students and teachers licensed for ESL participated in the study voluntarily. All the students participating in the focus groups were fluent in listening and speaking in Spanish (L1) and in English (L2). All the teachers participating in the individual interviews were fluent in listening and speaking in English (L1). All answers provided by the participants were considered honest, and the information was considered a reliable account of their experiences in the ESL classroom.

Limitations

1. This study was limited to Spanish-speaking students and ESL teachers who agreed to participate in the study.
2. The student participants were required to have Spanish as their L1 and English as their L2 in order to participate in the study and in the focus groups.
3. The study only included the opinions of some Spanish-speaking students and a few teachers licensed for ESL who work in public schools in Indiana and who are members or former members of the INTESOL organization.

Delimitations

This study was limited to Spanish-speaking students who were enrolled in Indiana State University during the 2010-2011 academic year and who graduated from a public high school in Indiana. All the students participating in the study were required to have taken ESL classes for at least 12 weeks of the time they spent in the K-12 setting. Certified teachers of English as a second language who are employed in a public school in Indiana and who have been members of the INTESOL organization were also interviewed for the study. All participants were asked to consent to participate in the study and to be tape-recorded by me during the individual interviews and the focus group session.

Summary

This study was designed to create a better understanding of the experiences of Spanish-speaking students as they were attempting to learn English and how they perceived and reacted to the different motivators and demotivators that they encountered in the ESL classroom. Learning more about what motivates and demotivates this group of students will allow teachers and experts to identify different ways to help this specific population to learn English and to

improve their academic performance. Because the Hispanic population is constantly increasing, it becomes essential to address the educational needs of those who do not speak English in order to promote a better future not only for this minority group but also for the U.S. economy.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

To understand better the experiences of Spanish-speaking students in the ESL classroom, it is pertinent to review former studies regarding this group and the ESL instruction they receive. It is important to examine some well-known theories on motivation and language learning. This review of literature served as a frame to contextualize this study and its findings.

Spanish-Speaking Students in American Schools

The Hispanic population in the United States has constantly increased over the last three decades. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (2010), the number of Hispanics has soared to over 48 million, making this minority group not only the biggest but also the fastest growing. Hispanics in the United States are also the youngest population with a median age of 27.4 years compared to the 36.8 years of the total population. As of July 1, 2009, 22% of the population younger than 18 was Hispanic, and 20% of all children and teenagers enrolled in Grades K-12 nationwide also belong to this ethnic group (U.S. Census Bureau News, 2010). According to Piché, Taylor, and Reed (2002) the "rapid growth has led to population dispersal in the nation as the communities with large shares of immigrants are no longer confined to a few gateway cities or states" (p. 247). In the specific case of Indiana, Hispanics account for 5% of the state population, double that reported in the census for 2000. Within this group in Indiana, 63% are native-born and 37% are foreign-born. Sixty-seven percent of the Hispanic population in the

state, ages 5 and older, report that a language other than English is spoken at home, and 23.09% of them, ages 5-17, are enrolled in Grades K-12 in Indiana public schools (Pew Hispanic Center, 2010). This rapid and constant increase has forced schools to adapt their curricula in order to satisfy the language needs of Spanish-speaking students.

The degree to which Spanish–speaking students will succeed academically is closely related to their ability to learn English. According to the report *Status and Trends in the Education of Hispanics* by Llagas and Snyder (2003), since 1972, Hispanic students have had the highest dropout rates and the lowest high school graduation rates when compared to their African-American and White peers. This group is also the least likely to take advanced placement math and/or science classes when in high school and more likely to drop out of school, either because they are too far behind those their same age or because their parents need them to work to help cover the family's expenses (Schnaiberg, 1996, p. 1). Additionally, "English-language learners (ELLs) are lagging behind other students on math and reading achievement tests, and one-fourth are failing to make progress toward language proficiency" (Jost, 2009, p. 1044). Piché et al. (2002) argued that this situation is taking place because "most states have failed to provide the resources needed by schools to effectively educate LEP students to high standards" (p. 245). They also affirmed that by 2002 "only 30% of public school teachers instructing limited-English students nationwide reported receiving any special training for working with these students" (p. 252).

Another reason making this situation more problematic is the fact that most Spanish-speaking students do not have the level of literacy required in their native language to build a solid base for their second language. Piché et al. (2002) asserted that

> recent studies of immigrant secondary education programs have identified two LEP student subpopulations as being of special concern. One is the set of immigrant children who arrive as teenagers. The time available for these late-arriving secondary students to master a new language and pass subjects required for high school graduation is limited. . . . Another subgroup that concerns classroom teachers is the growing number of under-schooled newcomers who must overcome critical literacy gaps and the effects of interrupted schooling in their home countries. (pp. 251-252)

Most English learners have to start by learning in high school the skills they should have developed in elementary school because schools tend to assume "first, that the basic elements for academic success (i.e., educators with appropriate resources and know-how) already exist in the classroom; and second, that students are ready to perform at or near the desired level" (Piché et al., 2002, p. 249). For these students, the struggles that they have to face to learn English might limit not only their academic success in Grades K-12 but also their future as members of American society. In this regard, S. Gardner (2004) affirmed that those people who are Spanish-dominant "are more likely to report lower incomes and be holding blue-collar jobs" (para. 10); more specifically, those people who speak only Spanish make less than $30,000 a year, while those who are native Spanish speakers but also know some English make over $30,000 (para. 11). This situation poses a real concern for the American economy, as it is projected that 30% of the nation's population will be Hispanic by the year 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau News, 2010).

English Language Programs and Instruction

One of the oldest struggles, not only for Spanish speakers but for all immigrant groups who speak a language other than English, has been the language barrier they faced when coming to the United States. In the specific case of Spanish speakers, however, their language struggle

differs from that of past ethnic groups. Because of their large numbers and their constantly growing communities, Spanish speakers have been more likely to retain their first language.

According to DeMarrais and LeCompte (1999), one of the main functions of American schools is to promote cultural transmission, which they defined as "the process by which schools transmit the cultural background, knowledge, and skills of the dominant group from one generation to the next" (p. 73). Corbett (2003) added that "the North American approach to language teaching has emphasized 'acculturation' as a curriculum goal, largely because English language learners have usually been immigrants" (p. 25). Ortmeier (2000), however, argued that in the American school system ELLs are incorrectly considered to belong to a common group based on the fact that they do not speak English, when in reality the students have cultural backgrounds as diverse among themselves as they differ from their American friends. Nieves (1994) affirmed that "the rise in the number of [speakers of a language other than English] is creating new pressures to increase the number of classrooms, expand bilingual education programs, and provide other services for foreign-born students" (para. 7).

English Language Instruction in the United States

In the early 1950s the debate between bilingual education and English immersion began as a tug-of-war between the two different and seemingly opposing approaches to language teaching and learning. Bilingual education gained a lot of attention, especially in southern states with large numbers of Spanish speakers, such as New Mexico, Nevada, California, Texas, and Florida (Parrillo, 1991); however, some sectors of the European-American communities reacted negatively to the idea of including bilingual programs in public schools because they considered that "English-speaking schools provide the heat for the melting pot. Anything else . . . is counterproductive because it reduces assimilation and societal cohesiveness" (Parrillo, 1991, p.

22). Following a trial for discrimination on the basis of language, the Supreme Court ruled in 1974 that

> there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education. Basic English skills are at the very core of what these public schools teach. Imposition of a requirement that before a child can effectively participate in the educational program he [*sic*] must already have acquired those basic skills is to make a mockery of public education. (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974)

This decision added controversy to the already heated debate between English immersion and bilingual education. Scholars' opinions vary greatly on this topic. On the one hand, some scholars believe that English immersion should be implemented for those students "who present the biggest challenge for schools: students from immigrant families typically poor and often headed by parents with limited education" (Porter as cited by Jost, 2009, p. 1044), because the nature of the program allows for rapid assimilation of the language and the culture. On the other hand, however, other experts in the field believe that "the more children develop their first language . . . , the more successful they will be in academic achievement in English by the end of their school years" (Collier & Thomas as cited by Jost, 2009, p. 1035), which is one of the main arguments of those who defend and promote bilingual education. And there are also the experts who believe that one specific type of language is not necessarily better or worse than the others because more attention should be paid to "giving kids access to academic content that sparks their curiosity. The fundamental piece is that education isn't [*sic*] pouring knowledge into empty vessels" (Hakuta as cited by Jost, 2009, p. 1037). It cannot be denied that the rulings of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), along with later reforms to the school

system in the United States, have shaped the education that English language learners receive today. However, experts need to keep analyzing English language education in order to determine the language programs that will most benefit the students who speak a language other than English.

English Language Learners and the No Child Left Behind Act

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed his educational reform, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), that introduced and enforced the concept of school accountability based on the students' performance in standardized testing. The NCLB reform also stated specific goals for English language learners. More specifically, the main objective of Title III is

> to help ensure that limited English proficient (LEP) children attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic competence in English, and meet the same challenging state academic content and student achievement standards that all children are expected to meet. (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, 2003, p. 1)

The academic performance of ELLs in state assessments and accountability plans is included in the adequate yearly progress (AYP) reports, which determine if schools are meeting their expectations or if they have areas that require improvement and, if so, which areas are targeted.

English Language Programs in Indiana

In the fall of 2006, the State of Indiana adopted the LAS Links placement test as "the only State approved instrument for initial placement/screening of new language minority students" (Indiana Department of Education, 2012b, para. 1). According to the Office of Student Assessment, the placement test is "administered upon the student's arrival in the United States" in order to "determine which English Learner (EL) services are appropriate for the student. . . . The annual assessment [is] administered in January and February . . . to determine the student's

current level of English proficiency" (Indiana Department of Education, 2012b, para. 1). The placement test is also administered to newly enrolled students whose parents report that a language other than English is spoken at home (Indiana Department of Education, 2012b). According to the Indiana Department of Education (2012a) for the 2009-2010 academic year, Indiana had a total of 70,962 language minority students; 48,960 were identified as limited English proficient (LEP) and 22,002 had fluent English proficiency (FEP). Of the total number of language minority students, 52,499 were Spanish speakers, which constituted a 73.98% of this student population. In Indiana, for the same school year, 7% of the students enrolled in public schools were Hispanics, and 70.59% of them were language minority students placed in an English language development program.

The LAS Links placement test is administered only once to new students in order to identify them as LEP and place them into English language development services. All new students must be administered the placement test within 30 days of enrollment. Students who are identified as LEP participate in the spring LAS Links English Proficiency Assessment, which is the more comprehensive assessment used to measure annual progress. LEP students continue to take the spring LAS Links until they meet the exit criteria, which consists of scoring at Level 5 two years in a row. There is no time limit placed on enrollment in English language development services. Typically students progress from Level 1 (beginner) to Level 5 (fluent English proficient) in five to seven years. Schools must continue to provide English language development services to students until they reach Level 5 status. In addition, at the high school level, the ESL classes may count as four of the eight required English/language arts credits, so students can take ESL before other general English/language arts classes. To date, there are eight different types of English language programs available in public schools in Indiana. These

programs serve a total of 48,960 LEP students. The Office of English Learning and Migrant Education (Indiana Department of Education, 2012a) provides the following definitions for each available instructional program.

Transitional bilingual education (TBE). This is an instructional program in which subjects are taught through two languages, English and the native language of the ELLs, and English is taught as a second language. English language skills, grade promotion, and graduation requirements are emphasized and L1 is used as a tool to learn content. The primary purpose of these programs is to facilitate the LEP student's transition to an all-English instructional environment while receiving academic subject instruction in the native language to the extent necessary. As proficiency in English increases, the amount of instruction through L1 decreases. Transitional bilingual education programs vary in the amount of native language instruction provided and the duration of the program (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994, as cited by the Indiana Department of Education, 2012a). TBE programs may be early-exit or late-exit, depending on the amount of time a child may spend in the program. Only 1.9% of LEPs in public schools in Indiana are enrolled in transitional bilingual education.

English as a second language (ESL). This is an educational approach in which English language learners are instructed in the use of the English language. Their instruction is based on a special curriculum that typically involves little or no use of the native language, focuses on language (as opposed to content), and is usually taught during specific school periods. For the rest of the school day, students may be placed in a mainstream classroom, an immersion program, or a bilingual education program. Every bilingual education program has an ESL component (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994, as cited by the Indiana Department of

Education, 2012a). This language program serves most LEPs in the state; 18,396 persons or 37.57% of the total.

Pull-out ESL. This refers to a program in which LEP students are "pulled out" of the regular, mainstream classrooms for special instruction in English as a second language (Baker, 2000, as cited by the Indiana Department of Education, 2012a). Pull-out ESL instruction is the second most common program in Indiana. It serves 13.24% of LEP students.

Content-based ESL. This approach to teaching English as a second language makes use of instructional materials, learning tasks, and classroom techniques from academic content areas as the vehicle for developing language, content, cognitive and study skills. "English is used as the medium of instruction" (Crandall, 1992, p. 477). Only 8.87% of LEP students in public schools in Indiana receive content-based ESL instruction.

