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**An exploration of language acquisition through peer
scaffolding and sociocultural interactions in a
New Zealand primary school**

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This thesis is dedicated to my father, Delfin, and my son, Elliot.

“Thanks, Dad. I miss you every day.”

ABSTRACT

In recent years, New Zealand's continued commitment to accept migrants and refugees from other countries has caused our schools to be impacted by a significant influx of English language learners from many different ethnic backgrounds. As a result, teachers have needed to modify their practices to cater for the needs of increasing numbers of English language learners (ELLs) in mainstream classrooms. This study seeks to identify the influences that sociocultural interactions and peer-scaffolding can have on the language development of young ELLs in primary schools.

Utilising a qualitative case-study design and participant observations as the main data collection instrument, this research investigated classroom and playground peer-interactions involving two junior primary ELLs over the course of two school terms. The classroom teachers and parents of the two case students were also interviewed for background information in order to explore their roles as mediators of language acquisition.

Findings revealed the significance of interactions between ELLs and their peers during both mainstream classroom and playground activities. The complexity of the communicative exchanges and linguistic strategies utilised by the ELLs with their peers highlighted their ability to develop agency within their social networks and to use both linguistic and non-linguistic tools to effectively engage with these. The ELLs' second language development was also facilitated by their parents and classroom teachers through mediated interactions that encouraged sociocultural and language development within the school, home, and wider community.

Throughout the study, a focus on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and Lave and Wenger's (1991) community of practice model help to explain the ELLs' strategies in coping with the linguistic challenges and the sometimes complex pre-existing relational structures within the mainstream educational environment.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CoP – Community of Practice

DP – deputy principal

ELL - English language learner

ESOL - English for speakers of other languages

L1 – first language

L2 - second language

LPP – legitimate peripheral participation

NESB - non-English speaking background

SLA – second language acquisition

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

ZPD – Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the sociocultural aspects of language acquisition of two young non-native speakers of English in a primary mainstream classroom, whose families have come to New Zealand as refugees from Bhutan. It seeks to explore the social relationships and interactions of the English language learners (ELLs) with the teachers, their parents, and student peers, and how these relationships might assist with their language learning.

In a multicultural society such as New Zealand, a constant influx of non-native English speakers from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds is now the norm. As one of the main groups entering the country every year, refugees, “come as part of our international humanitarian obligations and responsibilities” (Department of Labour, 2004, p. 2). Since 1987, New Zealand has taken part in resettling refugees, with a yearly quota in place (Ferguson, 2011). A report released through the Refugee and Quota Branch Statistics under the Refugee and Protection Unit highlighted 7,065 refugee arrivals since 2004, and in 2014 alone, 245 refugees arrived in New Zealand since July, 67 of which were children aged 0-12 (Immigration New Zealand, 2014).

The New Zealand government has put initiatives in place to address the social needs of migrant and refugee families to help them adapt and function in the new country, such as the Pathways to Settlement and Employment programmes (New Zealand Red Cross, 2015). Programmes have also been launched to support ELLs in primary schools. The Ministry of Education (2014) receives governmental funding to provide English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support for children of migrant and refugee families in New Zealand schools. Such funding is used to develop ESOL resources, to pay for teacher professional development, and for teacher aide support to assist ESOL students in mainstream classrooms. However, in recent years the growing number of migrant and refugee students, who are beginning learners of English, have put pressure on many aspects of mainstream New Zealand classrooms, and these days, “classroom teachers are constantly challenged to meet the many diverse needs of learners in their classes” (Haworth, 2003, p. 159).

Students with refugee status are entitled to up to five years English language support at school (Ministry of Education, 2014), but ESOL funding in schools varies, and there are certain criteria for students to get into the resource pool. Professional development for teachers in this area is funded by the Ministry of Education, but fully qualified ESOL

teachers are scarce. Teacher aides are often utilised as the main means of support for ESOL students in mainstream classrooms and their time is limited.

From the point of view of ESOL students, entering mainstream education can be a challenging process, as young ELLs are often placed into the unfamiliar environment of mainstream classrooms shortly after arriving in New Zealand. Often, classroom demographics do not offer ELLs the security of peers of the same ethnicity. In fact, the chances of another child speaking the same first language in the same classroom are very low in many schools. Because of this, beginning ELLs face the additional challenge of social isolation at school. To make matters worse, ELLs are sometimes surrounded by English language resources that are not at an appropriate level for their understanding. English sentence structures, words, phonics, and decoding strategies can be meaningless if presented in worksheets that beginning English learners cannot use, as different languages have different grammatical rules, alphabet, and phonetics. Comprehension may be minimal, even if there is visual support, as topics and resources may not match beginning English learners' prior knowledge.

The isolation and stress that ELLs can experience in the classroom may serve as barriers to learning outcomes. Therefore, a more social approach to teaching and learning is suggested to improve outcomes in language acquisition. For example, the literature suggests that teachers should deviate from the norms of teaching to better understand "the value of interaction in teaching and learning" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014, p. 155) in the classroom.

Research that focuses on socialisation processes in peer culture (Corsaro & Rizzo, 1988), interactions, tutoring, and relationships (Barnard, 2002; Vine, 2003) tends to examine the implications of interactions in older ELLs and their peers. However, only a small number of research studies have been conducted on young primary school ELLs, and of these, even fewer focus on socialisation processes that are linked to second language (L2) learning (Haworth, 2003; Haworth, P., Cullen, J., Simmons, H., Schimanski, L., McGarva, P. & Woodhead, E., 2006).

Previous classroom-based studies grounded in sociocultural theory have investigated the implications of interactions, supportive frameworks, learning environments, and relationships that occur between teachers, ELLs, and their peers (Barnard, 2002; Brown, 2009; Case, 2015; Haworth, 2003; Haworth et al., 2006; Toohey, 1996; Vine, 2003;).

This current study provides a micro-level perspective on interactions between ELLs and their peers, and also takes into account the teachers' and ELL parents' input into the sociocultural and scaffolding aspect of second language learning. There are also studies that largely contributed to the knowledge of how L2 learning occurs in very young children in an early childhood setting (e.g. Corsaro & Rizzo, 1988; Haworth et al., 2006; Toohey, 1996). The ethnographic study above also explores different identities, social practices, and resources that are available in these communities for newcomers, and how these conditions define possibilities for learning. Although the studies mentioned above significantly added to L2 research knowledge on very young ELLs, little is known about how the social context enhances young ELLs in the primary school context. Hence further research in this particular area needs to be addressed.

Research that examines teachers' beliefs and classroom practices highlights the importance of knowing ELLs' cultural capital and skills, as well as ideal interactional and collaborative dynamics which provide the best conditions to afford ELLs in an early childhood setting access to resources to optimise L2 learning (Caner, Subasi, & Kara 2010). However, as studies such as Haworth's (2003) examined teachers' conditions, beliefs, strategies, and interactions with primary school students of non-English speaking background (NESB) in a mainstream classroom, an in-depth exploration of the social complexities embedded within peer networks is still needed.

Other studies (e.g. Vine, 2003; Brown, 2009) provide an in-depth analysis of one-to-one interactions of an ELL with the teacher and indicate the importance of cultural knowledge in L2 learning. However, the current investigation of interactions between young ELLs and their peers within a cultural, social, and relational context gives further insight into L2 learning and addresses the gap in this area of research. It also highlights the need to include the importance of roles that parents and teachers play in acknowledging the ELL's first culture and language, as well as how this influences L2 development.

While some studies (e.g. Barnard, 2002) have highlighted the benefits of classmates as accessible peer tutors in the mainstream classroom, and the importance of relational interactions as influential aspects of a collaborative high school classroom environment (e.g. Case 2015), research on young primary school ELLs is still very limited.

1.1 The aims of the study

This study explores the experiences of two young ELLs in a New Zealand primary school by addressing questions on how they initiate, develop, and maintain interpersonal relations at school and how these might influence L2 acquisition. It discusses evidence of ELLs taking on different roles in a range of teacher and peer-mediated interactions, and investigates young ELLs' interactional L2 strategies in the classroom and playground, in the hope of giving insights into the challenges that young ELLs can face in the light of existing power structures within peer networks. Most importantly, the role of parents in mediating and developing the ELL's cultural identity, and how this extends in the school context will be also considered.

This thesis suggests a social approach to providing learning opportunities for ELLs that break away from the confines and imposition of learning new language structures in order to make way for a more sociocultural approach to language acquisition. Including the role of parents and teachers in mediating sociocultural interactions between ELLs and their peers, teachers may be able to understand the importance of establishing robust social practices for young ELLs in the mainstream classroom, and the influence of these on language learning. Through highlighting opportunities for naturalistic strategies that address the second language learning needs of young primary-school ELLs, the links between social and cultural systems will also become clearer.

A qualitative case study approach was utilised in order to provide an in-depth perspective of the environmental conditions influencing the two ELLs' sociocultural interactions in their school, home, and community contexts. The investigation therefore included not only observations of the children but also investigated how their teachers' and parents' beliefs and knowledge mediated their practices.