Regular education program. This *code* is appropriate for a student who has attained the English proficiency level of *fluent* and performs well within the school district's regular education program. It also applies to an LEP student whose parents have declined English language development services, an English language learner served solely through the special education program (not receiving English development services) due to a documented severe cognitive disability, and native English-speaking immigrants. According to the data from the Office of English Learning and Migrant Education (Indiana Department of Education, 2012a), 13.24% of students identified as LEP are enrolled in regular education programs.

English language development (ELD). This means instruction designed specifically for English language learners to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. This type of instruction is also known as *English as a second language* (ESL), *teaching English to speakers of other languages* (TESOL), or *English for speakers of other languages*

(ESOL). ELD, ESL, TESOL or ESOL standards are a version of English language arts standards that have been crafted to address the specific developmental stages of students learning English. This type of instruction has the fewest LEPs, fewer than 300 students (0.6%) receive ESOL instruction in Indiana (Indiana Department of Education, 2012a).

Sheltered English. This is an instructional approach used to make academic instruction in English understandable to ELLs to help them acquire proficiency in English while at the same time achieving in content areas. Sheltered English instruction differs from ESL in that English is not taught as a language with a focus on learning the language. Rather, content knowledge and skills are the goals. In the sheltered classroom, teachers use simplified language, physical activities, visual aids, and the environment to teach vocabulary for concept development in mathematics, science, social studies, and other subjects (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, as cited by the Indiana Department of Education, 2012a). In Indiana 7.47% of the LEPs in public schools receive sheltered English instruction.

Structured Immersion. In this program, English language learners "receive all of their subject-matter instruction in their second language" (Snow, 1986, p. 8). The teacher uses a simplified form of the second language. Students may use their native languages in class; however, the teacher uses only the second language. The goal is to help minority language students acquire proficiency in English while at the same time achieving in content areas. Structured immersion is the fourth most implemented language program, with 13.04% of the LEPs in the state of Indiana.

Motivation and Demotivation

Defining Motivation

Motivation and its effects in learning are not new in the education field. In its most basic definition, Kleinginna and Kleinginna (1981) explained motivation as "an internal state or condition –sometimes described as a need, desire, or want—that serves to activate or energize behavior and give it direction" (p. 1). Tuckman (1999) expanded this definition and affirms that motivation is influenced by three variables:

> (1) *attitude* or beliefs that people hold about themselves, their capabilities, and the factors that account for their outcomes; (2) *drive* or the desire to attain an outcome based on the value people place on it; (3) *strategy* or the techniques that people employ to gain the outcomes they desire. (p. 1)

Tuckman also argued that the interaction between these variables is fundamental because the constant interaction among all three of them constitutes and promotes motivation. After all, he said that

> without attitude, there is no reason to believe that one is capable of the necessary action to achieve, and therefore no reason to even attempt it. Without drive, there is no energy to propel that action. And without strategy, there is nothing to help select and guide the necessary action. (Tuckman, 1999, p. 6)

Lepper (1988) gave another definition in which he affirmed that motivation is better understood as a dichotomous construct between internal and external factors which represent intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, respectively. He defined intrinsic motivation as a "behavior undertaken for its own sake, for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits, or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes" and extrinsic motivation as a behavior that involves "actions

undertaken *in order* to obtain some reward or avoid some punishment external to the activity itself" (p. 292).

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) provided yet another definition of motivation that is closely related to Lepper's dichotomous construct. According to Csikszentmihalyi, "the act of wholeheartedly doing something just to do it is 'flow'," (p. 118) and he defined this flow as

> an act of concentration in which time passes without any awareness of it having passed. . . . Other requisites for flow are being in control of a task, having clear goals within it, and being challenged by it while possessing the skills to perform it. Being completely involved and having the enjoyment of peak performance requires continual growth. (p. 119)

Csikszentmihalyi also argued that even though aptitude is important for any task, the task itself should promote the thinking processes that are required for its fulfillment because "just having greater skills but no greater challenge can result in boredom, [and] something that becomes too easy to do may lose its value" (p. 122), and students would lose their motivation to complete the activity, either because they are not challenged by the task or because they already master the skills required for its completion. Vygotsky (1987) referred to this act as the individual moving from one zone of proximal development to the next. Similarly to Csikszentmihalyi, Louis (2009) posed that Vygotsky's theory argues that the appropriate level of difficulty of the task is essential because

> if a task is easy enough for a learner to complete alone, then no cognitive development will occur. . . . Also, if a task is too hard for a learner to complete successfully, even with assistance, no cognitive development will occur. (p. 20)

Vygotsky's (1987) theory includes the element of peer scaffolding, which he defined as "the child's potential to raise himself to a higher intellectual level of development through collaboration" (p. 210). Louis (2009) explained that the collaboration to which Vygotsky referred can take place between a learner and the teacher or between two learners, as long as one of them is "more knowledgeable" (p. 20) than the other in the task at hand. In addition, Vygotsky argued that the link between the zone of proximal development and actual cognitive development lies in the fact that "what the child is able to do in collaboration today, he will be able to do independently tomorrow" (p. 220). Thus, collaboration or social interaction becomes critical for cognitive development.

Glasser's (1998) choice theory also incorporates collaboration and social interaction, but he perceived them as means to satisfy basic needs, which are survival, love/belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Of these basic needs, Glasser believed that the need of fun and the need of power are closely related when it comes to teaching and learning. Glasser argued that "without the relationship between fun and learning we would not learn nearly as much, especially when we are young and have so much to learn" (p. 31). Glasser added that "if students do not feel that they have any power in their academic classes, they will not work in school" (p. 29). Studies by Holec (1981) and Dickinson (1995) on autonomy support Glasser's choice theory, especially regarding the need of power. Holec described autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (as cited by Shen, 2011, p. 27), and Dickinson characterized the same concept as a "situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with his/her learning and the implementation of those decisions" (as cited by Shen, 2011, p. 27). Both Holec and Dickinson argued that autonomy is vital for learning, especially in foreign languages,

because it allows the learners to set goals, make decisions, and monitor their progress towards their goals (Shen, 2011).

Motivation and Language Learning

The effect that motivation has in learning in general also transcends to the specific case of language learning and language acquisition. R. C. Gardner and Lambert's (1959) seminal work on the study of motivation and achievement on second language acquisition determined how motivation and attitude affected the process of learning a second language. In their study, Gardner and Lambert identified and defined two different types of motivation that influence students' performance in the language classroom; they termed them *integrative motivation* and *instrumental motivation*. Krashen (1981) defined the former as

> the desire to be like valued members of the community that speak the second language; [it] is predicted to relate to proficiency in terms of two functions. The presence of integrative motivation should encourage the acquirer to interact with speakers of the second language out of sheer interest, and thereby obtain intake. (p. 22)

Krashen described the latter as "the desire to achieve proficiency in a language for utilitarian, or practical reasons, which may also relate to proficiency. Its presence will encourage performers to interact with L2 speakers in order to achieve certain ends" (p. 22).

Krashen (1981) further argued that "when the practical value of second language proficiency is high, and frequent use necessary, instrumental motivation may be a powerful predictor of second language acquisition" (p. 23), especially "where there is a special urgency about second language acquisition where there appears to be little desire to 'integrate'" (p. 28). Thus, students who have a high integrative motivation will seek opportunities to use the target language and they will consider those instances valuable, but students who have a high

instrumental motivation will not necessarily look for opportunities to practice the target language, unless such opportunities constitute a means to an end. Viewed in this way, there seems to be a relation between R. C. Gardner and Lambert's (1959) integrative and instrumental motivation and Lepper's (1988) concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which relates to Noels, Pelletier, Clément, and Vallerand's (2003) research on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in language learning. Unlike Lepper, Noels et al. did not see motivation as a dichotomous construct but as a construct with three different variables (intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation), which interact and influence students' performance.

In a similar fashion, Dörnyei (1994) stated that "integrative and instrumental motivations are not antagonistic counterparts but rather are inherently interrelated" (p. 518). Moreover, the degree to which students are instrumentally and integratively motivated and how successful the outcomes are will vary according to their interest in the different activities and how much sense they make of the content presented. In this respect, Csizér and Dörnyei (1998) emphasized that

> motivation is only indirectly related to learning outcomes/achievement because it is, by definition, an antecedent of behavior rather than of achievement. In other words, motivation is a concept that explains why people behave as they do rather than how successful their behavior will be. (p. 20)

This is not to say, however, that they disregard the importance of motivation for second language acquisition; conversely, in their previous research, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) asserted that "without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough to ensure students achievement" (p. 203). Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) also expanded the definition of integrative motivation as follows:

> The "ideal L2 self" is the representation of all the attributes that a person would like to possess (e.g., hopes, aspirations, desires): If one's ideal self is associated with the mastery of an L2, that is, if the person that we would like to become is proficient in the L2, he/she can be described –using Gardner's (1985) terminology—as having an "integrative" disposition. (p. 616)

The final goal of learning a specific language plays an important role in the level of motivation and success that students will have. This is also the case for the value attached to the language and its culture, along with the reasons to study the language. According to Csizér and Dörnyei (2005), the more utilitarian reason to learn an L2 entails a perception of the self that differs from the ideal described above.

> The "ought-to L2 self" concerns the more extrinsic (i.e., less internalized) types of instrumental motives: This self-guide refers to the attributes that one believes one ought to possess (i.e., various duties, obligations, or responsibilities) and that therefore may bear little resemblance to one's own desires or wishes. (Csizér and Dörnyei, 2005, p. 617)

Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) argued that it becomes pertinent for ESL teachers to help their students develop and maintain a positive attitude towards the English language in order to increase their motivation, regardless of whether students have the *ideal L2 self* or the *ought-to L2 self* as their final goal.

Most components of motivation, such as attitude and aptitude, have been extensively researched in second language learning. Krashen (1981), for example, affirmed that "attitude and motivation relate to achievement in second language learning and are much better predictors of success than aptitude and IQ measures" (p. 36). Krashen also added the fact that attitudinal factors fulfill two functions in the language class.

> First, they will be those that *encourage intake.* . . . They are simply factors that encourage acquirers to communicate with speakers of the target language, and thereby obtain the necessary input, or intake, for language acquisition. Second, attitudinal factors relating to acquisition will be those that enable the performer to utilize the language heard for acquisitions. (Krashen, 1981, p. 21)

Krashen clarified that "simply hearing a second language with understanding appears to be necessary but is not sufficient for acquisition to take place. The acquirer must not only understand the input but must also, in a sense, be 'open' to it" (p. 21), in order to integrate that input to his or her own language knowledge.

R. C. Gardner, Lalonde, and Moorcroft (1985) stated that "attitudes and motivation and language aptitude are important because they influence the rate at which second language material is learned" (p. 225). Likewise, Bialystok and Fröhlich (1978) agreed that "aptitude and attitude have both been shown to be involved in successful second language learning" (p. 329), but they also argued that

> although much of the evidence indicates a positive relationship between attitude and attained proficiency, the strength of this relationship fluctuates depending on factors relating to the learning context; for example, the correlation between attitude variables and achievement tends to be higher in cases where the environment provides many opportunities to communicate with the target language group. (p. 328)

Similarly, Krashen (1981) stated that "there is some evidence . . . that those subjects who learned a language in the country of the target language, usually acquired it successfully" (p. 37). Thus, Spanish-speaking students who took ESL classes during their K-12 years in public schools in the state of Indiana have an advantage to be successful in learning English because they are

immersed in an environment that provides them with plenty of opportunities to practice their target language and acquire intake.

Schneider (2001) agreed with Csikszentmihalyi's assertion that it is pertinent to pay attention to the level of skill required to challenge students to complete a task, and he affirmed that "the attainment value of a task is the importance of doing the task, its personal, familial, and social relevance to oneself" (p. 3). Schneider also considered that students learning a second language are more likely to succeed when they have clear goals that they can understand and are able to reach. Additionally, Schneider stated that

> over 400 studies of goal-setting theory have revealed that, when goals are specific and high and accompanied by high self-efficacy, performance is also high as long as there is commitment to the goals, the ability to fulfill them, sufficient autonomy, and feedback when success is revealed. (p. 5)

According to Schneider (2001), careful planning and constant feedback are a teacher's best predictors of achievement in second language acquisition. Regarding external motivators such as prizes or rewards, Schneider did not consider them effective to promote motivation in students learning a second language because "doing things for a reward can take away one's feeling of ownership of them" (p. 6). He also affirmed that other factors, such as the relations the students establish with the teacher, and the atmosphere of the classroom as well as the reason why they are taking the class, will also have an effect on the students' performance because "being watched over, being forced to rehearse, receiving deadlines, being threatened with grades, or competing with others inhibits learning" (p. 6). Schneider believed that students who take language classes because of their internal motivation will be more successful than those who are required to take such classes. Schneider argued that "the ease with which we forget things

learned for exams suggests the value of intrinsic motivation for long-term retention" (p. 6), which is necessary for communicating in the second language.

Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) believed that most researchers in the area have made the mistake of considering the students' attitude and motivation the most important variable of second language acquisition. Krashen (1981), for example, claimed that "attitude is the single most important factor in second language learning" (p. 38). Csizér and Dörnyei (1998), however, believed that such an approach is too simplistic, and they also argued that "studies that look only at the impact of motivation on language proficiency or other L2 achievement measures (such as course grades and standardized tests results) ignore, in effect, the mediation link, behavior, and suggest a false linear relationship between motivation and learning outcomes" (p. 20). Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) insisted that second language acquisition is a far more complex process, and even though research and suggestions for increasing motivation and improving the students' attitude and achievement in the second language continues to be published,

> no motivational strategy has absolute and general value because such strategies are to be implemented in dynamically changing and very diverse learning contexts, in which the personality of the individual learners and the teacher, as well as the composition and structure of the learner group, will always interplay with the effectiveness of the strategy. (p. 224)

Likewise, Williams (2003) affirmed that understanding motivation in language learning as either integrative/intrinsic or instrumental/extrinsic is a very narrow approach that limits not only the data but also the generalizations drawn upon it. Williams also argued that there is a "dynamic interaction of external and internal factors" (p. 168) that influences the learner's decisions to act, and the actions of the students in the language classroom are not the result of

one or the other but a combination of both. He insisted that researchers should be more concerned with studying the students' decision to act, or not, under certain circumstances instead of paying so much attention to the internal and external factors that influence their decision-making processes. After all, it is the students' actions that should have most of the attention (Williams, 2003, p. 170).

Demotivation and Language Learning

Demotivation and its effects on language students is an often overlooked area of investigation for language learning. The most simplistic definition for this concept states that "it concerns various negative influences that cancel out existing motivation" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 142). Dörnyei (2005) argued that demotivation is closely related to "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action" (p. 90).

Among the external forces identified as demotivators, some of the most commonly reported by language students are teacher-related, more specifically, unfair grading, lack of organization, boring instruction, and an unfriendly learning environment (Dörnyei, 2001). The compulsory nature of a language class is also considered an external demotivator, along with having inadequate school facilities and a previous negative attitude towards the L2, which can originate from home or from past failures in language learning (Dörnyei, 2001). Teachers whose students are either assigned or forced to choose a language class can recognize the challenge that the situation represents, and they are able to observe the characteristics or behaviors that students identified as being demotivated display. Among these behaviors are lack of interest, poor concentration, failure to complete tasks and/or homework, unwillingness to cooperate, and being distracting to other students (Dörnyei, 2001). Nevertheless, Csizér and Dörnyei (1998, 2005)

argued that language teachers have the power or ability to change these circumstances and transform demotivation into motivation towards language learning.

Transforming demotivation into motivation is a challenge that might be easier to overcome in the beginning stages of the language instruction because Spanish-speaking students "are often amazingly motivated to learn when they feel that they have a chance; they know that they are at a disadvantage with limited language in a new culture" (Shope, 2006, p. 21). This initial motivation is one of which English language teachers need to take advantage, given the fact that "without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough to ensure student achievement" (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998, p. 203).

Conclusion

It cannot be denied that Spanish-speaking students already have an important place within American education. Parrillo (1991) stated that "we live in the midst of profound demographic changes and their subsequent ripple effects" (p. 25). Hence, schools should prepare for such changes and provide the resources that all students need in order to succeed. Gay (2000) affirmed that teaching in general should embrace and accommodate the diversity of the students instead of forcing all of them to assimilate to the culture, language, and behaviors of the dominant group. Gay also affirmed that "unless teachers understand what is interfering with students' performance, they cannot intervene appropriately to remove the obstacles" (p. 16) that hinder their academic success.

Changes in education can already be seen, but in order to successfully integrate everybody in the American "melting pot," their needs, challenges, and struggles must be

understood, and schools must have all the resources available to guarantee that their students are receiving the education they need and deserve.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD OF RESEARCH

This chapter examines the methodology that was used in the study in terms of data collection, instruments to collect the data, data analysis, and validity and reliability.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore the experiences of Spanish-speaking students to determine how they perceive and react to the specific motivators and demotivators that are present in the ESL class as well as the extent in which these motivators and demotivators either inhibit or increase Spanish-speaking students' willingness to learn English. The main objective of this study was to explore the experience of Spanish-speaking students who took ESL classes in K-12 and who were enrolled in Indiana State University during the 2010-2011 academic year. Particular attention was paid to the students' reflection on their motivation to learn English as well as the motivators and demotivators that they encountered. The specific motivators and demotivators that emerged from the data collection were identified for analysis, including how students perceived them and reacted to them.

Research Questions

The main research question for this study was the following: What motivates or fails to motivate Spanish-speaking students' willingness to learn English? Secondary questions for this study included

1. What do Spanish-speaking students identify as motivators and demotivators in the ESL classroom?
2. What are the experiences in the class that lead to motivation and demotivation?
3. What do the students construct as the reasons for being motivated or demotivated by those experiences?

Context

The main participants of this study were undergraduate students who identified themselves as Hispanic when they enrolled in Indiana State University and who took ESL classes in K-12 public schools in Indiana or Illinois, as determined by a recruitment e-mail sent by me. Licensed ESL teachers from different areas of the state of Indiana also participated in the study in order to provide a broader picture of the topic.

Two methods of data collection were used in this qualitative study, individual interviews and a focus group interview. A total of three students participated in the study. The students who participated in the research project were interviewed together in a focus group session. The participants were tape-recorded during the focus group session. I asked the participants to share their perceptions and reactions to the different motivators and demotivators that their teachers included in their school's ESL class. I also conducted individual interviews with four teachers licensed for ESL. All interviews were transcribed in the original language of the recording, and I wrote a summary of the main ideas or topics discussed during each session. The summary of the interviews was e-mailed individually to each corresponding participant for member checking, and all the comments received from the interviews, as well as the e-mail summary, were used for analysis. These qualitative methods of data collection were selected because they allowed the participants to reflect on their experiences and share their opinions in a non-threatening

environment and because they allowed me to collect a large amount of data in a short period of time.

Participant Selection

This study explored the experiences of Spanish-speaking students who took ESL classes while they were enrolled in a public school in the states of Indiana or Illinois during their K-12 years. Their opinions were analyzed, along with those of teachers who teach students like them. Participants for this study were chosen through homogeneous sampling, which consists of selecting "certain sites or people because they possess a similar trait or characteristic" (Creswell, 2005, p. 206). In this way, the characteristics identified as required for the student participants of this study were as follows:

1. All student participants needed to be 18 years of age or older.
2. All student participants needed to be students at Indiana State University (ISU). They needed to be enrolled in ISU for the 2010-2011 academic year.
3. All student participants needed to be former ESL students in Indiana or in Illinois public schools. The main objective of this study was to explore the experiences of the participants who took English language classes during their grade K-12 education.
4. All student participants needed to be native Spanish speakers. The focus group was conducted in Spanish with limited English being spoken. Materials were prepared to accommodate Spanish speakers but not speakers of other languages.

I recruited students through a targeted e-mail sent to all undergraduate students at Indiana State University from the MyISU portal. The targeted e-mail included the criteria required to participate in the study. Only those students who replied to the targeted e-mail were contacted by me in order to determine whether or not they met the criteria and were willing to participate in

the study. The recruitment e-mail (see Appendix A) was only used to gather descriptive information from a group in order to determine who was both fitting and willing to participate in the study. Punch (2009) described face validity as "the extent to which a measuring instrument measures what it is supposed to measure" (p. 360). In the case of the recruitment e-mail that was used in this study, its face validity was determined by Dr. Leslie Barratt, Professor of Linguistics at Indiana State University, who has more than 30 years of experience in teaching English to speakers of other languages and language acquisition research.

The same method of participant selection, homogeneous sampling, was used to recruit ESL teachers to be interviewed. The characteristics identified as required for the teachers participating in this study were as follows:

1. All teacher participants needed to be teachers who are licensed for ESL in K-12, not only at the high school level.
2. All teacher participants needed to have been employed in a public school in the state of Indiana during the past academic year, 2009-2010.
3. All teacher participants needed to be current or former members of the INTESOL organization.

As a member of INTESOL, I used the organization's electronic newsletter to contact the teachers and request their participation in the study (see Appendix B). In the same way it was done with the student participants, exclusions were made if the teacher participants did not meet the set criteria. There were no special circumstances with this group of participants in regards to language fluency. All forms, including consent forms (see Appendices C, D, and E), were provided in English for the teachers and in English and Spanish for the students.

Teachers' Interviews

The main objective of this study was to explore the experience of Spanish-speaking students in the ESL classroom and how they perceived and reacted to the different motivators and demotivators present in the language class. However, in order to have a more complete picture and a better understanding of the context in which the motivators and demotivators were presented, four licensed ESL teachers were individually interviewed by me.

According to Berg (2007), "the interview is an especially effective method of collecting information . . . particularly when investigators are interested in understanding the perceptions of participants or learning how participants come to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events" (p. 97). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) described this method of data collection as "a purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other" (p. 103). In this study, I interviewed four ESL teachers from different public schools in Indiana in order to analyze their opinions along with those of the students.

Teachers' Interview Structure

In order to allow the teachers participating in the study to share their experiences openly, it was decided to conduct semi-structured interviews where I engaged in a conversation with the teachers individually; this conversation was guided by the interview questions. I relied on prompts derived from the conversation in order to obtain further information and specific details from the teachers. These prompts were not previously scripted, and the order of the interview questions may have varied without affecting the outcome of the interviews. All the interviews were scheduled according to the teachers' time availability, and they were tape-recorded and transcribed; they did not take longer than 40 minutes to be completed. In order to confirm the

accuracy of the data collected and my interpretation of it, I e-mailed the interviewed teachers a summary of their comments and answers for them to clarify, correct, or add any information.

Teachers' Interview Questions

Listed below are the questions that I asked the teachers during the individual interviews, although other questions emerged through the process.

1. What type of ESL class do you teach (pull-out, structured immersion, etc.)?
2. Please describe a typical ESL class.
3. What do you usually do in the class? Please include some examples.
4. How do your students react to what you do in class?
5. Why do you think they react in that way?
6. What aspects of the class do you think really make your students want to learn?
7. Is there anything you do that makes your students want to learn more?
8. Are there any factors that make your students not want to learn?

Students' Focus Group

The qualitative method of focus groups was used to collect the data from the Spanish-speaking students participating in the study. According to Edmunds (2000), focus groups are defined as "guided or unguided group discussions addressing a particular topic of interest or relevance to the group and the researcher" (as cited by Berg, 2007, p. 144). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) explained that

> [focus groups] are particularly useful when the topic to explore is general, and the purpose is either to stimulate talk from multiple perspectives from the group participants so that the researcher can learn what the range of views are, or to promote talk on a topic

that informants might not be able to talk so thoroughly about in individual interviews. (p. 109)

Since the participants were asked to reflect on their experiences in their school's ESL class, I considered that conducting a focus group allowed them to recall more details about specific situations and reflect on them than if they had been interviewed individually. Also, this method of data collection allowed me to gather a large amount of information in a limited period of time (Creswell, 2005, p. 215).

Students' Focus Group Structure

I sent a recruitment targeted announcement and e-mail to contact those students interested in participating in the study. A total of three Spanish-speaking students were both fitting and willing to participate in the study. Once the participants were contacted, I determined the place and time for the focus group session according to the participants' availability. The focus group session included the three student participants, allowing them to take part and get involved in the discussion as they shared their opinions and experiences. The focus group session was completed in 60 minutes, and it was tape-recorded in order to transcribe, translate, and analyze the opinions of the participants. All student participants received a summary of the topics and ideas discussed during the focus group session via e-mail. Students participating in the study had the opportunity to clarify or add any more information to the summary and send it back to me for member checking. The summary of the focus group session was sent to each participant individually and not through an e-mail distribution list to ensure their privacy and confidentiality. All the data collected from the focus group session and the summary e-mail was transcribed and translated into English by me for analysis and discussion.

I was the moderator of the focus group. I engaged in a conversation with the participants and relied on prompts derived from the conversation to obtain more information and details from the students. In the same manner as it was done with the teachers' interviews, the prompts derived from the conversation were not previously scripted, and the order of the focus group questions may have varied without affecting the outcome of the session.

Students' Focus Groups Questions

Listed below are the questions that I asked the students during the focus group, although other questions emerged through the process.

1. What type of ESL class were you in (pull-out, structured immersion, etc)?
2. Please describe what a typical ESL class was like.
3. What did your teacher do in the class? Please include some examples.
4. How did you react to what your teacher did?
5. Why do you think you reacted in that way?
6. What aspects of the class really made you want to learn?
7. Was there anything your teacher did that made you want to learn more?
8. Was there anything your teacher did that made you not want to learn?