1.2 Personal impetus for the study

The idea for this study emerged from my awareness of new ELLs' feelings of isolation that they sometimes face in their new mainstream classroom, and how this presents a barrier to their L2 learning. My background as a primary teacher for ten years gave me a first-hand look at the challenges that ELLs encountered in the classroom and the playground. As a second language learner myself, my assimilation into the New Zealand culture after migrating with my son from the Philippines fifteen years ago meant that I had to immerse myself socially and establish interactions in my new environment. As a

parent, my decision to fully immerse my son in the English language because of his negative experiences as an ELL in school resulted in his first language (L1) loss in half a year. Besides being bullied by his peers for speaking in his native tongue, my son did not receive encouragement from his teachers to speak his L1. They also assumed that he could not speak and understand English. There were no enquiries from his previous school about his L1 and culture, and I was not made aware of its relevance and value to his self-identity and social development. As a result, I have taken a proactive stance as a current teacher of young ELLs in order to explore ways of fostering sociocultural practices and interactions within the primary school setting.

Many new ELLs who are transitioning into mainstream primary classrooms do not have the social confidence that most non-ELLs because of cultural factors. Incorporating collaborative and social dynamics into my own classroom programme appeared to encourage the ELLs in my supervision to establish relationships with their peers in a short time, and also lead to some L2 learning. As a result, I sought to find out knowledge on how other teachers teach and integrate young ELLs in their own classroom structures, as well as how L2 is acquired through the relational peer networks they are involved with both in the mainstream classroom, playground, and the home environment.

The focus of this study is to look at how sociocultural interactions and peer scaffolding in the classroom act as mediators of language learning. From my experiences over ten years as a teacher, before the study, it became clear that a simple investigation of peer-to-peer interactions would not be enough to present the complexities of L2 learning in young ELLs as other factors can also contribute to an understanding of the layered nature of L2 acquisition, including the teachers and the ELLs' parents. All of these people may have input into the L2 learning process and play key roles in mediating what happens in the mainstream classrooms the school, and outside of school. It is for this reason that it was decided to include data on all of these layers in this study.

1.3 Chapter structure

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Having begun with an introduction to the background, aim, and purpose of the study, Chapter 2 will review the body of relevant literature associated with sociocultural theory and other concepts significantly linked to the present study. This review includes previous research based on the ELL's social interactions in both the mainstream classroom and the playground, and theories related to

assisting language learning. In particular, the focus in Chapter 2 will be on theories that shed light on how ELLs acquire language through social interaction and provide insights into the holistic nature of ELLs' social interactions. Following that, the specific research questions for the study are identified.

Chapter 3 provides information on the methodology and tools utilised in the study. It begins by describing the research approach used, before describing the research site. Information is then provided on the participants in the study and the process for their selection. Next, the data gathering tools and their implementation are explained, including ethical considerations for the study. This is followed by discussion of the study's validity and reliability.

As the main study participants are Bhutanese refugees, Chapter 4 focuses firstly on providing background to these refugees and the New Zealand government's resettlement programme. Next, a description of the two key ELL participants and their parents is presented, including an overview of their family background, language, and life before and after resettlement in New Zealand from Nepal.

Chapter 5 describes the study findings on how the school and class communities of practice mediated language learning. These findings draw on interviews and observation data that provided insights into the complex nature of the ELL participants' L2 learning journeys.

Chapters 6 and 7 present and discuss the case studies on the two young ELL participants.

The thesis concludes with a summary of the answers that were found to the research questions; presents practical implications for teachers, parents of ELLs, and schools; and discusses the study's strengths and limitations. Finally, some suggestions are offered for future research, and some reflections are provided on my own personal journey as a researcher throughout this study.

Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the literature related to the current thesis. The first part of the literature review covers the sociocultural approach taken to researching interactions. In particular, this section centres around young ELLs' interactions and their role in second language acquisition (SLA). Following this, a description of the key concepts of mediation, gestures, private speech, and scaffolding – notions related to sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) is provided. The Community of Practice (CoP) model (Lave & Wenger, 1991) will be explained and links made with Vygotsky's theory of mediation. Both of these theories are likely to be relevant to the participant ELLs' school and wider community. The concept of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) will also be examined in this section, as this provides a potential lens to understand how the participant ELLs become members of various CoPs. Finally, a discussion of the importance of agency, identity, and belonging, which are embedded within the participant ELLs' interactions in a second language community, will be considered, including perspectives, concepts, and studies relevant to SLA in young ELLs.

2.2 A sociocultural approach to researching interaction

This study aims to explore how young ELLs' social and educational interactions influence their English language learning. It therefore takes a sociocultural approach. Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978) has been an integral part of research in SLA. Links between sociocultural practices and SLA indicate that language learning is a “socially mediated process” (Van Patten & Williams, 2007, p. 15) that is facilitated through collaboration and participation in cultural and social activities. A sociocultural approach to learning emphasises the influences of cultural and linguistic participation in established settings such as family units, organisational institutions, relational interactions, and schools (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Language acquisition is also historically influenced by “the social contexts and situations” (Gibbons, 2015, p. 13) that individuals experience and the “cultural capital that families bring to the learning situation” (Rodriguez-Brown, 2010, p. 111). Furthermore, supporting fluency in the L1 is particularly important for the development of the L2 (Baker, 2006). This aspect of SLA is particularly central to the focus of the present study, which looks at how young ELLs interact with members of the various social groups (which consist of both L1 and English speakers) of which they are

a part. In particular, within this sociocultural approach, the current study focuses on the interactions between participant ELLs, their teachers, parents, and classroom peers.

Interaction is defined as “conversations that learners participate in” (Gass, 1997, p. 176), which suggests a link between collaborative interactions and L2 development. Natural language acquisition occurs when ELLs focus on meaning while they engage in normal and spontaneous L2 interactions (Van Patten & Williams, 2007). Participation is necessary for the L2 development of ELLs in contextual situations because it allows them to use the L2 in meaningful ways. This leads to “comprehensible output” (Swain, 2000, p. 25). Swain explains that as ELLs produce the L2, they place emphasis on making their utterance understandable to others, thereby enabling them to engage and focus on how they are generating the L2. She goes further by pointing out that this utterance will result in more coherent and well-formed L2 communication. However, there are times when ELLs may struggle with the L2 and produce language that may be incomprehensible to native speakers. This struggle, which Swain refers to as “stretched language” (p. 26), can be supported through the presence of a “helpful interactant” (p. 26). For instance, Gibbons (2015) suggests buddying up students in the classroom to assist in an activity, boosting an ELL’s confidence through affirmation of their L2 communication, or creating an environment for ELLs that supports and allows them to be grouped with their own friends. These approaches can lead to interactions that promote “collaborative dialogue” (Swain, 2000, p. 99) which might mediate opportunities for ELLs to communicate in the L2 and improve their language output. Such buddy strategies may be relevant to the mainstream classrooms that are the context for the current study.

2.2.1 Mediation

Interactions are also facilitated by mediation – a construct associated with the idea that cognition is shaped by engagement with artefacts, social activities, peer interactions, and perceptions (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978). The notion of mediation as self-regulation also relates to the “capacity to regulate, or mediate others, as well as to be mediated by others” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 55). Within the current study, the process of L2 development may be supported by mediated linguistic interactions among the young ELL and their peers, their families, and teachers (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). Mediation has been described as the basis of sociocultural development, and occurs as a result of how an individual appropriates “dialogic interactions” (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994, p. 467) with others. In an educational context, researchers often refer to this sort of mediation as

teaching through dialogue (Gibbons, 2015). This process involves co-construction of the curriculum in which ELLs make connections with past learning experiences and evolve new understandings with their teacher and peers (Ball & Wells, 2009, p. 371, as cited in Gibbons, 2015, p. 33). Providing such supplementary teacher support will give ELLs extra opportunities for facilitated engagement, collaboration, and interaction with peers (Gibbons, 2015). In the current study, it will be helpful to explore how parents and teachers of young ELLs mediate social interactions that may assist with SLA.

Research conducted by Walk, Matsup, and Giovanoni (2015) found that social interaction is an important aspect in language development in preschool and kindergarten years. Their study showed that bilingual children's language development was linked to their relationship experiences with adults in the classroom. This finding points out the importance of teachers' role in mediating second language acquisition for young learners in a mainstream environment. It was also noted that bilingual children may benefit from the informalities of classroom interactions, as they learn English language rules and structures outside formal language teaching approaches. This view was influential in designing the current study.

Peer interactions relate to the concept of "language learning as a social process developed by interaction" (Gómez Lobatón, 2011, p. 193). Gómez Lobatón concluded in the study that teachers need to be responsible for how the social dynamics in the classroom facilitate language learning, since the social environment needs to promote and encourage confidence in the interactional processes amongst learners. Therefore, teachers are influential "mediators of social relationships" (Gómez Lobatón, 2011, p. 199) in the classroom – a concept which supports Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and confirms the importance of the focus of the current study.

Research that explored classroom interactions as potential opportunities for language learning found that activities that could be done "individually, with a partner, or in small groups" (Vine, 2003, p. 127) proved beneficial to a young ELL. Vine's research highlighted the interdependent nature of one-to-one dialogues and interactions between a teacher and a young ELL, who attempted to communicate his understandings in the L2. In the current study, dialogues that occurred between the participant ELLs, their peers, teachers, and the impact on their language development will be considered.