The Researcher

I am a native Spanish speaker from Costa Rica, and I have near-native fluency in English. I have earned a bachelor's degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language/Teaching English as a Second Language (TEFL/TESL) and a master's degree in Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics (Linguistics/TESL). I have three years of EFL teaching experience in Grades K-12 in Costa Rica and five years of Spanish teaching experience with college students and non-degree seeking adults in the United States. In this study, I bring an insider's perspective as a former

EFL/ESL student but an outsider's in ESL teaching in Grades K-12 in the United States. I have a passion for learning different languages and their cultures as well as for teaching both EFL/ESL and Spanish. As a Costa Rican, I am associated with the Hispanic population in the United States, but I identify myself as a Latina and I do not necessarily relate to some of the customs and beliefs of the main ethnicities (Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican) comprised in this minority group. I am neither personally nor professionally affiliated with any school corporation in the state of Indiana. I do not have ambitions to teach in Grades K-12 in Indiana or in the United States, but I do have ambitions to teach in higher education either in the United States or overseas. I completed all the program coursework, including statistics and research methods classes, and I have experience conducting interviews and research with human subjects.

Research Assistants

Two assistant researchers were recruited to assist me in this study. One of the assistant researchers, Mr. Luis Romero, is a doctoral candidate in the counseling psychology program in the Bayh College of Education at Indiana State University. Mr. Romero's L1 is Spanish and he has English as his L2. The other assistant researcher, Dr. Daniel Rueckert, is an assistant professor of TESOL at Oklahoma City University. Dr. Rueckert's L1 is English and his L2 is Spanish. Both research assistants collected the data for their dissertations in Spanish, and they have both completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) required by the Institutional Review Board of Indiana State University. The assistant researchers helped to code the data and create categories of emerging themes for analysis and discussion. Because neither of the assistant researchers is directly or indirectly related to the study, their views and opinions helped to ensure the validity of the study as well as the accuracy of all translations. Both research

assistants have completed classes in research methods and have experience coding and analyzing qualitative data.

Confidentiality

Any information obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with the participants remains confidential and will be disclosed only with the participants' permission or as required by law. Confidentiality was maintained by means of a coding system and the use of pseudonyms. The participants' names do not appear in any of the information obtained from this study or in any of the research reports, nor will information resulting from the participants' responses or actions be shared with their colleagues or superiors. The audio files from the interviews and focus group were not accessed or heard by anyone other than me. I was the only person transcribing and translating the data. The audio files and their corresponding transcriptions and translations are kept in a locked filing cabinet, and all digital files are password encoded in order to prevent access by anyone other than me. The assistant researchers only had access to the transcripts of the data and the translations into English made by me; all names were omitted in the transcripts.

Analysis

All the data were collected and tape-recorded via individual interviews and a focus group; the data were transcribed in the original language of the recording, which was expected to be English for the teachers' interviews and Spanish for the students' focus group. The original language of the data being discussed in further chapters was clearly stated in order to take into account the translation into English, if necessary, as well as the use of code-switching by the participants. The transcript of the focus group was translated into English by me; the assistant researchers received the original transcripts and their corresponding translations at the same

time, before starting to code the data, so that they could also check the accuracy of the translations. All the data collected were analyzed in order to develop a coding system. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) described the process of creating a coding system as follows: "You search through your data for regularities and patterns as well as for topics your data cover, and then you write down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns" (p. 173). The resulting words and phrases constituted the coding categories that were used to organize the data by themes and topics for their analysis and discussion. All the coding was done manually, without software assistance, by the researchers who reviewed the transcripts and the translations of the data and analyzed each sentence in order to identify the key words. The key words were grouped into codes according to how they relate to each other; the codes were then organized in themes for their discussion.

Validity

The qualitative methodological technique of triangulation was used in this interpretative study in order to ensure its validity. Berg (2007) stated that "by combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements" (p. 5). In this study, the different lines of sight that were used are the teachers' interviews and the students' focus group. Teachers' and students' responses were analyzed in order to provide a broader picture of the topic and to determine a common ground that will most benefit ESL instruction in Grades K-12. Creswell (2005) described member checking as the process of sharing the data collected, and the researcher's interpretation of it, with the participants of the study to make sure that their ideas are represented accurately (p. 252). All the participants in the study received a

summary of the opinions expressed during their individual interview or focus group via e-mail, allowing them to clarify, add more information, or correct any misinterpretation of their ideas.

Summary

The main objective of this study was to explore the experiences of Spanish-speaking students in the ESL classroom in order to determine what motivates them or demotivates them to learn English. Although no direct benefits were expected for the participants, the findings of this research could have an effect on future practice for English language programs in K-12 settings as well as service provision for students with limited English proficiency. Furthermore, results could influence current practices and promote new ones within the ESL classroom, as well as outside of it. Finally, the information gathered may support future research on specific motivators used in ESL instruction that will increase students' willingness to learn English.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The present study aimed to explore the experiences of Spanish-speaking students in order to determine how they perceived and reacted to the specific motivators and demotivators that were present in their ESL classes as well as the extent to which these motivators and demotivators either inhibited or increased Spanish-speaking students' willingness to learn English. Two different groups of participants, licensed ESL teachers in Grades K-12 and former ESL students, were questioned about their experiences in the ESL classroom. Particular attention was paid to the students' reflection of their motivation to learn English as well as the motivators and demotivators that they encountered. Also relevant were the similarities and differences between the students' and the teachers' answers to similar questions. The specific motivators and demotivators that emerged from the data collected were identified for analysis. All teachers were interviewed during the fall semester of 2010, and all e-mail correspondence for member checking also took place during that period of time. The students' focus group took place at the beginning of the spring semester of 2011, and the last e-mail correspondence for member checking was received in the month of March. All the data were transcribed and translated into English, when necessary, and sent to the assistant researchers to corroborate the translations and to code the data into themes. The results of the interviews, the member-checking communications, and their analyses are compiled in this presentation of the findings.

Participants' Profiles

Student Participants' Profiles

Three ISU students who identified themselves as Hispanic when they enrolled in the university and who took an ESL class for a minimum of 12 weeks during Grades K-12 were interviewed for this research. Student A, female, age 20, is the fourth daughter of five children. She has two brothers and two sisters and lives with her parents in northern Indiana during the summer breaks. She was born in Michoacán, Mexico. As a child, her family spent periods of four to six months in Mexico and in Indiana; she attended elementary school in both countries and she recalled that going to school in Indiana was especially challenging because her school did not have an actual ESL class at that time. She was held back in third grade, and she attended all her classes with the rest of her classmates and with the same teacher, all of them native English speakers with no knowledge of Spanish. The only accommodation that her teacher was able to make for Student A was to grant her more time to read and complete the assignments. Her family moved back to Mexico towards the end of her fourth grade year; there, she finished the last two years of elementary school before her family moved again to Indiana, this time permanently. Upon registering for high school, her mother reported that a language other than English was spoken at home; therefore, Student A was placed in the ESL class that was offered in the high school. She did not remember taking a language placement test when she first entered the school in mid-January, but she did remember taking a test at the end of the school year, in late May. She tested out of the ESL class after being there for a little over four months, and she credited her previous immersion, as well as her studying English in Mexico, for not being placed in ESL during the following academic year.

Student B, male, age 19, is the youngest child of a family of eight children. He has three sisters and four brothers, one of whom is his twin. He was born in Los Angeles, California, in a community where Spanish was the dominant language and most people were Mexican-Americans. His family speaks only Spanish at home, and even though he was always surrounded by the English language, he never really needed to use it in order to communicate with others. He moved with his mother and four siblings, including his twin brother, to Indiana when he was 6 years old. His first formal encounter with the English language took place in kindergarten and elementary school, where he was placed in the ESL classroom because he came from a home where a language other than English was spoken. He took ESL classes for two years, and he did not remember having taken a placement test at the beginning of his formal education or at the end of each academic year, but only at the end of second grade when he tested out of ESL. He mentioned that he and his family used to live in a school district that did not offer ESL classes for language minority students; therefore, his mother had to make special arrangements for him to go to a school where ESL was taught. As soon as he tested out of ESL, he was transferred to the corresponding school of his district. He did not receive any ESL instruction past the third grade, and he was the only child of his family to complete high school.

The last student participant, Student C, male, age 22, is the youngest of three siblings. He was born in Caguas, Puerto Rico. His father served actively in the U.S. military and his family moved several times before settling permanently in rural Indiana. He has a brother and a sister, both of whom attended elementary school in Puerto Rico before they moved to Indiana when Student C was 8 years old. Upon entering elementary school, he was placed in a regular second grade class; the school did not offer ESL classes at that time. He remembered getting extra help from the teacher and having more time to complete his work. He described his language learning

experience as “differentiated learning” where the teacher would explain a topic to the whole class and then she would come to his desk and re-explain the same topic to him in a different way. His family spoke only Spanish at home, and he could only speak English at school because there were no other students in his elementary school with whom to speak Spanish; therefore, he credited this type of immersion and separation of language settings for acquiring both languages fluently and with native accents. He said that he only took one year of ESL during his freshman year in high school, when instruction for language minority students had just started to be mandatory in schools, but he was not given a placement test for English proficiency, and he was not required to take ESL during his sophomore year or thereafter. He went on to complete high school, always with the help and assistance of the high school’s ESL teacher when it came to the English language.

Teacher Participants’ Profiles

Four teachers who are licensed for ESL and who teach in public schools in Indiana were interviewed for this research study. Teacher 1 teaches in a high school with one of the largest percentages of refugees and Hispanic students in the Indianapolis area. She has over 20 years of experience working with language minority students. She teaches sheltered English 11 to juniors and sheltered English 12 to seniors, each class with about 10-12 students. She also teaches ESL; her smallest class has only five students and her largest class has a total of 24 students. Most of her students in sheltered English 11 and sheltered English 12 and all of her ESL students are Hispanic. Most of the ESL students are at Level 4 of LAS Links, which is the placement system that Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) uses for placement and proficiency assessment of their language minority students. For her sheltered English classes, Teacher 1 follows a curriculum that is widely used in the continental United States (*Rubicon Atlas*, http://www.rubicon.com/

AtlasCurriculumMapping.php), but she explained that she implements a thematic approach that allows her to modify and incorporate different activities in order to accommodate for the students' different levels of proficiency. For her English 11 and 12, she is required to use the *Spring Board*, published by the College Board (http://springboardprogram.collegeboard.org/).

Teacher 2 works in a middle school where she teaches reading and ESL, and she also coaches the girls' basketball team. According to her, all the students from the middle school where she works go to the high school where Teacher 1 works; therefore, the student population in the middle school is very similar to that of the high school, with a high percentage of refugees and Hispanic students and at least half of the Hispanic students are in ESL classes. In the middle school where Teacher 2 works, the students have an 8-10 period day, with one of those periods being called "special area period" during which most students go to the gym, Spanish, music, or art. But the ESL students meet Teacher 2 for a class that she and her ESL colleagues created at the middle school called "vocabulary immersion." The school uses this period for ESL to avoid taking the students out of their regular classes. This class is content-based, and it focuses on science and social studies vocabulary. They use materials from *National Geographic* (Hampton-Brown, http://www.ngsp.com/), which are differentiated by reading level. The school also has an "enrichment period" at the beginning of each day where most of the teachers work on test preparation, but the ESL students do not have the level of proficiency that would allow them to actively participate in these classes; therefore, they meet with Teacher 2 in order to work mainly on developing basic skills as they follow the textbook and workbook from the *High Point* series (http://www.ngsp.com/tabid/249/Default.aspx) that corresponds to their reading level. During this enrichment period, Teacher 2 has mostly seventh graders, Levels 1 and 2 of LAS Links, and some special education students because "that's the only time they can see any ESL teacher."

Teacher 2 stated that for the enrichment period, she mostly follows the textbook because she has not "taught 1s and 2s in a really long time [and she is] not terribly comfortable with that level of students." Teacher 2 has 15 students during the enrichment period, and in the vocabulary immersion period her smallest class has 20 students and her largest class has 35 students, all of them Level 3 and 4.

Teacher 3 has six years of experience working in an elementary school where she teaches second, third, and fifth graders and a few students in sixth grade. In this elementary school the students have a 90-minute reading block, which for third and fifth grades is only 60 minutes. Unlike Teachers 1 and 2, Teacher 3 does not follow a specific ESL curriculum. Instead, she focuses on the skills and topics requested by the classroom teachers in order to help the ESL students understand and perform as well as the rest of the students in the same grade. Teacher 3 pulls out the ESL students for 30 minutes of the reading block in order to work on the specific content or skills required by the second grade teachers. For example, one of the second grade teachers asked her to work on phonics, but another needed her to reinforce the vocabulary words that the students need to learn week by week. Additionally, one of her second grade classes and one of her fifth grade classes are more focused on writing, where she uses a textbook that is "designed for English language learners that has brief passages." In these writing-focused classes, she emphasizes the development of reading strategies (e.g., drawing conclusions, sequencing, cause and effect), which require a higher level of thinking than just learning the vocabulary. Her largest class has seven students and she has a total of 46 ESL students, most of them Levels 3 or 4 in LAS Links. She also reported that she shares her classroom with the other ESL teacher in the school, and although this situation is not uncommon, it does add to the challenge of keeping her students focused on a specific task without them paying too much

attention to what the other group of students and their teacher are doing. In order to adjust for the space limitations, the ESL teachers try to have students at the same proficiency level in the room at the same time; more specifically, while Teacher 3 is working with one group of second graders, Levels 3 and 4, her colleague would be working with fourth graders who are also Levels 3 and 4, all of them in the same room. She also tries to develop activities that would allow her to sit at a table with her students during the class. She explained, "If I distance myself even enough to draw on the white board behind me, you know, they're getting too much interference from what is going on on the other side of the white board." Teacher 3 is the only teacher interviewed who had a shared classroom.

The last teacher, Teacher 4, is the only one of the teachers interviewed who works in a smaller, suburban high school. She has been teaching in Indiana for 13 years, but only three of those years as an ESL teacher. In addition to teaching ESL, she also teaches general English 10, English 10 for the gifted and talented, and a power word class (mostly etymology) as an elective. She explained that before she started teaching ESL, language minority students only had ESL teaching aides to assist them in math, science, and English. During her first year as the ESL teacher, the school only offered the class during one of the three terms of their academic year. During the last two years the ESL class has been offered for two of those three terms, first and second term; there is no ESL class offered during the third term of the academic year. The students can only rely on the ESL aides for assistance with the language and their regular classes during this period of time. This situation is explained by the fact that her school corporation has a low incidence of language minority students and an even lower incidence of Spanish-speaking ESL students. She only has 10 students in her ESL class and only one of them is Hispanic. Because there are so few ESL students in her high school, she has all four levels of LAS Links

students in the same class. Teacher 4 has one period with her ESL students every day, and the class lasts 70 minutes. She said that in order to accommodate all four levels of proficiency she would give extra activities to those students at Levels 3 and 4, and she would also pair students based on the proficiency so that they can help each other. Teacher 4 did not mention the specific curriculum or the textbook that they follow, but she did say that her class is structured, and she has an agenda and specific topics she wants to cover every day. Yet at the same time she has the flexibility to introduce different materials and activities in order to focus mostly on speaking because that is the students' biggest challenge.

Emergent Themes across Participants

The information gathered in this study revealed that no two of the ESL programs described by the teachers are exactly the same, as they all have to accommodate the specific needs of their students and the limitations of time and space that are particular to each institution. Although the ESL programs vary greatly, there are some similarities in the experiences of former ESL students and current teachers. Some themes presented themselves repeatedly within and between the two different groups of participants, current ESL teachers and former ESL students.

Language Learning Environment

Three out of the four teachers interviewed commented on how important it is for them to create an environment that fosters language learning, where their students would feel comfortable enough to take risks and participate eagerly in the different activities. Teacher 1, for instance, described her class as a place where the students "feel comfortable among one another, and so they are not intimidated." She also said that in this environment the students "are not embarrassed to read out loud; they are not embarrassed to show somebody else their story," and this constitutes a "positive environment for them." Teacher 1 also mentioned that providing

students with a safe environment where they can make mistakes will help them to learn from the mistakes and develop more confidence in all language areas.

In a similar manner, Teacher 2 also mentioned the effect that the atmosphere of the class has on her students, and she added an explanation for the increased sense of belonging that she sees in her students when they are in the ESL class but not in other classes.

> Within that group, generally speaking, they are not worried about getting laughed at . . . and for better or worse, . . . the fact they look alike, and they are all coming from the same background. I think that adds to that comfort level because they're not worried about what this person is going to say "I can't speak English" or this person is going to say "I'm a foreigner" or this person is going to say . . . or "I don't like that person because they look different," [and] I don't think this is good in the sense that I'd like to see them be able to feel safe like that in a mixed atmosphere, but it doesn't seem like they always, most of them, feel that way in the other classes.

This sense of belonging described by Teacher 2 was also mentioned by Student B when questioned about his feeling towards the ESL class. He expressed in Spanish that he enjoyed taking ESL because he "felt a little bit more comfortable" in comparison to his general class where "there were no Hispanics." In the ESL class, all his classmates were Mexican or Mexican-American, like him, and he "felt like, like it was [his] house." He also said that he was "happy in there and to be able to stay there [he] tried harder, but in the end trying harder is what got [him] out of that class when [he] tested out of it." Teacher 4 used a similar metaphor to describe her class. She emphasized that her class has a "family feel," where the students always sit in a circle, work together in different projects, and they even sit together for lunch in the school cafeteria. The ESL teaching aides have reported to Teacher 4 that hers is the one class

where they notice that the ESL students "have their guard down and they're more apt to speak" than in other classes.

Teacher 3 did not mention the learning environment during her interview, presumably due to the fact that she has to share her work environment with another teacher. Also, this type of social pressure might be less noticeable by the teacher in the elementary school. She did, however, mention another theme that presented itself repeatedly in the teachers' interviews.

Student-Teacher Relationships

The relationships that the teachers build with their students were deemed as relevant by all four teachers. Teachers reported that it is very important for them to establish positive personal relationships with their students in order to show them that they really care about them and want them to succeed. Teacher 1, for instance, said that it is imperative for her to establish a good rapport with her students from the beginning, and she added that "when the students do not like the teacher or they feel that the teacher doesn't respect them, then there are problems" of behavior and discipline. Teacher 2 said that she motivates students by showing that she cares about them and their progress. She said that constantly checking up on them and letting the students know that she expects them to succeed creates a personal connection that really motivates not only ESL students but all students in general. This personal connection is also one of the strategies that Teacher 2 uses to address the problem of demotivated students. She said that there is always a reason for a student to be demotivated, and in order to find out what the reason is she would simply "sit down with them and find out what happened: Did you have a problem with a teacher? Did you have a problem with another student? Is something going on at home?" By having these conversations with the students, Teacher 2 said that she can find out if a given student just needs a little bit more help with the class or if he or she needs to talk to the

social worker, the school counselor, or the bilingual assistant, as the case requires. She also said that by modifying what she does with each student she can see how "all of a sudden he does more because he realizes that you're individualizing things, so it creates a personal connection."

In order to create a similar personal connection with her students, Teacher 3 incorporates activities in which the content connects with the students' lives as well as their culture because then the students "are excited to be able to tell [her] what they already know and then they want to learn more," which ends up making their learning more personal and significant. Similarly, Teacher 4 also brings the students' culture into the classroom because it is very "motivating to really dive into their cultures . . . ask questions about their own cultures, their own traditions, holidays, things that they do with their families." She said that using the students' background in class conversations and activities lets the students know that she cares about them and that she wants to learn from them in the same way that they are learning from her. She also added that a student's culture "is part of who they are . . . is part of where they came from, so there's a sense of pride." She utilizes that pride to foster a "sense of respect for all the cultures" and she was very clear to state that "the more you can connect with your students the better." She described the way in which she does this: "I try to develop a sense of rapport with them, that I'm approachable and that I want them to learn; I want them to succeed." Teacher 4 also said that one should make the students "feel that you are with them, . . . you are in the same team, you want them to learn, and they can come to you with questions, and it'd be okay."

Despite being considered a very important construct of the ESL class, the relationship between the students and the teachers was not so readily mentioned by the students in the focus group. They were quick to mention their classmates and whether or not they like the teacher, but their reasons for not liking a teacher were more focused on the amount of homework assigned

and how difficult some tasks were. When questioned more specifically about their student–teacher relationship, the students took some time to think and try to remember and reflect on any situation that could answer the question. Student A was quick to say in Spanish that she did not have a relationship at all with her teacher because she was in the ESL class for only four months and during that time she did not really need her help. Student A said that her teacher knew that she did not need her help, so she was left to complete her work alone and the teacher spent most of her time helping the other students in the class. When asked the same question, Student B paused for a little while and then he said in Spanish:

> My teacher also worked as a counselor, and I remember one time . . . since I had lost a brother, my mom had lost a child, and that day I was crying and instead of taking me to the school counselor they took me to my ESL teacher and she talked to me and that way . . . I don't know the word I'm looking for, but she was comforting me; so, I liked her after that.

When asked if this situation had an effect on the way he related to the ESL teacher, Student B said that he "liked" his ESL teacher because she "was very nice compared to the others, to the Americans," but he did not make any other comments regarding his relationship with her and his motivation to work harder in the class. In the case of Student C, he described in Spanish his elementary school teacher as being very "rigid" and a "true disciplinarian." According to Student C, there were never any songs or games in his class, and the teacher focused mostly on constant practice and repetition, a situation that did not leave much room for different activities or creativity. This situation, however, changed in high school because it was then when he really developed an interest for reading and literature and it was all due to his teacher, and he was very eager to explain why.

> The enthusiasm she had about the subject . . . English . . . really left an impression in me . . . but in grade school I didn't have a teacher like that, who would really . . . who would do things that were inspirational . . . it was . . . in high school I did have that teacher that really . . . she made me work really hard . . . she wouldn't allow me to be lazy . . . she really made me . . . what's the American saying? "She called me out" . . . because I would do the work, I mean I would never complain . . . I would do the work and I would do it right . . . but I wouldn't do any extra effort to really do it better . . . she was the first to really tell me you can do it . . . you are better than this, so . . . do it better . . . and that was the push that really . . . that I needed.

Although no explicit comment was made by the students in regard to their relationship with their teachers, their reflections and answers indicate that their interactions inside and outside the classroom did have an effect on them. They simply did not acknowledge them as such.

Choice of Task or Reading Material

Glasser (1998) suggested that people consciously choose their behaviors based on their need to satisfy basic needs. These basic needs are survival, love/belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Giving people choices becomes a motivator to complete tasks, as it was expressed by three of the teachers participating in this study. The teachers reported that when the students had the opportunity to choose what they wanted to read and how to demonstrate that they had understood the material, they performed better than when they were assigned a specific text and task. Teacher 2, for example, said that she would bring seven or eight books to the class and let the students pick which one they want to read. She recalled a situation that she had the last time she did this in her ESL class. She had a student who refused to do the assigned work and, when she sat down to talk to him, the student said that he wanted to read the *Twilight* book (Meyer, 2005).

In spite of her initial surprise, Teacher 2 brought in the book mentioned and the student embarked on the journey of reading a 500-page book. She said that giving students a little freedom and choice in their work is always a motivator, and the best proof of that was that the student with the *Twilight* book had even taken it home overnight and "he's on page 60, [after only] three days."

In a similar manner, Teacher 1 incorporates choice into her class by letting her students decide the way in which they want to present a topic. Since her classes follow a thematic approach, all of her activities are built around a single story, i.e. *The Tell-Tale Heart* (Poe, 1959), but the presentations that the students have to give in order to show that they understood the material can be anything, including a poster, an essay, a short skit, or even a simple general questionnaire with questions such as: Who are the main characters? What is the plot? What is the climax of the story? She said that depending on how much the students enjoy the story they would do something more elaborate with the material. Interestingly, she also said that when most of the students decide to do the general questionnaire, she knows she needs to go back and review something or spend a little bit more time on that particular story. As she explained, the fact that most of the students choose the questionnaire over the other presentation projects is an indication that they are struggling with the story.

Teacher 3, unlike the other three teachers, has to follow the curriculum that the classroom teachers are using; yet, she still includes different projects from which the students can choose, similar to the practice of Teacher 1. Teacher 3 also reported that her elementary school is using a new math curriculum, and all the children have their own dry-erase boards. Because her second graders really enjoy using the boards and markers, she started to incorporate more activities that would allow the kids to use them, and "they seem to be doing better with the vocabulary words

for the week [because] they know that if they make a mistake they can just erase it and try again." Teacher 4, like Teacher 2, also brings several reading options to her students instead of having all of them work with a preselected text. Because Teacher 4 has all four levels of LAS Links proficiency in her class, she has to create extra activities for the students at Levels 3 and 4, but they can also choose to spend more time on one activity if they are helping a classmate with their work.

None of the students in the focus group recalled having choices, neither in the reading material nor in the assessment tasks or activities. When asked about choice in the ESL class, they reported that if they had been given different options, they would have probably been more interested in the task and in the content of the reading than they were when they were required to read a specific book. They also said that they would have felt more empowered and more in control of their own learning.

Use of Technology

The use of technology, more specifically computers and the internet in the ESL classroom, is a theme that came up in three of the teachers' interviews, but it was not mentioned at all by the students in the focus group. Presumably, this can be explained by the fact that the students were talking about their ESL experiences from six or seven years ago when neither computers nor the internet were so readily available in public schools. Conversely, the teachers were talking about their experiences in 2011.