The role of interaction between native speakers of English and ELLs was also explored in a study which investigated meaning negotiation, social factors, ELLs' level of interaction, attitudes, and confidence around native speakers (Xu, 2010). The study's findings indicated that 84% of the ELL participants had marginal communication with native speakers because of lack of communicative confidence in the L2 with native speakers. Lack of opportunities for social and communicative interactions, language barriers, and native speakers who were not socially interactive, were identified as hindrances to the ELLs communicating confidently. The study concluded that "interaction is socially bound" (p. 83) and noted that integration of "social perspectives into future study of the role of interaction" (p.84) is worth undertaking. The research described above emphasises the importance of teacher intervention with regards to mediating interactions between ELLs and their peers, especially among young learners. It will be interesting to see how teacher involvement facilitates communicative opportunities for ELLs in a mainstream classroom environment, which is one focus in the current study.

The present investigation also explores the influence that parents, as mediators of language in the home environment, have on young ELLs' L2 development. First language practices in the sociocultural home environment may lead to potential benefits for ELLs. It has also been argued that "dual language skills are associated with cognitive and linguistic advantages, including greater control over language" (Cummins, 2000; Diaz, Espinosa, Rodriguez, & Winsler, 1999; Krashen, 1999, as cited in Galindo, 2010, p. 49). Research also highlights how strength in an ELL's first language can influence their success in learning other languages (e.g. Baker, 2006). Teachers, as mediators of second language, can also give ELLs opportunities to communicate with others who share the same L1 in order to clarify concepts and instructions in the classroom (Gibbons, 2015).

At times, interactions are mediated by various tools which encourage cognitive functioning. Vygotsky refers to these tools as "symbolic artefacts (such as languages, literacy, numeracy, concepts, and forms of logic and rationality) as well as material artefacts and technologies" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 220). The function of such tools "is to serve as the conductor of human influence on the object of activity" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 55). Also included are "culturally semiotic artefacts (activities such as seeing movies, watching television, listening to music, viewing art, playing games, reading, and

listening to stories about others and themselves)” (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995, p. 91). Mediators like this serve as significant talking points among children as they begin to make connections and understand how others appropriate such activities. Thus, children may be able to think about how their own interests align with others in order to form new social relationships which may, in turn, promote SLA.

The sociocultural structure of L2 learning is “a semiotic process” (Donato, 2000, p. 45) that allows individuals to participate in “socially mediated activities”. This may lead to interactions mediated by various tools which encourage intellectual functioning. This idea is closely linked to the use of “higher-level cultural tools” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 202) which act as mediators between human beings and the “social-material world” (p. 203). It also supports the idea that individuals have the ability to make decisions surrounding “culturally constructed objects” (p. 203) that require them to function more effectively in different contexts, thus enabling social transformation. It will be interesting to see how the young ELLs in the current study utilise various cultural artefacts as points of L2 communication with native speakers.

2.2.2 Play, gestures and private speech

One of the elements of interaction the current study investigates is play, which is seen as an integral part of children’s mental and physical development. Research on the sociocultural analysis of discourse strategies and the contributions of peer culture gave some insight into the development of communicative competence and language learning in very young children in a kindergarten setting. The value of the sociocultural approach of teacher and peer mediation, as well as the advantages of collaborative peer interactions, cultural tools, and artefacts in an early childhood context were investigated in a bilingual development study by Haworth et al. (2006). Bilingual research suggests that language acquisition is linked to children’s engagement in play-based activities “to assist in their advancement along a unique developmental pathway” (Haworth et al., 2006, p. 296). This connection recognises the verbal and non-verbal strategies that occur between children during play activities. During L2 learning, children may use gestures, especially in play-related interactions or games. Gestures can also be used to “manifest meanings” learners cannot express verbally (Lantolf, 2000, p. 23). “Representational gestures” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 108) children use to express meanings to objects and games can hold “symbolic functions” (p. 108) during play. Vygotsky considers communication through gestures as a “very complex system of speech” (p. 108) during the early stages of a child’s

development. Studies conducted on collaborative classroom interactions have concluded that gestures and non-verbal cues gave ELLs opportunities to communicate with native speakers, establish friendships, and break language barriers (Case, 2015; Toohey, 1996). In this study, the role of play in promoting L2 communication in the mainstream classroom and playground will also be investigated.

Another notion explored in the current study is self-talk or private speech – a form of mediated “mental activity” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 206) that enables individuals to appropriate socially communicated ideas internally. This concept links to an individual’s mental domain with regards to learning. Social communication facilitates an individual’s connection to the world, while private speech helps in making sense of an individual’s personal experiences. Private speech assists in mediating the relationship between a person and his or her mental understanding or perceptions (Frawley, 1997). This ability to support experiences mentally through private speech helps individuals in organising and integrating events. This process may become visible in the current study, as the participant ELLs engage in literacy and play activities.

2.2.3 Scaffolding

A classroom environment often provides adult support and encourages cooperative peer teaching or scaffolding among its members. One construct that is widely discussed in sociocultural studies related to SLA, is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD is “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Vygotsky also adds a cultural lens in suggesting that “social relations or relations among people underlie all higher functions and their relationships” (p. 57). In addition, collaborative learning in “specifically designed learning environments” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 211), where teachers modify learning spaces to cater for identified student needs, can encourage cognitive development in young learners.

In educational research, ZPD is seen to allow students to have “access to language that is ahead of what they are yet able to produce themselves” (Gibbons, 2015, p. 25). In Applied Linguistics, a related concept is termed “comprehensible input... $i+1$ (where i is the acquirer’s level of competence)” (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 32), wherein ELLs acquire language by listening to and coming to comprehend messages that are marginally

above their level of English. Teachers can scaffold new language and information to increase the learner's comprehension. Teachers can also make curriculum related language understandable through links to an ELL's prior knowledge, visuals, or even their first language (Gibbons, 2015).

ZPD theory highlights the importance of "guidance and collaboration with more capable peers" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014, p. 155). This mirrors the notion of "scaffolding" (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). Scaffolding is a particular form of assistance that enables learners to move towards understanding different skills and concepts (Gibbons, 2015). This moves away from the idea that individuals are capable of learning on their own and leans towards valuing interactions in the classroom. Gibbons (2015, p. 32-33) explains that dialogue and interaction are "at the heart of the learning process" as these activities enable learners to "construct the resources for thinking". This "dialogic approach" takes into account the "quality of the dialogues" students engage in and what takes place during peer-to-peer discourse and interactions. Hence, learning is an ongoing process that occurs through co-construction of meanings and critically shared understandings (Gibbons, 2015), which helps in generating new language. Exploring scaffolding in SLA, as this occurs during interaction, will be an important focus in the current study.

Peer-to-peer scaffolding and interactions between native and non-native speakers in mainstream classrooms have been explored in a longitudinal case study of ELLs (Barnard, 2002). The study concluded that the understanding that is shared and developed between learners is dialogic in nature. It also found that peer scaffolding and collaboration can be facilitated through social and private speech, and that English speaking children are able to find a variety of strategies to teach, model and instruct L2 learners. Extracts of recorded interactions revealed that the ELLs' peer teachers (who were all native speakers of English) demonstrated authentic scaffolding "by explanation, exemplification, demonstration and modelling" (p. 61). Also highlighted were the benefits and accessibility of classmates as peer tutors, as well as the role of teachers in setting the scaffolding and "interactional frame" (Barnard, 2002, p. 62) for ELLs.

Occurrences when English-speaking peers in the current study are seen to pass on new learning and strategies, as well as engage in dialogic, social and peer-scaffolded interactions with ELL participants will be explored further in this investigation.

Feedback on language development can also emerge in the negotiation of meaning “between the novice learner and the expert knower of the language” (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994, pp. 466-467). Research findings suggest that the quality and amount of assistance an ELL received from an expert (in this case, the teacher) were key factors in enabling the novice (the ELL) to achieve success in a language task (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). Ultimately, scaffolding can be removed once the learner has achieved success in a particular task. The relevance of scaffolding, as well as its impact on language learning tasks in the classroom and playground, is likely to be important in the current study.

Collaborative interactions among young learners, which highlighted two teachers’ recognition of its importance in the classroom, was investigated in a study by Caner, Subasi and Kara (2010). Both teachers facilitated English language learning among young students through child-centred activities that promoted play and English dialogue. The researchers referred in their study to the “Vygotskian classroom” which “promotes assisted discovery” (p. 65), especially where teachers explain, demonstrate, and prompt within each child’s ZPD. This concept is particularly relevant to the current study, which focuses on how the teachers’ classroom programme encourages and promotes ELLs’ social, collaborative, and dialogic interactions.

2.3 Community of practice theory

ELLs belong to interrelated communities (family, ethno-cultural community, classroom, school) that enable them to weave together experiences, languages, and learning. Any community that has a role in mediating interactions that may assist L2 learning, may be conceptualised as a Community of Practice (CoP). A CoP is defined as “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98). The learning that takes place in a CoP is described as intrinsic in nature, being dependent on the “social structure, power relations, and its conditions for legitimacy” (p. 98). The implications of participating at different levels include recognition, acceptance and membership in the CoP. Lave and Wenger also state that participation should not be confused with replication, and that being able to apply new skills and knowledge learnt from the CoP, out into the wider world determines its validity. Removing the conventional notion of “observation and imitation” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 95) apprenticeship paves the way for cultural engagement to encourage learning. Mitchell and Myles (2004) also highlight that how the CoP is constructed determines possible learning opportunities accessible to

members, but they “may have differential access to the repertoire of negotiable resources” (Wenger, 1998, p.76) of the community.