In respect to use of technology, Teacher 1 said that having the computer and the internet in the class has been very helpful, and she incorporates it in her routine when the students need to do research on a topic or if they need more examples. Teacher 2 reported that her students get very excited when they get to work on a project because it usually involves using the computer,

which allows them to be creative and to work together. She also said that her class has access to 10-12 iPods, depending on whether or not the other ESL teacher is using them. She said that she would use those devices sometimes to have the students practice their listening comprehension and pronunciation skills, and because it is a type of technology with which the students are familiar, "they really enjoy any activity that has to do with using the iPods." Teacher 4 expressed that she is "very lucky to have a computer in [her] room" because when the students are having trouble with a specific word or a topic "they can put it into their target language and translate and get an idea of what [it] is." She also said that she lets her students do this with "something in the book, something that [they're] reading or directions [because] they can put it in and it would translate for them, and that's really helpful." Because of the gap between the students' last ESL class and the time of the interview, the theme of technology use in the classroom was not so readily mentioned by the students as it was by the teachers. The only student who mentioned some sort of technology being used and helpful in the ESL class was Student C. He said that in high school, his teacher "would always use clips from *Twin Peaks* [Frost, 1990] to teach allegory . . . examples of literary terms . . . she would use television or movies to teach, demonstrate . . . sarcasm . . . allegory . . . concepts like that." Neither Teacher 3, nor Students A or B mentioned using or having access to some sort of technology during the ESL class.

Peer Scaffolding

The constant collaboration and mutual support among the students was also mentioned by three of the teachers and two of the students. Teacher 1, for example, said that when she has one of her students reading out loud from a story she can hear the others helping and correcting the one reading if he or she mispronounces a word. She also explained a situation in her ESL class where "there is one child that is really a fairly weak reader," and the student who sits next to him

"is constantly helping him along as he is reading, and it doesn't seem to bother him, . . . it seems to help him." She said that if she were to correct every mistake and just focus on the details and provide negative feedback, the students would simply give up. But when it is a classmate who corrects them, they do not seem to mind it at all. On the contrary, they think of it as a game, and they try to be the next to make the correction instead of the one being corrected. In a similar fashion, Teacher 2 reported that her students were more willing to try and correct their mistakes if it was one of the other students correcting them. Teacher 4 said that since her 10 students are at all four different levels of proficiency, she makes sure to pair "someone who's strong and then someone who's weak, and they help each other." Teacher 4 also shared the example of three students in the ESL class, one of them is more advanced than the other two and "one especially is very limited." She said that she can always rely on the one student to help the other two when they do not understand something and that in a way "they're all learning a lot."

Two of the students in the focus group also had some experience with peer scaffolding, but from a different perspective. Student A remembered that sometimes her teacher struggled to help the students who had just arrived in the class with no knowledge of English because she did not know Spanish. In such cases, she said, the other students and she would help when they could because they "knew that it is hard when you don't have anyone to help you." Student B also had experience in assisting his peers when the language created a barrier, but the situation he described in a combination of English and Spanish did not happen in the ESL class but in a math class.

> When I was in seventh grade, they put a group of students that didn't speak English very well in my math class, . . . and there was a lady who came to the classes sometimes, but there were times where there was a big need for her help, so she couldn't always be there,

> in the class with them, so, when she wasn't there I was the one who tried to explain to the students what was going on with the work, and that way when the teacher had a question for them I would translate.

Student B said that helping these students made him feel good because he was helping people like him, who wanted to learn and to get ahead in life. Neither Teacher 3 nor Student C mentioned any experiences with peer scaffolding in their classes, presumably due to the emphasis on individual work that both participants described for their experiences.

Difficulty of the Task

Two of the teachers and the three students mentioned the effect that the level of difficulty of a specific task has on the students' motivation to learn English. Teacher 1, for example, believes that it is important for the students to experience success in the class because they "continue improving and improving and feel good about it." She also said that if a text or a task is too difficult for the students it makes them think that they "might as well just give up." In a similar way, Teacher 2 claimed that one of the characteristics of her class that her students really appreciate is that "they are able to be successful, they can do the work" and when they are struggling with a specific topic or a text, they will break down the content into smaller pieces and rephrase or restate the information to make it easier for all to understand. When asked about any factors that make her students not want to learn, Teacher 2 replied that her students are demotivated "when they feel they can't do it, when they don't get it or they think that they don't get it, it sounds like it's going to be hard." She also said that when her students say that a specific topic or activity "is boring, it really means that it's hard;" so instead of making the topic more exciting, she tries to make it more understandable. Teacher 2 also shared a particular experience

she had with a student regarding the level of difficulty of the activity and her student's behavior once the task stopped being challenging.

> What I finally figured out was [that] he was a kid that would do it until he knew he got it and then stopped. He didn't care about a grade; he didn't care what the expectation was. If you gave him 10 questions and he understood it by three he wasn't doing more than three; because he got it, he was done . . . but I knew that if [he] stopped at three, he got it, and I could ask him 50 questions that were related to that and test him and he did get it. So he was intrinsically motivated enough to learn, but he had a limit.

From the students' perspective, the level of difficulty was also identified as a motivator or a demotivator. Student A, for example, recalled being bored in her ESL class because she already knew most of the content. She also said that when she was placed in the ESL class in high school it was only because of the language spoken at home and not because she really needed the classes to learn English or to learn in English. She claimed that by the time she started high school she was able to read and write well in English and she did not find her ESL class challenging at all, which resulted in her being bored and uninterested in the class. She also said that her ESL class in high school was very easy, but she "knew that it was harder for the rest to do the work and read the chapters in their book every day" but she did not consider that this was enough "reason to demotivate" them. Student B said that he was not challenged by the ESL class either because "being born in the United States and being around the language" made the class feel "normal" because he "already knew most of the stuff." He did recognize that he had "a little bit of trouble" with the English language when he started kindergarten and first grade, mostly because he was used to speaking only Spanish at home. However, he believed that this initial "shock" was motivating for him because he did not find the class to be difficult and he

"just went with it." Student B also recalled that some of his classmates did struggle a little bit more than he did to learn English. In the case of Student C, he believed that being challenged by his experience with immersion was a big motivator to learn the language. He remembered that he had no problems asking questions or asking for help when he needed it because he was interested, and he really wanted to learn the language. He also mentioned that "growing up in an area where [he] didn't have friends" who spoke Spanish was probably better for him because it forced him to work harder and figure things out on his own. He said that his sister "would help [him] with [his] homework" but his parents were not able to help much with English and being aware of this situation made him work harder in the class.

Other Emergent Themes

Perspectives on Placement and Attitude towards Language Learning

Two of the students participating in the focus group reported that they were placed in the ESL class solely on the basis of the language they spoke at home. Because formal ESL instruction was not available for Students A and C when they were in elementary school, they learned most of their English by immersion. They struggled to keep up with the rest of the class, and they remembered that their classroom teachers tried to help to the best of their ability, especially by giving them extra time to complete their work. Both of them claimed that by the time ESL classes became available for language minority students, they were placed in ESL because they spoke Spanish at home with their families and not because they had taken a placement test and were in real need of the classes. Although Student A was in ESL for just a short period of time, being forced into taking a class that she did not need and that was not challenging at all had a negative effect on her attitude towards the class. Student A felt like she was wasting her time, and she never tried to put much effort in any project, but rather the bare

minimum. Unlike Students A and C, Student B did acknowledge the fact that he did need the class, and he recognized that he benefited a lot from it.

Only one of the teachers interviewed mentioned a specific concern regarding placement. As noted above, students have to take the LAS Links placement assessment in order to be identified as having limited English proficiency (LEP). The LAS Links placement test consists of a written test and an oral interview. According to Teacher 4, students need to score at Level 5 two years in a row in order to be considered fluent English proficient (FEP). This, however, does not mean that those students who score at Level 4 or lower do indeed receive ESL classes because the parents can refuse the services. In other words, the schools are required to offer the services and satisfy students' language needs, but the students themselves are not required to take advantage of those services because their parents can decide whether or not they want their child to receive ESL classes. Teacher 4 described her experience with one student in such a situation.

> One time, there was a student, . . . very good at math and science, very strong, but she didn't want to take the time to take ESL because she didn't want it in her transcript, they thought –the parents and she—that it will look bad, it showed she had a weakness, and it would have been very helpful if she had taken the class . . . I had her in my [general] English class and she did okay, but it was hard for her. She really would have benefited from taking the class, but her parents . . . she just flat out refused.

Teachers' Concerns and Ideal Scenarios

Two of the teachers interviewed, Teacher 3 and Teacher 4, expressed their particular concerns regarding their students and the language instruction that they are able to provide. Teacher 3 said that the conditions in which she works with the ESL students leave a lot of room

for improvement. She understands that her school has serious space limitations, but she also believes that sharing a room with a different teacher who is working with a different grade level of students is a big distraction for her and definitely for her students. She said that this situation does not give her a lot of flexibility in the activities that she can plan for the students. She described her class as pull-out ESL instruction, but the fact that she works more on reinforcing the content and skills that the content discipline classroom teachers need makes her feel more like an ESL teaching aide than an ESL teacher with her own curriculum to follow. She also said that

> ideally, in an ideal situation, there would be an ESL teacher in every classroom that has English language learners and we'd be co-teaching. Like maybe I'd go in and introduce the vocabulary to the whole class and do it in such a way that is best for all the students.

The concerns of Teacher 4 were focused on availability of instruction in her high school as well as the other public high school in the same town. As mentioned above, Teacher 4 only teaches ESL during two of the three terms of the school year. She reported that some of her colleagues have expressed their issues with some of the ESL students during the term that they do not have ESL classes. She specifically recalled when a teacher told her that she was frustrated and she was having a lot of problems with a couple of students because their "behavior is terrible." Teacher 4 explained that one of the reasons behind their behavior is the fact that

> they're in there and their English is limited, that's why they're not in an advanced class or in the gifted and talented, they have the motivations to be there but they're just limited in their speaking, . . . they want to learn and they're not being really challenged because . . . well, that's really not the fault of the teacher, but it's not their fault either.

Teacher 4 was not only concerned about the ESL learners in her high school, but she also worries about those ELLs who attend the other public high school in the same town. According to Teacher 4, the other high school has a higher enrollment altogether, but they do not have a designated ESL teacher like herself to provide language services. As far as she knew, the other high school only had a couple of ESL aides. She did say that she thinks her "high school has more ESL kids" than the other one, but she considers that, in spite of the fact that "the ESL aides are wonderful ladies and they really care a lot about the kids," it simply is not the same as having an actual language class that meets during the whole school year.

Summary

Language learning is experienced very differently by the teachers and the students. The specific differences become more apparent when participants are asked their opinions about the motivators and demotivators that are present in the ESL class. Although none of the teachers or the students in this study have experience with the same program and in the same circumstances, the ideas that they value and consider relevant for language learning are not only similar, but also easy to recognize. The environment of the classroom and the interactions among the participants of the language process, including student collaboration and peer scaffolding, seem to be traditional yet still pertinent points of interest. The increasing availability and use of technology in the classroom, as well as the opportunity to choose reading materials and assessment tasks, have also shaped the experiences of the participants in the language class. Steps have been taken to provide language minority students with the language education that they need in order to succeed; however, it appears more work needs to be done when it comes to placement. It is necessary to ensure that those students who really need to learn the language are provided the classes they need and that those who already know enough English to learn in English are not

placed in ESL just because of the language they speak at home. The former describes the ESL experience of Student B and the latter describes the case of Students A and C, as it was reported in their corresponding participants' profiles.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter comprises the summary, discussion, implications, and recommendations that derive from the findings of the present study. All the information presented pertains to the area of motivation and demotivation in ESL and the experiences of former Spanish-speaking ELLs and current ESL teachers with this topic.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Spanish-speaking students to determine how they perceive and react to the specific motivators and demotivators that are present in the ESL class as well as the extent to which these motivators and demotivators either inhibited or increased their willingness to learn English. This study provided a greater understanding of the similarities and differences between teachers and students regarding what they consider to be motivating or demotivating factors to learn English. The specific motivators and demotivators that emerged from the data collected were identified for analysis. The individual interviews with the teachers took place during the fall semester of 2010, as did the e-mail correspondence between me and the participating teachers for member checking. The students' focus group took place at the beginning of the spring semester of 2011, and the last e-mail correspondence for member checking was received in March. All the data were transcribed and translated into English by me, when necessary, and coded into themes by three different

people: two assistant researchers and me. The specific themes regarding motivation and demotivation that emerged from the data collected were identified for analysis, using the categories of language learning environment, student-teacher relationship, choice of task or reading material, use of technology, peer scaffolding, and difficulty of the task. These themes are considered within larger groupings of similarities and dissimilarities following.