Lave and Wenger (1991) also mention the “significance of artefacts” (p. 101) which were first mentioned in Section 2.2, and they associate this with technologies of the CoP. They add that participation involving such artefacts requires full engagement with the social, relational, and production processes of the particular technology of the CoP, as it carries a considerable part of that culture.

Wenger (1998) looks at a CoP from a reciprocal point of view, wherein an individual engages with and contributes to the “practices of their communities”, while also noting that the community refines their own practice in order to benefit “new generations of members” (Wenger, 1998, p. 7). CoP is therefore socially bound, with its own resources, systems, organizations, activities, relational connections, and understandings of the world (Wenger 1998). As such, the CoP model has often been used to explore educational contexts, where “evolving forms of mutual engagement” (Wenger, 1998, p. 95) encourage both new and old members of the community to negotiate, invest in, as well as seek knowledge about each other’s identities. “Tutors, peers or relatives” contribute not only to a learner’s language proficiency, “but also in the [learning of] values and practices associated with the language and its users in particular communities of practice” (Duff, 2011, p. 566). The CoP may provide a useful model to explore the different communities operating within the participant ELLs’ context in the current study, and the various roles that specific members take to encourage social and interactional L2 learning.

The importance of seeking knowledge of and investing in language learners’ cultural identity was noted in a study which highlighted the teacher’s facilitation of a young bilingual student’s understanding of a “cultural model of writing” (Brown, 2009, p. 32) through interactions, co-constructions, and negotiation of identities to create content for his picture book. Findings showed the student’s refusal to reveal his knowledge of Spanish to the teacher, who did not inquire about the student’s cultural and language background – knowledge which could have been valuable in creating content for his picture book. These findings led to a recommendation that teachers should get to know individual ELLs, so that they can use knowledge about them to design relevant teaching experiences. Brown also suggested that teachers should practise inclusivity by restructuring their classrooms to properly support ELLs in their L2 environment.

The classroom as a community of practice has been further highlighted in a study that provided an in-depth analysis of how two young ELLs' identities were affected by the social practices and resources used in the classroom (Toohey, 1996). The ELLs' access to the CoP within these parameters was presented through detailed observations of the classroom's social dynamics, as well as how English was utilised by two students through play, sharing circles, and craft activities. One of the ELLs, Harvey, was of Chinese descent but spoke English as his first language. Toohey reported that Harvey struggled through social stigma in class which affected his access to resources and his relationships with other classmates. Therefore, he did not have productive experiences and seldom became part of the CoP. The other student, Amy, was an ELL who was liked by many of her classmates and was able to reciprocate friendly gestures and actions from female peers. Although her English was basic, her close-knit, personal, and relational interactions with her classmates increased her chances of engaging in classroom craft activities and accessing resources. Her affability gained her entry into "power relations" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98), which led to her accessing friendships, resources, and social relationships within the classroom's social dynamics. She also maintained her first language through linguistic interactions with Cantonese speaking friends. She was therefore able to participate in two distinct CoPs in her class – the social networks of Cantonese and English speakers. Toohey concluded that "access to participation and resources in these various communities are historical, dynamic and [can be] problematic for the children" (Toohey, 1996, p. 573). While the existing CoP created new social opportunities for Amy, in the example above, Harvey was able to only marginally participate in the CoP. Language learning success, in this context, may have a direct relationship to the social aspects of learning within a CoP, but may also be subject to power relations. The above is relevant to the current study, where the impact of effective social relationships on L2 learning and communication are examined. It is possible that the ethnicity and first language of the ELLs in the current study may affect their social interactions at different levels with their peers who are native speakers of English in the mainstream educational environment.

Wenger (1998) maintains that CoPs provide newcomers opportunities and ideal conditions to competently participate and mutually engage in a collective "joint enterprise" (p. 214). The study explores the potential for communal enterprises such as family units, schools, classrooms, and peer networks as communities of practice. How

the ELL participants engage and participate in the structures operating within their school and social networks will determine its legitimacy as CoPs.

2.3.1 Legitimate peripheral participation

Participation in each different CoP presents its own challenges, especially for ELLs. In exploring the role of interaction, the current study also aims to investigate how participant ELLs use social interactions to gain membership in the school communities they have access to and how they engage in legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) leading to fuller participation. LPP is defined as the progressive inclusion of new members in the CoP, where initially “peripherality and legitimacy” are “required to make actual participation possible” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 100). There are three descriptive components in LPP: peripherality, legitimacy and practice. In peripherality, engagement and participation in the community is minimal, but new members can be introduced to the structure of the CoP and create connections. Full legitimacy is granted by existing members to newcomers only once “competent engagement” (p. 101) is perceived to be achieved. Lave and Wenger also consider practice in the CoP as a process that is ongoing, social, and interactional, where new members involve themselves in interactions and “negotiate new meanings” (p. 102) that eventually move them towards “full participation” (p. 100). New members can engage, make observations, and have unplanned access to a CoP “without the demands of full membership” (p. 117). Competency is initially learned through engaging peripherally in activities, and progressively coming to understand how the community legitimizes such activities that contribute towards the individual’s learning process.

Similar to scaffolding, mutual interaction and individual engagement of newcomers with old timers in the CoP bring about positive outcomes (Van Benthuisen 2007). In his study on L2 learners, Van Benthuisen found that while interactive engagement with old timers cannot be expected of newcomers instantaneously, especially among young ELLs, they do have potential to come up with strategies for communicative interactions. In Muramatsu’s study (2013), power struggles, inequality, and non-participation affected the positioning of newcomers to the CoP. By negotiating their identities through active participation in different classroom contexts, these newcomers were able to overcome such difficulties in order to fully and successfully participate in their CoP.

Lea (2005) described how a CoP can be utilised as a research framework in formal social contexts like mainstream classrooms: “The [CoP] model could help us to understand the ways institutional practices marginalise learners, the ways in which meaning is negotiated for all participants in the learning process, the ways in which membership, participation, and identity are negotiated in communities, and the experience of learners as members of several different communities of practice” (Lea, 2005, p. 194 as cited in Van Benthuyssen, 2007, p. 127). These insights may be useful in the current study.

2.3.2 Agency, identity and belonging in the community of practice

The concepts of agency, identity, and belonging in the CoP will be presented next, along with literature on the importance of these ideas in relation to language learning and its influence on ELLs.

2.3.2.1 Agency

Agency has been defined as the ability of “individuals to imagine, perform, accept, refuse, and resist. In other words, agency enables individuals to make choices with regard to how they relate themselves with the social world, to take ownership and to create opportunities for self-transformation” (Muramatsu, 2013, p. 44). Muramatsu’s research looked at students’ meaning negotiation, engagement, how they recreated their sense of self, and how they shaped their own learning through the social connections they made in the classroom. Because learning relied on individual students’ agency and active participation within their social contexts, their learning outcomes varied. She points out that learners are agents, whose intentions are not standardised because of what social groups present them, but that they are also individuals who form their own skills, which in turn defines the quality and development of their knowledge.

Young ELLs’ social behaviours must include a consideration of their agency in making choices and using strategies to achieve particular outcomes. The concept of agency emerges through the integration of concepts and cultural tools into our physical and intellectual activities (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Such tools, including “spoken and written artefacts” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 63), are responsible for an individual’s capacity to design, create, and plan for specific activities. Agency, in this context, is defined as the capacity of individuals to act in a socioculturally mediated approach (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), which implies that an individual’s agency to act may still rely on the social context of the CoP.

In an earlier longitudinal study conducted on elementary school children, it was concluded that “social settings work best when target language speakers outnumber learners, and when they are structured in ways that maximise interaction between the two groups” (Fillmore, 2000, p. 63). The demographic of ELLs’ classrooms may represent them as members of cultural minorities, but being exposed to a classroom structure offers them an opportunity to exercise their agency and interact with potential peer teachers. This study also investigates the social and classroom dynamics set up by two mainstream teachers, and how the individual ELLs in their class operate as agents of their own learning.

Donato (2000) took a sociocultural perspective in considering what learners bring to their classroom interactions and concluded that “personal histories replete with values, assumptions, beliefs, rights, duties, and obligations” (p. 46) matter in a language classroom that acknowledges agency among its students. Learners also play an active part in transforming their own world since “no amount of ...instructional manipulation can deflect the overpowering and transformative agency embodied in the learner” (Donato, 2000, p. 47). As agents, learners actively construct tasks and create their “own diverse enterprises” (Roebuck, 2000, p. 84). Learners are also agents who can take charge of and make decisions on L2 learning, which allows them to develop proficiency and fluency, without losing their L1 culture and, at the same time, to accept new customs and traditions in the community (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1998). In the current study it will be interesting to see how a capacity for agency may enable individuals to retain their first language and their culture.

2.3.2.2 Identity

Identity is a significant aspect of “a social theory of learning” (Wenger, 1998, p. 145), which is directly linked to practice, community, and meaning negotiation. It looks at the identity of the individual from a social perspective and the wider processes that extend beyond the community. Social identity has been defined as a fragment of a person’s individuality based on self-beliefs and significant emotions that originate from relationships or associations in a societal group (Hansen & Liu, 1997; Mitchell & Myles, 2004). “Social identity” can also be described as the sense of ‘belonging’ to a particular social group, whether defined by ethnicity, by language, or any other means” (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 246). Young ELLs may also be developing their identities, so it will

be interesting to see how various home and school community practices impacts on their identity.

The effects of young children's language socialisation within the family unit, schools, classrooms, and social communities were illustrated in a recent study by Muramatsu (2013). She described interactional practices that involved parents or teachers as a simultaneous process of "acquiring the values and ideologies associated with the language" (p. 13). This highlights the socialisation effect of language. In particular, Muramatsu's study showed how negative practices by teachers and teacher assistants linguistically and socially affected one L2 learner. This student was given the social identity of a needy child by the classroom community of practice, thus marginalising his opportunities for learning and limiting his access to resources. The current study may provide some useful insights into how teachers create L2 opportunities for ELLs in the classroom.

Involvement in a CoP does not only include actual participation in social practices. Wenger (1998) also highlights that non-participation may be an integral part of the learning process. As participation through mediation is not guaranteed, non-participants might still learn through peripheral observations within the CoP. Participation might also have its benefits and advantages, and it is reliant on how the community receives such participation. These factors may have either negative or positive outcomes for the learner's identity.

2.3.2.3 *Belonging*

The notion of belonging is related to the knowledge a child gains and the extent to which he is able to make such knowledge "his own in a community of those who share his sense of belonging to a culture" (Bruner, 1986, p. 127). Socialisation is not individualistic, but rather communal in nature, where children negotiate, share, and create a joint culture with peers (Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). This process also includes elements of friendship and social participation, so belongingness may include engagement in social activities, mutual relationships, meaning negotiation, and how these all contribute to the learning trajectory of the individual as a social being (Wenger, 1998).

The socialisation of ELLs in the mainstream classroom may present a challenge for teachers because of lack of background information on the social aspects of these students' lives. There is the expectation that teachers practice sensitivity towards mental,

social, and emotional challenges that ELLs face in a new classroom situation because that promotes and encourages cultural cohesion “rather than a divisive, multicultural community” (Arias, 2008, p. 38). An ELL’s need to communicate with, belong to, and contribute to the community of native speakers is something that should be recognised by teachers (Little, 2004). Although belonging may be ideal, reality may present a different picture. The complex system of friendships operating within a mainstream school environment may therefore be relevant in initiating and sustaining L2 communication between participant ELLs and their peers.

One study on peer culture which described and examined the values attached to children’s routines, nonverbal play, and activities in peer groups found that “sharing and social participation” offered children a sense of belonging and “emotional security” (Corsaro & Eder, 1990, p. 214). In a study of elementary school children, it was also found that an ELL’s “social style and communicative needs affect the learner’s ability to establish and maintain contact with speakers of the target language” (Fillmore, 2000, p. 50).

Participation in cultural practices can enable young children to discover different worlds on their own and help shape their own personal experiences in cultural routines (Corsaro & Eder, 1990; Corsaro & Rizzo, 1988). Although such routines in the target culture develop over time, how young ELLs in this study engaged in sharing and contributing part of their own culture to classroom learning and play activities within their social networks needs to be explored further.

2.4 The research questions

As a result of the review of relevant literature, the following research questions were developed to explore key aspects in relation to the research focus stated in Chapter 1.

1. How can teachers act as mediators of sociocultural interactions and scaffolding between English language learners and their peers to promote language learning?
2. How can parents act as mediators of sociocultural interactions and scaffolding between English language learners and their peers to promote language learning?
3. How can sociocultural interactions and scaffolding between English language learners and their peers act as mediators of language learning?

2.5 Summary

The discussion of the literature above has provided insights into concepts relevant to the current study. A review of theory and previous research has revealed notions and ideas that have significant links to the current study and its aims. In particular, by answering the research questions above, this research may identify potential advantages that sociocultural practices and peer scaffolding might contribute to young ELLs' second language acquisition.

Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The current chapter will offer an overview of the research setting and of the participants of the study. It will also discuss the methods of collecting and analysing data, and the ethical considerations associated with the project. The discussion will encompass a consideration of key concepts and instruments that are relevant to the study's methodology, as well as some notes relating to the tools' strengths, limitations, and reliability.

3.2 The research approach

The study employs a qualitative case study approach as the methodology through which to collect, analyse, and discuss evidence relating to the two young ELLs who represent the focus of the study. In such a paradigm, data collection entails participants being studied in their "natural setting" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37) to address issues related to the study. Another feature of a qualitative approach involves data collection through direct interactions with the participants and observations of their behaviours within the setting of the study in order to gather information-rich data that can serve as the basis of individual case studies. Case study research is explained as a comprehensive study of phenomena from the point of view of research participants who are directly involved in the phenomena (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003).

Casanave (2010) mentions that "case study data are typically collected over time, in some depth, and from a limited number of people and settings" (p. 70). In discussing the advantages of a case-study approach, Yin (2003) suggests identifying comparisons and distinctions between two participants in a case study in order for the researcher to develop "naturalistic generalizations" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37) that others can utilise in other research. Observations and interviews gathered from case studies also provide details, descriptions, and histories of participants being analysed (Nunan, 1992). It is this particular approach that is applied in the current study, where the activities and social behaviours of both ELL participants both inside and outside the classroom were observed in order to determine and uncover patterns, themes, and insights that might help find answers to the study's research questions.

3.3 The research setting

The research domain for the current study is a primary school in the Central North Island of New Zealand that included around 300 students at the time of the study. Over time, the school's demographics have become culturally diverse because of a steady influx of refugee families in the region and currently, students with families that have English as a second language make up around five percent of the school's student population (see Appendix A). The teaching of students whose first language is a language other than English (ESOL) is assisted by government funding through the Ministry of Education (2014).

3.4 Selection of participants

As the study aimed to explore the role of peer interactions in the L2 development of primary-school ELLs, the initial research design was developed to include ways to observe young ELLs interacting with other children within the school setting. To make this possible, I had to seek approval from the school's Board of Trustees (see Appendix B). All students in the two junior classrooms of the chosen school were invited to take part in the study. These included students of European, Māori, Pasifika, Nepalese, and Cambodian descent. Utmost care was taken to specifically indicate in the consent form that only students whose parents had granted full consent would be observed (see Appendix C).

Following the distribution of information sheets (see Appendix D) to the parents and guardians of all the children, eleven out of twenty-one students in the Year 1 and 2 class, and nine out of sixteen students in the Year 2 to 3 class gave parental consent for observation purposes and were therefore included in the study. Among the students whose parents gave consent, two students of Nepalese background were found to be ELLs (see Appendix E for Nepali-translated information sheet and consent forms).

Funded through the ESOL initiative of the Ministry of Education, teacher aide hours were given to support these students during the week, but the mainstream teacher was responsible for delivering the curriculum to ELLs when support was not available. These two Nepalese students became the two case study participants in the study.

Pseudonyms were used throughout the study to maintain all the participants' privacy. The name of the site school was also kept private.

Prem was a Year 2 student, who was six years old at the time of the study, and had been attending the school for one year and two months. He is the sole child in his family and lives with his parents. Noraj was also Year 2 student, who was six years old at the time, and had been attending the school for one year and ten months. He lives with his older siblings and parents. The parents of both ELLs were also invited to participate in the study and to be interviewed to provide historical background information as well as information about the ELLs' language and cultural practices at home.

The teachers of the two ELLs, Ms. Campbell and Ms. Rogers, were also invited to participate in the study, together with the Deputy Principal of the school, Mrs. Keith (see Appendix F and Appendix G). The aforementioned staff were invited to be interviewed so to provide background information about the ELL participants, classroom structures and practices, and school-wide/community ESOL practices.

3.5 Data-gathering tools

3.5.1 Observations

Participant observations were the main tool for data collection in the study. The “researcher was a key instrument” (Creswell, 2007, p. 38) in gathering data through observing the participants' behaviour. All observations were recorded using field notes and were conducted within the two focus classrooms and the school playground – settings that student participants were familiar with (see Appendix H). Genesee (1996) comments on the usefulness of group rather than individual observations because they take less time and can provide the researcher with insights into how language acquisition takes place through collective linguistic interactions. It is also essential to note importance of in-class observations to observe academic language, and outside observations to observe social language among students (Genesee, 1996). Observations were restricted only to interactions between participant ELLs and mainstream students whose parents granted full consent.

3.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were conducted with the ELLs' parents, teachers, and the Deputy Principal (see Appendix H). The interviews were utilised to collect background information relevant to the study and to gain knowledge about the young ELL participants through a social discourse that evolved as the interview progressed. The “flexibility” (Nunan, 1992, p. 149) of this approach gives the interviewer a “general idea” (p. 149) of the direction of

the interview and “allows for richer interactions and more personalized responses” (McDonough & McDonough, 1997).