Similarities Between and Within the Groups of Participants

The analysis of the data collected shows some relevant similarities in the perspectives and opinions of the students and the teachers in the themes of use of technology, peer scaffolding, and difficulty of the task. In the case of use of technology, three of the four teachers and one of the students mentioned the advantages of using some form of technology (video clips, iPods, computers, or the Internet) to provide examples and extra material relevant to the class. This finding is supported by Dörnyei and Csizér's study (1998), in which they listed "interest" as one of the "commandments" to motivate students (p. 212). Dörnyei and Csizér further argued that introducing unexpected and exotic elements in the class promotes students' curiosity at the same time that it makes the activity challenging yet enjoyable. Dörnyei and Csizér's assertion was corroborated by the teachers in this study who added that the fact that the students are familiar with the type of technology they use motivates them to work on projects and complete tasks. At the same time, they get to explore and use the technology in very specific ways that they might have not anticipated. Similarly, the student who mentioned the use of video clips in his class added that, because of their use in the class, he began to recognize similar structures and English phrases outside of the class, which he later incorporated into his own language inventory.

Regarding the theme of peer scaffolding, the findings of this study are congruent with Vygotsky's (1987) theory of socio-cultural cognitive development. According to this theory, culture, language, and social interaction are the main elements that precede cognitive development. Vygotsky also argued that peer scaffolding was essential to help individuals navigate through one zone of proximal development to the next. In the specific case of this study, three of the four teachers interviewed reported that their students seemed to perform better and enjoy more the different activities when they had the opportunity to work with a classmate. They also stated that they take into account the students' proficiency levels when pairing them in order to ensure that one of them is more knowledgeable that the other and can help his or her classmate to complete the task, which is an essential element of Vygotsky's theory. Two of the students who participated in the focus group also shared their experiences with peer scaffolding in their corresponding ESL classes, and they both expressed that they enjoyed assisting a classmate with the different activities. It made them feel good to help others who were in the same position as they were when they started learning English.

Another relevant component of Vygotsky's (1987) theory is the zone of proximal development. This component is described as the level of difficulty of a task which is too hard for an individual to complete alone but that can be successfully accomplished with the assistance of a more knowledgeable peer. Vygotsky (1987) and other researchers (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Schneider, 2001) agree that it is important for teachers to take into account the level of difficulty of a task because tasks that are too easy for the students are not challenging and therefore uninteresting, and tasks that are too difficult for the students to complete can end up in students' frustration and disappointment. The four teachers interviewed consider that experiencing success in the language classroom is definitely a motivator for their students, and they all emphasized the

importance of creating such opportunities in their classes. Likewise, the findings from the students' focus group are also consistent with the research as well as with the opinions from the teachers.

Dissimilarities Between and Within the Groups of Participants

The data collected in this study also shed light on some important dissimilarities in the perspectives and opinions of the students and the teachers in the themes of language learning environment, student-teacher relationship, and choice of task or reading material. Deemed by many experts (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; R. C. Gardner, 2006) as an important component for language learning, the environment or atmosphere of the language class was not only mentioned by the teachers interviewed, but they also emphasized and highlighted their many efforts to create a welcoming environment in their classroom where their students would feel safe to make mistakes and comfortable to participate and cooperate with one another. Interestingly, the students who participated in this study did not recognize the environment of their language class as a motivator. Only one of the students mentioned feeling comfortable in the class, but it was because he was friends with some of his classmates and not because of other aspects of the environment.

A similar situation emerged within the theme of student-teacher relationships. Previous studies by several experts including Dörnyei (2001), R.C. Gardner (2006), Glasser (1998), Louis (2009), and Oxford (1998) all support the teachers' opinions about the relevance and impact of this relationship. According to the teachers interviewed, having good rapport and creating a good relationship with their students is essential to motivate their students because then the students perceive the teacher as being "in the same team" (Teacher 4) as opposed to being an enemy or a rule enforcer. The students of the focus group, however, did not acknowledge this relationship as

part of their experience in the ESL classroom, not even when specifically asked about it. This finding is relevant because of two reasons. First, in spite of the many efforts of the teachers to create and foster a positive relationship with their students, there is a disconnection between the teachers' efforts and the students' perceptions of those efforts. And second, because the students interviewed had not been in ESL for at least seven years, the question remains as to whether or not current students would have different opinions or if they would also fail to recognize their teachers' efforts to create positive relationships with them.

The theme of choice of task or reading material also constitutes dissimilarity in the findings because it was mentioned by three of the teachers as one of the motivators they implement in the language class, but it was not experienced as such by the students interviewed. According to Glasser (1998), it is pertinent for students to feel that they have at least some control in their academic classes because doing so helps to fulfill their needs of power and fun. Glasser's assertion supports the teachers' argument that when the students get to choose what book to read or how to present a project, they are more invested in the task at hand than when they are assigned a specific book to read or a specific project to do. Glasser's theory of choice is closely related to the concept of student autonomy discussed by Holec (1981) and Dickinson (1995) who argued that students need to experience ownership of their learning and take responsibility for the decisions they make in the classroom. This feeling of control or autonomy was not mentioned by the any of the students as part of their experience in the language classroom. Here again, the time gap between the students' last ESL class and the focus group for this study constitutes a limitation, and only further research will determine if current ESL students exercise choice in their classes and if they experience autonomy and ownership of their learning.

Discussion

The main goal of this study was to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of Spanish-speaking students in the ESL class. Special attention was paid to what they perceived as motivators or demotivators and their reaction to them. This study also provided a detailed look at the different approaches that ESL teachers use in their classes and the modifications and accommodations that they have to make in order to better serve their students and their corresponding institutions as a whole. In addition, the study also provided other noteworthy findings regarding the participants' perspectives on placement and attitude towards language learning as well as teachers' concerns and ideal scenarios. The former concern was mentioned by two of the students and two of the teachers; the latter was only mentioned by two teachers.

Perspectives on Placement and Attitude towards Language Learning

Students A and C claimed that they were placed in ESL only because they spoke a language other than English at home, not because they had taken a placement test to determine their level of proficiency in the language. According to information from the Office of English Learning and Migrant Education in the Indiana Department of Education (2012a), it is presumed that this situation is unlikely to repeat itself. Currently, all students whose parents report that a language other than English is spoken at home are given a mandatory placement test (LAS Links) that determines a child's level of English proficiency. The test is to be administered within the first two weeks of enrollment for initial placement and once again in the spring semester for continuing placement during the following academic year. According to the Office of Student Assessment, students taking the placement test have to score at Level 5 two years in a row in order to be considered fluent English proficient (Indiana Department of Education, 2012b). In the case of the situation described by Teacher 4, where a student scored at Level 4 in

her placement test yet the parents decided to refuse any ESL instruction, the Office of English Learning and Migrant Education in the Indiana Department of Education limits its resources to provide and satisfy the need for language instruction, but ultimately it is the parents' prerogative to decide whether or not to have their child take the ESL classes.

Teachers' Concerns and Ideal Scenarios

Two of the teachers interviewed expressed similar concerns regarding the ESL instruction that their schools and school districts offer. In addition to mentioning the specific space and curriculum limitations that she has in her school, Teacher 3 also said that all students, regardless of whether or not they are language minority students, would benefit from having an ESL teacher and a classroom teacher collaborating in every class, as opposed to having the ESL teacher act as a teacher's aide. Similarly, Teacher 4 was concerned with the availability of ESL instruction not only in her high school but also in the other public high school in the same town, as she is the only ESL teacher in her high school and the other school only has ESL aides. Now, according to the Office of English Learning and Migrant Education in the Indiana Department of Education (2012a), Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act grants a specific amount of money to all the states for them to provide the resources that language minority students need. Each state is then in charge of deciding how to allocate those federal funds. Most states take into account a significant influx of immigrant students as well as low or high incidence of language minority students in order to decide how to spend the money. It is presumed that if the Indiana school districts for which Teachers 3 and 4 work were to experience an increase in their number of ESL learners, the districts would invest in providing more resources for that population.

Implications

The information gathered and presented in this study provides a better picture of the ESL classroom from the perspectives of those most directly involved, teachers and students. It is pertinent to mention here the specific limitations of this study in order to take them into account for future research. First, while the teachers interviewed referred to their experiences at the moment of data collection, the students participating in the focus group could only provide the information they remembered from the last time they were in an ESL class, which was at least seven years previous. Second, according to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at Indiana State University (2012), there were over 100 undergraduate students who identified themselves as Hispanic enrolled during the spring semester of 2011, when data were being collected for this study. However, in spite of the efforts to recruit participants for this project, only three students who met the required criteria agreed to participate in the research. Due to this limited number of students, it was decided that a focus group interview would yield more information than individual interviews would. The specific limitations of this study only allow for tentative assertions, and further research on this topic is still needed. Replication of this study would need to take into account these limitations listed above. However, having acknowledged that, the experiences of the participants and the analysis of their comments and opinions resulted in various implications for enhancing language instruction in ways that would be most effective for all those participating in the process of teaching and learning English.

Placement in a language class should constitute a more comprehensive process and be based on more than a written test. Upon registering for formal education, those students who speak a language other than English at home should be given a comprehensive assessment for proficiency that combines written and oral skills, as it is currently done in Indiana where the

instrument used for placement (LAS Links) also has an oral interview component to ensure that all four language skills are being addressed (Indiana Department of Education, 2012b). Additionally, teachers should conduct constant assessment of daily activities to add to the year-to-year decision on placement for each student. It is pertinent to keep in mind that students learn at different paces, and teachers who constantly evaluate their students' work will be better prepared and have more information to place a child in the right class. This will prevent situations where students are placed in a class that might not be challenging enough for them as was the case for Students A and C. It is presumed that if Students A and C had received different types of assessments and evaluations during their first couple of weeks in the ESL class, they would have tested out of it and would not have had to wait until the end of the academic year to take a placement test.

Smith-Davis (2004) noted that there are many reasons for the parents of a student identified as limited English proficient to refuse to take advantage of the language services. Some of these reasons include "lack of language mediation, immigration stress, acculturation stress, cultural variations in child care and child rearing, and fear of and reluctance to interventions, treatments and assistive devices" (Smith-Davis, 2004, p. 24). However, Kouritzin (2004) argued that one of the most important elements in a successful ESL program in schools is parental involvement. She believed it is pertinent for the families of ESL students to collaborate in the construction of learning plans and evaluations, and be "part of a network approach to students learning and language development" (Kouritzin, 2004, p. 491). In order to create and promote this network, schools need to create channels of communication that would allow parents to learn and understand the education that their children receive as well as the benefits that taking ESL classes will have in their children's academic performance. Although parents

cannot be forced to place their children in ESL classes when they need them, the parents can be informed of the services and the benefits that these services carry before they decide to refuse language instruction.

As newer and better technologies become available, there is an increased integration and utilization of technology and instruction in many classrooms. According to the teachers in this study, not only are they fortunate to have a couple of computers in their classrooms, they are fortunate to have access to the internet and other devices, such as iPods, to use in different projects with their ESL students. According to Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), these types of devices constitute "interesting supplementary materials" that challenge the students and raise their curiosity because they are "unexpected or exotic elements" (p. 212). The teachers interviewed in this study reported that students always respond positively and they seem to have a more enjoyable experience in the class when they have the opportunity to use and explore these devices. In order to enhance the teaching and learning experience, schools need to invest in these emergent technologies in order to provide teachers and students with more opportunities to interact and become familiar with their applications. This will likely not only improve the experience of language minority students, but it will likely also have a positive effect in all learning that happens inside and outside the classroom, as was the case for Student C. According to Student C, he was able to identify different figures of speech in different television shows and live conversations after his teacher used a clip from *Twin Peaks* (Frost, 1990) in the class as an example of sarcasm and allegory. Finally, in order to become more comfortable with technology and to keep up with the new devices, schools need to be more supportive of teachers' professional development, especially when it comes to workshops and conferences that are focused on the use of these technologies and their many applications in the classroom.

Recommendations

This study has implications for future research in language education as well as motivation and demotivation of Spanish–speaking students to learn English. Conclusions suggest that the environment and the interactions that take place in the language classroom have an impact on the students' willingness to learn English. The motivators and demotivators identified by the participants in the study do not constitute, by any means, an exhaustive list of all the different aspects that play an important role in the academic achievement of language students. Replication of this study using a specific theoretical approach as well as a larger sample of teachers and students would shed more light on the issues that pertain to ESL instruction in Grades K-12 in Indiana and other places that might experience similar increases in their Spanish–speaking population. Although numerous studies find the relationship between the students and their teachers relevant in creating and promoting motivation (Chambers, 1993; Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; R. C. Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Glasser, 1998; Oxford, 1998), there is little research that specifically addresses the students' acknowledgement of this relationship and even less its construction and characteristics. Additionally, there is little research that focuses on the students' perceptions and characterizations of the language learning environment, the motivators and demotivators that they encounter, and their reaction to them.

Recommendations for future research based on this study include

- A qualitative study with a minimum of 10 students who took ESL in elementary school (or high school) only describing their social interactions in the language classroom, both among themselves and with the teacher as well as the environment of the language class.

- A study with a minimum of 10 teachers licensed for ESL comparing their actual settings (class size, curriculum, time allotted) and their ideal settings for language instruction.
- A study comparing the comments and opinions of current ESL students in K-12 and current ESL teachers regarding motivators and demotivators in the language classroom.
- A quantitative study comparing the academic achievement of two different language classes, where the constructs of Glasser's (1998) choice theory are implemented in one but not in the other.
- A mixed methods study where participants would not only provide their opinions and reflections of the language class, but also rate in a Likert scale the importance of specific motivators and demotivators that would derive from their own experiences.