The interview questions were designed to explore the adult participants’ experiences, practices, and knowledge to help the researcher gain an understanding of their connections with the two ELL participants. The interview questions (see Appendix I), were worded to reflect the purpose of the study. These were sometimes followed-up by informal prompts by the researcher to allow the participants to extend their responses (Duff, 2008). The adult participants were made aware of the nature of the semi-structured interview so feel welcome to discuss other matters not specifically indicated in the questions. Interviews with teachers and caregivers allowed for “voices of participants” (Creswell, 2007, p. 37) to be included in order to provide background knowledge as well as to capture different perspectives on social interactions and peer scaffolding in the classroom environment. A focus on the meanings that “participants hold about the problem or issue” (Creswell, 2007, p. 39) were taken into account during the interviews.

The questions’ content and how they were formulated, were considered in order to practise “linguistic sensitivity and adaptability by the researcher” (McDonough & McDonough, 1997, p. 185). Overall, the questions prepared for the teachers aimed to inquire about their professional practices, beliefs and opinions on L2 learning, as well as background knowledge surrounding the L2 learning of their ELLs. The parent participants’ questions explored family histories, experiences, and language practices of their respective ELL child at home and in school.

All interviews were recorded using an audio recording device and were later transcribed for further analysis. An interpreter was employed to interpret for the ELL families as required, and a confidentiality agreement signed (see Appendix J) to maintain privacy of those involved in the process.

3.6 Implementation

3.6.1 The pilot study

A pilot study was conducted over a two-week period prior to the distribution of consent forms in order to refine the methodology design for the study, develop observation strategies, and to identify potential issues during data collection procedures. Meetings with the junior school teachers and the whole school staff were organised to discuss the

logistics and purpose of the study (see Appendix K) in order to ensure transparency in how data collection was to be conducted, and to address any questions arising from teaching and management staff about the study.

During the pilot stage, observations of each of the invited classrooms, including playground activities, lasted only twenty minutes to half an hour. Utmost care was taken to assure minimum disruption to normal teaching and learning practices and routines.

Findings from the pilot suggested that close observations of ELLs' interactions within the classroom and playground should be avoided to prevent ELLs from feeling they had been "singled out" (Genesee, 1996, p. 84), as they clearly felt conscious of an observer watching their interactions with others. The pilot also indicated the importance of cultivating positive, professional relationships with the teaching staff and to keep open to suggestions on how the observation sessions might be best managed.

As a result of the pilot study, specific changes were made as to the location of the researcher during observations both inside the classroom and in the playground. No interaction between the researcher, the ELLs, and other student participants were encouraged during observations, and entry into the classroom was scheduled with the two teacher participants prior to data collection. The process of documenting data was interchanged between handwritten field and digital notes, depending on the location of the observation.

3.6.2 In-school observations

The data collection process was modified according to specific changes made after the pilot study (see 3.6.1). Observations of study participants were conducted over the twelve weeks of the third and fourth term. The two participant teachers were informed of observations ahead of data collection processes. Data was gathered from classroom and playground observations of the ELL students and their peers.

Due to ethical considerations, only observations of students who gave consent to participate in the study were included to maintain privacy (see 3.7). Data collection was conducted during the researcher's classroom release times, morning, and afternoon breaks. Utmost care was given during the course of observations, which mostly consisted of field notes, in order to maintain the unobtrusive nature of the data gathering.

3.6.3 Interviews with teachers and parents

The two ELL participants' teachers and the deputy principal were interviewed for one hour each, at an agreed time and venue suitable to the participants. The interview schedule was given to all teacher participants prior to the interview so that they could consider their responses. Both of the ELLs' families were given a week to peruse the schedule prior to the meeting. A mother tongue interpreter was organised to be present during all interviews with ELLs' family members whose first language was not English and one family chose to have the questions read by the interpreter. Both ELLs' families chose to be interviewed in their homes, instead of the initially proposed school venue, for personal and work reasons. Both interviews lasted for an hour.

3.6.4 Researcher's role

As a teacher employed by the focal school at the time of the study, it was imperative for the researcher to maintain professional and cordial relationships with both adult and student participants. Gaining the confidence of the participants is key to conducting case studies (Creswell, 2007, p. 122), and necessarily involves briefing the participants about the purpose of data collection and of the study as a whole (Nunan, 1992).

To ensure that the lines of communication between the researcher and the participants remained open, invitations were issued to contact the researcher anytime should any questions or comments arise, and additional information was made available to participants upon request.

3.6.5 Data analysis

Once collected, data was systematically organised through a data collection table (see Appendix H) – a dated and detailed list which categorised each data as either interview, or classroom/playground observation. Excerpts from interviews and observations include the name of the participant, data category, data number, page number, and the date (see Appendix L).

All data were analysed, and interpreted through an inductive data analysis process through which recurring themes and topic patterns were identified and manually coded on the transcripts (see Appendix M). The themes were later categorised and grouped according to the three research questions (see Appendix N) until the main themes and “generalizations” (McDonough & McDonough, 1997, p. 187) for the “interpretive phase”

(Creswell, 2007, p. 121) were established. The application of themes helped shape the concepts surrounding the data and provided understandings on how the participant ELLs' interactions influenced their second language development. The result of this process of interpretation and classification ultimately gave rise to the project's findings chapters.

3.7 Ethical considerations

All main decisions surrounding qualitative case study research design and gathering of data are associated with ethical considerations (Duff, 2008) and researchers need to commit to protecting "the well-being of their research participants and respect their confidentiality, privacy, safety and other legal and human rights" (Duff, 2008, p. 146). The study's main participants involved minors under the age of 18, which subjected the study to a lengthy review from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee before being granted ethical approval (see Appendix O).

It was made clear in the ethics documentation that the identity of the school and of all the participants would be kept private so pseudonyms were used throughout the study. The procedures of informed consent were explained to possible participants and documented in detail. As part of the interviews with the ELLs' family members, an interpreter familiar to the families was employed to explain what the study entailed and to facilitate the interview process. A confidentiality agreement was mutually signed in this regard (see Appendix J).

The study was conducted in the junior syndicate of the school because of the researcher's teaching capacity and involvement with senior students in the school. To avoid conflict of interest, only younger ELLs and mainstream students who were not professionally known by the researcher were invited to participate in the study. Because of ethical considerations, challenges with obtaining consent became a time-consuming exercise, without which could have possibly set data collection procedures earlier. The lengthy process of obtaining consent from parents and caregivers somewhat delayed data collection procedures but overall did not compromise the outcome of the project.

3.8 Validity and reliability of data

The question exists whether the current qualitative case study might be set within a valid "bounded system" (Creswell, 2007, p. 75) in the field of linguistics, and whether the cases presented are "worthy of study" (p. 76). Needless to say, the data collected represents a

small fraction of ELLs in the primary school system and so a generalisation of the findings to any larger population or group is beyond the scope of the study. That said, within each of the cases presented, the validity of the findings is supported by the sheer amount of data collected and the in-built process of triangulation afforded by employing both participant observations and interviews to arrive at rich descriptions of the ELL participants' sociocultural experiences and interactions with their peers in the context of the school and the wider community.

3.9 Overview of following chapters

The chapters that follow are organised according to the findings initially obtained from interviews with participant parents and teachers, and observational data from the two ELL participants.

Chapter 4 will provide a brief historical overview of Bhutanese refugees to New Zealand, followed by background information on the families of the two focal students as gathered from the participant ELLs' parents, which will present a perspective of their respective culture and language practices at home. Data from teachers' interviews will complement this information with insights from their teaching experiences with the two ELLs' in the mainstream classroom.

The study's main findings and their discussion are found in Chapters 5, 6, and 7; these are organised according to issues and processes that emerged as significant to the study's research questions. More specifically, Chapter 5 will centre around findings relating to aspects of the school and classroom contexts which are understood to be significant in a discussion of the mediating role of teachers, while Chapters 6 and 7 will present detailed case studies of the two focal students – Prem in Chapter 6 and Noraj in Chapter 7, encompassing findings associated with both the home/community and the school/classroom contexts, specifically focused on discussing the mediating role of parents and the dynamics of peer interactions within the school context.

Chapter 4 PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUND

4.1 Introduction

As the study has a key focus on two young ELLs of Bhutanese background, this chapter will provide information on the project's case study participants, Prem and Noraj, their families' resettlement as Bhutanese refugees to New Zealand, and their initial experiences within the New Zealand education system. The chapter begins with an overview of the history and conditions surrounding migrant refugees from Bhutan to New Zealand, including a brief history of the New Zealand government's resettlement programme and its initiatives towards providing language support for new migrants and refugees. Following this, information gathered from the interviews with Prem, and Noraj's parents and teachers, will offer some insights into the students' language and cultural practices at home, as well as their initial schooling experiences in New Zealand.

4.2 Bhutanese refugees in New Zealand: A historical perspective

Bhutan is a very small country enclosed between India and China. It has been described as an "ancient kingdom nestled at the base of the Himalayas" (Pulla, 2016, p. 1). Most of its population reside in the north, east and western part of the country. Conflict in nearby Nepal during the middle of the 1800s drove many of its people to migrate and settle south of Bhutan. Known as "Lhotsampa" or "people from the south" (p. 1), these Bhutanese-Nepali citizens successfully cultivated farmlands and raised livestock in southern Bhutan (Pulla, 2016).

The Lhotsampa's plight resulted from cultural conflict and resistance to the Bhutanese regime in the 1990s. They were driven out of Bhutan after their citizenship rights were revoked by the government and were forced to flee on foot back to Nepal – their ancestral country of origin. Tensions grew as Nepal demanded Bhutan to allow the displaced refugees back into their country.

The problem remained unresolved as a consequence of both countries' refusal to accept the Bhutanese-Nepalese refugees as citizens. International aid agencies intervened to find a solution, and in 2008, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) "offered third-country resettlement" (Department of Labour, 2011, p. 1) to more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees.

4.2.1 Bhutanese refugee resettlement in New Zealand

The acceptance of refugees in New Zealand began after the Second World War. In 1987 the ever changing nature of global conditions caused the government to launch an official yearly quota for resettling refugees (UNHCR, 2014).

In 2012, the New Zealand Government approved the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy wherein an annual quota of 750 refugees was established (UNHCR, 2014). This paved the way for refugees, including many Bhutanese refugees, to resettle in New Zealand with their families. Upon arrival in New Zealand, refugees spend six weeks at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre in Auckland where a “Reception Programme” (UNHCR, 2014, p. 13) is implemented to provide refugees basic employment-related information and assistance in developing various skills needed to integrate themselves successfully in their new environment.

4.2.2 English language support

One of the key aspects of the Mangere Reception Programme is the English language training for refugees who are eligible for work. Also available is the preparation and integration of school-aged children into New Zealand mainstream classrooms in “resettlement communities” (UNHCR, 2014, p. 13). These are facilitated by “Refugee Education Coordinators” (p. 13) who directly work under the Ministry of Education. These coordinators work alongside “refugee families, agencies and schools throughout the country” (p. 13). All secondary and primary schools in New Zealand can also access government funding to support ELLs.

4.2.3 Bhutanese refugees in New Zealand and the Lower North Island

Since 2007, New Zealand has resettled a total of 961 Bhutanese refugees (New Zealand Immigration, 2016). Most of them reside in the Lower North Island, which is now home to a total of 700 refugees, 15 percent of which are from Bhutan. The Red Cross Refugee Services provide Bhutanese refugees significant links and access to housing, school, and community services. Programmes such as the “Pathways to Settlement” and “Pathways to Employment” (New Zealand Red Cross, 2015) enable refugees to transition into their new home and community, as well as encourage future employers to offer them work experience and opportunities directed towards independence and self-sufficiency.

4.3 The focal students and their families

4.3.1 Families' background

The two Nepalese refugee families who participated in the study have come to know each other since moving into their new community following completion of the Mangere Reception Programme (See 4.2.2). They arrived one year apart from each other and settled in the Lower North Island to find work and educate their children. Having relatives already living in New Zealand influenced both of the families' decision to apply to resettle here. Refugee services directed the families to enrol their children in their current school because of its close proximity to their homes. Prem's parents, chose to educate their son in the same school where Noraj, the other Nepalese student, is studying with his other older siblings.

During the interviews that made up part of the study's data collection stage, the parents and New Zealand teachers of the two focal students provided relevant, background information about their English learning in Nepal and New Zealand respectively.

4.4 Focal students: Noraj and Prem

This section provides background information on each of the case study participants, Noraj and Prem. Information presented in this section on the families' arrival and the support for the child's language development in school was taken from interview transcripts with key adult participants in the study who consisted of both ELLs' parents and their classroom teachers.

4.4.1 Noraj's family

When in Bhutan, Noraj's parents, Ros and Sita, helped support their own parents by working on the family farm until the age of 16. They were both moved to a refugee camp in Nepal during the 1990s, where they met and got married. They stayed in the camp for 20 years until they were accepted as refugees by the New Zealand government. Noraj's parents received no education in Nepal and had a very difficult life there. Noraj moved to New Zealand with his family as a five-year-old in 2012. Because he was too young to go to school in his home country, Noraj had his first experience of schooling in New Zealand. No one in his family had any knowledge of the English language when they first arrived in New Zealand.

Noraj's parents chose to educate all their children in a Central North Island school because they knew a couple of Nepalese families who had already settled there. At the time of the study, Noraj's father worked full-time on a farm while his wife cared for all six children at home.

4.4.1.1 *Languages in the home*

Noraj belonged to a big family and had full support of his siblings who helped him grow in both first and second languages. Because his parents did not have any basic English education when they were in Nepal, they spoke very little English and required an interpreter for basic functions like reading bank statements. Working full time on a farm and caring for the family meant that Noraj's father and mother also did not have the facility to attend an English language course.

Both of Noraj's parents spoke Nepali fluently and made a determined effort to speak in their first language at home. Noraj's exposure to a multitude of first language and cultural experiences was a result of several support systems in place – his parents and siblings. For Noraj, English was only spoken in school and, when necessary, the older children translated Nepali to English for the parents at home. Noraj liked playing football games with other children in the neighbourhood, whilst speaking in the L2, and in his spare time, plays English computer-based literacy and maths games at home.

4.4.1.2 *Languages in the school*

Noraj's mother mentioned that her son used to be bullied by his own peers during his first year in a New Zealand primary school because he was unable to communicate in English. As his English improved, he became more settled in school and made some friends. His parents described him as a confident and avid soccer player and noted he could be seen playing this game during lunch breaks with his New Zealand friends.

Both of Noraj's parents were happy that he was learning both from his teacher and peers in school. They saw the importance of students learning from each other in a peer-to-peer and group situation in the classroom and realised its academic and social benefits.

Noraj's teacher, Ms. Rogers, has had two years of teaching ELLs in her class. She pointed out that her previous ELLs rarely communicated and had minimal interactions with her, but they did not appear to have a problem interacting with their peers in basic English. She commented that peer scaffolding and social interactions were vital for L2 learning

because she had observed Noraj watch what his peers did to help his understanding of tasks. Noraj seemed to be able to support his understanding of set tasks when he observed his classmates carry out the teacher's verbal instructions. Ms. Rogers also pointed out that Noraj's confusion resulting from the language she used when giving instructions diminished when another peer explained it differently (in kidspeak).

4.4.2 Prem's family

Prem was only four years old when he arrived in New Zealand with his family from Nepal. His paternal grandparents had already been in New Zealand for 6 years prior to the time of arrival of Prem's family in 2013. Having relatives in the country was instrumental in their opportunity to obtain refugee status in New Zealand.

Prem had no prior schooling at that time as he was too young to be enrolled. At the time of this study, he had been in the country for two and a half years and was attending a Year 2 class.

Both of Prem's parents, Kumar and Maya, finished lower secondary schooling in the Nepalese refugee camp and had some basic English education background. While in Nepal, Prem's parents learnt and spoke English only in school. Nepali was the main language at home, and there weren't many opportunities to speak English in a real context. Both parents attended some English classes to improve their basic communication skills before they moved to the Central North Island to work.

Initially, when Prem first attended kindergarten in New Zealand, he became bored because all his classmates spoke English. His inability to speak English at the time made him scared and he did not have an opportunity to make friends. Experiences of teasing and bullying in his first year at a New Zealand primary school led to him harbouring negative attitudes towards school. His parents shared that they felt his lack of understanding and inability to speak English as a second language was the main reason for his negative experiences.

4.4.2.1 *Languages at home*

Being the sole Nepalese child in his class meant that Prem relied greatly on English language education in school. As the only child in the family, Prem did not have a wide support system of siblings to assist him with first and second language experiences at home. His parents mainly spoke with Prem in Nepali but also included some basic

English at home. The parents reported that Prem disliked it when they talked to him in English because he felt that their pronunciation was not good. He did, however, like it when they used “smart words”, which suggested his appreciation for learning new English vocabulary. There were also times when Prem helped his parents pronounce English words at home. Prem’s parents knew how to speak basic English and supported him with homework and some English communication at home.

Prem was gifted an iPad tablet as a resource to help with his English. His father shared that Prem easily learned English from the tablet via cartoons and video games. He also watched some English television programmes at home and usually talked about his favourite scenes with friends at school. Language learning was also extended through a story writing homework book that his classmates took turns writing in as an incentive. He received support from his father to complete this task. He watched Indian TV at home and learnt some Hindi language and songs. Both parents were fluent in Nepali and spoke some Hindi and basic English.

4.4.2.2 *Languages at school*

At the time of the study, Prem had a solid group of English-speaking friends whom he spent most of his time with, both in the classroom and the playground. However, his parents encouraged him to speak Nepali in school when he was around his Nepalese friend, Noraj, the other focal student in the study. During the previous year, Prem was heavily reliant on Noraj. Prem attached himself to Noraj most of the time in order to understand his English-speaking classmates. Prem’s confidence had grown towards the end of Year 1 in primary school. Noraj, who was a year level above Prem, was transferred to a different classroom. His parents mentioned that Prem did not feel bad about Noraj being moved because he spoke English now and had made new friends in his new class. According to them, his relationship and daily interactions with his teacher and friends contributed to his happier disposition in school.