The implementation of these recommendations could guide more specialized research in the area of language education and motivation, as the studies and the samples of participants would be more delimited than in the present study. Also, the continuous study of motivation and demotivation can increase the understanding of the actions and behaviors that teachers evidence in their practice. This information may be used to minimize or eliminate factors that would hinder students' willingness to learn English.

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APPENDIX A: STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE/RECRUITMENT TOOL

Please take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire. Your answers and participation will be fundamental for a research project that seeks to explore and improve the ESL instruction that Spanish-speaking students receive in public schools in the State of Indiana.

1. Are you 18 years of age or older?
   Yes ____ No ____

2. Did you graduate from a public high school in the State of Indiana?
   Yes ____ No ____

3. Do you speak Spanish and/or English?
   _____ Mostly Spanish and some English
   _____ English only
   _____ Spanish and English equally
   _____ Mostly English and some Spanish

4. While in High School, did you take English as a Second Language classes?
   Yes ____ No ____ (if no, you can skip the rest of the questionnaire.
   Thank you for your time)

5. If yes, did you finish the ESL program or tested out of it?
   _____ Completed the ESL program (number of years: ____)
   _____ Tested out of ESL classes (after _____ years)

6. Will you be interested in participating in a study about the experiences of Spanish-speaking students in the English as a Second Language class (K-12)?
   _____ Yes, here is my e-mail: _____
   _____ Maybe, but I'd like to know more first. Here is my e-mail: _____
   _____ No, I am not interested.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

APPENDIX B: INTESOL NEWSLETTER ADVERTISEMENT

We are searching for licensed ENL teachers to participate in a research project about Spanish-speaking students' motivation and demotivation in the English as a second language class.

The complete interview will not take longer than one hour to be completed and the researcher will meet you at the place and time that you deem as most convenient and comfortable!

Please contact Alejandra Alvarado-Brizuela at 812.251.7206 or via e-mail to aalvaradobr@indstate.edu if you are interested in participating in this study.

APPENDIX C: TEACHERS' STATEMENT OF CONSENT

Please read carefully:

My name is Alejandra Alvarado-Brizuela; I am doctoral student in Curriculum, Instruction, and Media Technology at Indiana State University. My faculty sponsors are Dr. Susan Kiger and Dr. Leslie Barratt. I am conducting a research project for my dissertation to determine what motivates or demotivates Spanish-speaking students to learn English as a new language. I am requesting your participation in this project.

You are being asked to take part in this study because you teach English as a new language to Spanish-speakers in a public school in the State of Indiana. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before you agree to participate in the study.

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer some questions during an individual interview with me (the researcher). This will take about one and a half hours (90 minutes). The interview will be recorded with two digital voice recorders and I will be taking notes with a pen and paper. You will also receive an e-mail with a summary of the interview conducted with you as a follow up communication. If you choose to respond to the e-mail, you will be able to add information, or clarify. If you choose not to respond to the e-mail communication, the data collected during the interview will still be used for the study. The follow up e-mail will be sent to you individually and not through a distribution list

Risks are not greater than minimal risks to you for taking part in this study. Although there does not appear to be any risks or discomforts to you, you may withdraw from the study at anytime without any penalties. There are no direct benefits to you for helping with this study, but the information collected will help to improve the language instruction that students in public schools receive.

All the information obtained in this study and that can identify you will remain strictly confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by the use of pseudonyms, which will be known only to me. Your name will not appear in any of the information obtained from this study or in any of the research reports; nor will information resulting from your responses or actions be shared with others. The data derived from this study could be used in reports, presentations, and publications but you will not be individually identified.

My advisors, Dr. Susan Kiger and Dr. Leslie Barratt, and I will be the only persons who will have access to the recordings of the interviews. I will keep all recordings and their corresponding transcriptions in a locked filing cabinet and I will destroy those three years after the end of the

study. In addition, any identifying information from you will also be kept secured in order to preserve your confidentiality.

Your decision to take part in the study is voluntary. You are free to choose not to take part in the study or to stop taking part at any time without any penalty. You will be able to decide if you want to participate in the interview AND receive the follow up e-mail, or to participate in the interview only but DO NOT want to receive the follow up e-mail; with the understanding that not responding to the follow up e-mail does not mean that the data from your interview will be excluded from the study.

If you have questions now, feel free to ask me. If you have questions later, you may contact me at (812) 251-7206 or via e-mail: aalvaradobr@indstate.edu. You can also contact my advisors; Dr. Susan Kiger at (812) 237-2960 or via e-mail: susan.kiger@indstate.edu and Dr. Leslie Barratt at (812) 237-2677 or via e-mail: leslie.barratt@indstate.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board at Indiana State University at (812) 237- 8217 or IRB@indstate.edu.

Statement of Consent:

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study.

I have been provided a copy of this form.

Please check the box that applies:

☐ I agree to participate in the interview AND to receive the follow up e-mail.

☐ I agree to participate in the interview only but DO NOT want to receive the follow up e-mail.

_____
Print name

_____
Signature and date

APPENDIX D: STUDENTS' STATEMENT OF CONSENT IN ENGLISH

Please read carefully:

My name is Alejandra Alvarado-Brizuela; I am doctoral student in Curriculum, Instruction, and Media Technology at Indiana State University. My faculty sponsors are Dr. Susan Kiger and Dr. Leslie Barratt. I am conducting a research project for my dissertation to determine what motivates or demotivates Spanish-speaking students to learn English as a new language. I am requesting your participation in this project.

You are being asked to take part in this study because you are a Spanish-speaker who took ESL classes for a minimum of twelve weeks in a public school in the State of Indiana. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before you agree to participate in the study.

You must be at least 18 years of age or older in order to participate in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer some questions during a group interview with me (the researcher) and four other students. This will take about one and a half hours (90 minutes). The focus group will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and I will be taking notes with a pen and paper. The focus group will be recorded with two digital voice recorders and I will be taking notes with a pen and paper. You will also receive an e-mail with a summary of the focus group as a follow up communication. If you choose to respond to the e-mail, you will be able to add information, or clarify. If you choose not to respond to the e-mail communication, the data collected during the focus group will still be used for the study. The follow up e-mail will be sent to you individually and not through a distribution list.

Risks are not greater than minimal risks to you for taking part in this study. Although there does not appear to be any risks or discomforts to you, you may withdraw from the study at anytime without any penalties. There are no direct benefits to you for participating with this study, but the information collected will help to improve the language instruction that students in public schools receive.

All the information obtained in this study and that can identify you will remain strictly confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by the use of pseudonyms, which will be known only to me. Your name will not appear in any of the information obtained from this study or in any of the research reports; nor will information resulting from your responses or actions be shared with others. The data derived from this study could be used in reports, presentations, and publications but you will not be individually identified.

My advisors, Dr. Susan Kiger and Dr. Leslie Barratt, and I will be the only persons who will have access to the recordings of the group interviews. I will keep all recordings and their corresponding transcriptions in a locked filing cabinet and I will destroy those three years after the end of the study. In addition, any identifying information from you will also be kept secured in order to preserve your confidentiality.

Your decision to take part in the study is voluntary. You are free to choose not to take part in the study or to stop taking part at any time without any penalty. You will be able to decide if you want to participate in the initial focus group session AND receive a follow up e-mail, or to participate in the initial session only but DO NOT want to receive the follow up e-mail; with the understanding that not responding to the follow up e-mail does not mean that the data from the focus group will be excluded from the study.

If you have questions now, feel free to ask me. If you have questions later, you may contact me at (812) 251-7206 or via e-mail: aalvaradobr@indstate.edu. You can also contact my advisors; Dr. Susan Kiger at (812) 237-2960 or via e-mail: susan.kiger@indstate.edu and Dr. Leslie Barratt at (812) 237-2677 or via e-mail: leslie.barratt@indstate.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board at Indiana State University at (812) 237- 8217 or via e-mail: IRB@indstate.edu.

Statement of Consent:

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study.

I have been provided a copy of this form.

Please check the box that applies:

☐ I agree to participate in the focus group session AND to receive the follow up e-mail.

☐ I agree to participate in the focus group session only but DO NOT want to receive the follow up e-mail.

_____
Print name

_____
Signature and date

APPENDIX E: STUDENTS' STATEMENT OF CONSENT IN SPANISH

Por favor lea cuidadosamente:

Mi nombre es Alejandra Alvarado-Brizuela; soy estudiante de doctorado in Curriculum, Instruction, and Media Technology en Indiana State University. Mis profesores consejeras son la Dra. Susan Kiger y la Dra. Leslie Barratt. Estoy haciendo un proyecto de investigación para mi disertación para determinar que motiva o desmotiva a los estudiantes que hablan español para aprender inglés como un idioma nuevo. Le solicito su participación en este proyecto.

Se le solicita que participe en este estudio porque usted habla español y tomó clases de ESL en una escuela pública en el Estado de Indiana. Por favor lea este formulario y haga cualquier pregunta que tenga antes de aceptar participar en este estudio.

Usted debe tener al menos 18 años de edad para participar en este estudio. Si usted decide participar en este estudio se le pedirá que conteste algunas preguntas durante una entrevista de grupo conmigo (la investigadora) y cuatro estudiantes más. . Esto tomará alrededor de hora y media (90 minutos). La entrevista de grupo será grabada con una grabadora digital de voz y yo también estaré tomando notas con papel y lápiz. Usted también recibirá un resumen de la entrevista de grupo en un correo electrónico de seguimiento. Si usted decide responder al correo electrónico, usted podrá agregar información o aclarar. Si usted decide no responder el correo electrónico, la información recolectada durante la entrevista de grupo todavía será usada para el estudio. El correo electrónico de seguimiento le será enviando en forma individual y no a través de una lista de distribución.

Los riesgos para usted por participar en este estudio son mínimos. Aunque usted no corre ningún riesgo, usted se puede retirar del estudio en cualquier momento sin ningún castigo. No hay beneficios directos para usted por participar en este estudio, pero la información recolectada servirá para ayudar a mejorar la enseñanza del idioma que los estudiantes en escuelas públicas reciben.

Toda la información obtenida en este estudio y que pueda identificarlo/a se mantendrá estrictamente confidencial y solo será divulgada con su permiso o de ser requerido por la ley. Su confidencialidad será garantizada utilizando un sistema de pseudónimos que sólo yo conoceré. Su nombre no aparecerá en ninguna de la información obtenida para este estudio o en ninguno de los reportes de la investigación; tampoco la información obtenida de sus respuestas o sus acciones será compartida con otras personas. La información obtenida en este estudio podrá ser utilizada en reportes, presentaciones, y publicaciones pero usted no será identificado/a individualmente.

Mis profesoras consejeras, la Dra. Susan Kiger y la Dra. Leslie Barratt, y yo seremos las únicas personas con acceso a las grabaciones de las entrevistas. Yo mantendré las grabaciones y las transcripciones correspondientes en un archivero bajo llave, y las destruiré tres años después de haber terminado el estudio. Además, cualquier información que pueda identificarlo/a será guardada en un lugar seguro para preservar su confidencialidad.

Su decisión de participar en este estudio es voluntaria. Usted tiene la libertad de decidir no participar en el estudio y de dejar de participar en cualquier momento sin ningún castigo. Usted podrá decidir si quiere participar en la entrevista de grupo Y recibir el correo electrónico de seguimiento, o participar sólo en la entrevista de grupo, PERO NO desea recibir el correo electrónico de seguimiento; teniendo claro que el no responder al correo electrónico de seguimiento no significa que la información obtenida durante la entrevista de grupo será excluida del estudio.

Si usted tiene alguna duda, por favor siéntase libre de preguntarme. Si tiene alguna pregunta después, me puede contactar al teléfono (812) 251-7206 o al correo electrónico: aalvaradobr@indstate.edu. Usted también puede contactar a mis profesoras consejeras; la Dra. Susan Kiger al teléfono (812) 237-2960 o al correo electrónico: susan.kiger@indstate.edu; y la Dra. Leslie Barratt al teléfono (812) 237-2677 o al correo electrónico: leslie.barratt@indstate.edu. Si usted tiene preguntas o le preocupan sus derechos como participante de la investigación, por favor contacte el Institutional Review Board en Indiana State University al teléfono (812) 237-8217 o al correo electrónico: IRB@indstate.edu.

Carta de Consentimiento:

Entiendo los procedimientos descritos arriba. Mis preguntas han sido contestadas a mi satisfacción y estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio.

He recibido una copia de esta carta.

Por favor marque el cuadro que corresponda:

☐ Estoy de acuerdo en participar en la entrevista de grupo Y en recibir el correo electrónico de seguimiento.

☐ Estoy de acuerdo en participar sólo en la entrevista de grupo PERO NO deseo recibir el correo electrónico de seguimiento.

_____
Nombre

_____
Firma y fecha