Prem’s teacher, Ms. Campbell, indicated that Prem and another ELL in her class quickly learnt to interact with their peers, were proactive in relation to their classroom tasks, and were eager to learn. However, different forms of a language have specific functions that work in a variety of situations. Ms. Campbell had observed discrepancies in Prem’s comprehension because he was unable to distinguish social from academic language. She

prioritised and cross-checked for understanding at all times so that Prem grasped his second language and the related learning tasks.

Ms. Campbell had friendly, positive, and responsive interactions with all the families in her class and invited them to classroom and school events. She also reported that teacher aides in her classroom received guidance to address ELLs' learning needs.

4.4.3 Summary

As Van Patten and Williams (2007) note, social and cultural participation are key to language learning, and the two focal students in the study belong to different communities that contribute to their overall social, cultural, and linguistic identity. To begin with, the students belonged to an ethno-cultural community with their families at home, where the heritage, culture, and language were given much significance. Secondly, they belonged to a neighbourhood Nepalese community, whose inclusive nature offered security, friendship, and support. Finally, the young ELLs also belonged to their school and classroom communities, where they spent most of their time trying to use and learn English as they immersed themselves into the social and linguistic practices of these groups. As we have seen, the above communities do overlap to some extent, and gave the ELLs some opportunities to operate in and benefit from dual linguistic domains.

Chapter 5 THE SCHOOL AND CLASS COMMUNITIES

5.1 Introduction

The current chapter draws on background information obtained from interviews with the school's Deputy Principal (DP) and the teachers of the two students, as well as from classroom observations. Relevant findings gathered will be presented and discussed, beginning with a focus on the importance of teachers' awareness of the ELL's cultural and language background, followed by a discussion of how promoting and establishing effective sociocultural connections during classroom activities may affect the ELLs' learning. The chapter also examines the role of teacher-facilitated play in the classroom and how this influences the participant ELLs' interactions in the L2. Specific classroom support systems will be identified in terms of the mediating role of the teachers and the potential for peer-scaffolding. Throughout the discussion, the DP and ELL teachers' beliefs will be highlighted through data excerpts from interviews and observations, which aim to illustrate some of the ways in which teachers and peers are involved in the interactional and scaffolding dynamics which may assist the ELLs' L2 development.

5.2 School and teachers' awareness of ELLs' ethnolinguistic background

Background information gathered from the DP highlighted her knowledge of the teachers' capabilities as ELL teachers. She also showed a strong involvement in the wider community, particularly amongst families of ELLs.

The DP is responsible for coordinating all ELLs in the school. Before each school year starts, she took into account each ELL's individual needs. She was also committed to an inclusive approach to teaching and learning as shown when she talked about her role as ESOL coordinator, and her ideas about best practice in a classroom with ELLs:

Each year, I ensure that I know who these students [ELLs] are across the school, and then help to place them accordingly in classrooms, so class lists are set up. Thinking about the teacher, their style, what sort of ESOL learning PD [professional development]/or teaching they've done in the past, whether they are open to being able to take on board for our learner. That's really important first, and then I coordinate from there. Best practice would be knowing who each ESOL learner is...who they are, where they are from, where they belong, what's important to them, what they love, and what drives the programme through that. So learning through strengths. (DP Int32 p1,3/30.11.15)

The DP's approach to catering for ELLs in different classrooms across all year levels shows her consideration of what teachers contributed to the learning of these students. It also showed that the ELLs' placements in classrooms were well thought out with the students' best interests in mind. She also acknowledged what ELLs contributed to the classroom's learning experiences, which indicated her recognition of the value of the ELLs' ethno-cultural identity, as well as the "cultural capital" (Rodriguez-Brown, 2010, p. 111) that ELLs and their families contribute to the school.

The DP's involvement in the ESOL community was also evident in her interview response below:

I get involved with quite a few outings with the ESOL community and families... I can go to some and I can't go to others. I get invited to homes to eat and...to be part of their community. I get invited by the Police and the Red Cross to gatherings that are organised through their organisations. And I get invited by the Multicultural Centre...to come along to listen to PD [professional development], to resources, to the facts about refugee students/families coming in to New Zealand. (DP Int32 p2/30.11.15)

The DP's high level of participation and involvement began with the ELLs' families in the school and extended to the wider community. Having established her legitimate place in the "social structure and power relations" (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 98) of the school community, the DP helped maintain important links and created harmonious relationships between the school and the local ESOL communities. She explained:

The links with these families flow on to the mainstream classrooms because that's where our ELL learners are all the time.

Now I understand more about the background knowledge of each of the ELL families, where they come from, what is important to them, what their goals are for their children. (DP Int32 p3, 4/30.11.15)

She acknowledged the value of getting to know the ELLs' families and communities, and their priorities and goals. The DP therefore showed a proactive approach to the "overlapping" nature of the school and the wider ESOL community as two CoPs, highlighting the idea that links and relationships established and maintained through promoting interactions with the wider ESOL community will positively flow on to the social and academic life of the ELLs in mainstream classrooms.

5.3 Promoting social and cultural connections in teaching and learning

In the following section there is discussion of the role of play in language learning, and how teachers in the study mediate L2 learning during classroom tasks through cultural awareness and cross-cultural communicative strategies.

5.3.1 The role of teacher-facilitated play in language learning

Play held an important role in the participant ELLs' junior classrooms. During the study, ELLs were observed participating in a programme called 'Discovery Time'. This programme is based on student-directed, play-based activities (Martin & Hay, 2012) which promoted a relaxed learning environment. The programme gives young students the opportunity to choose from a wide range of play-based activities in order to develop "key competencies such as thinking, relating to others, participating, and contributing" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 12). The programme was also found to encourage language learning by allowing interactions to occur spontaneously between students. Discovery Time activities allowed students to experiment and discover with play objects. Such objects, which can be conceptualised as cultural or "material artefacts" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 220), encourage and in some cases, enable ELLs to engage and interact linguistically with others by offering opportunities to understand how others appropriate and give meaning to various play objects (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995).

Discovery Time is only one example of classroom activity during which teachers may serve as mediators of play interactions between ELLs and their peers. However, because of the organic nature of this type of activity, teachers tend not to have set systems for encouraging class dynamics during this time, and so the programme quite often will include activities which vary from classroom to classroom. A student-directed approach to play-related activities is key in realising the full potential of the interaction but opportunities to explore how peer-to-peer interactions can benefit ELLs may, at times, be neglected if one operates and manages a classroom purely from a teacher-directed stance. Haworth et al. (2006) recognise the benefits of young children's engagement in play-based activities and identify its links with language acquisition and learning. The mere practice of observing interactional dynamics between ELLs and their peers may help inform a teacher's steps in promoting language acquisition in young ELLs. During her interview, Noraj's teacher, Ms. Rogers, describes an experience during Discovery Time with a young ELL from the previous year:

We have Discovery Time on a Monday afternoon. So when we got out the games, teachers would sit by them [the ELLs] and join the game. She [an ELL] did have more interaction that way than coming to see me as a teacher. ...If I was sitting in a game with her, by her side, or with a small group, she would talk. Not talk a lot but she would talk to me”.

With her peers, she [the ELL] was interesting to watch. She would sit [with her peers] and they would matter, and it's with English [language]. (Rogers Int19 p2,3/16.10.15)

The excerpt above indicates that Ms. Rogers saw the value of play-related interactions between ELLs and their peers, as a way to encourage them to engage using English. Ms. Rogers also saw the role she played in mediating such interactions by joining the game and sitting with ELLs at their level during a game, as this helped break down language barriers and assisted L2 communication. Teachers' strategies involved assuming the role of peers during learning experiences, including play. This approach can assist ELLs' access to opportunities for initial peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), as it can help guide newcomer ELLs on how interactions occur in certain classroom situations. A lack of social initiative from the ELL in these cases (as in the example above) does not necessarily mean that the ELL's ability to use and learn a second language is nil. ELLs may simply prefer to observe their teachers and peers at first instead of actively participating in an L2 environment. This is not always a sign of withdrawal or isolation, but may be an indication of an ELL negotiating their own terms of peripherally participating.

The excerpts above point to the fact that classroom social play can be helpful in ELLs' language development by offering opportunities to develop communicative agency while minimising difficulties, and allowing young ELLs to interact with their peers in a non-threatening way. Ms. Rogers saw the potential of Discovery Time as a platform for ELLs to interact with their peers and teachers, which is why this strategy continued to be utilised as a tool in promoting peer interactions, and as a medium for language learning in her classroom.

5.3.2 Teacher mediation during learning activities

Quite often when they join mainstream classes ELLs do not have the skills to effectively communicate and explain what they know to others in the classroom, and tend to rely solely on teacher instruction to learn. Exposure to the L2 during different activities and active participation in interactions may encourage ELLs to eventually learn different

ways of using the L2, depending on the context. Increasing participation in activities, interactions, and experiences that assist language development may require effective modelling and scaffolding from both teachers and peers. In one example in the current study, a participant teacher was observed giving ELLs the opportunity to learn together with a classmate during a teaching session.

In the observation below, Prem's teacher, Ms. Campbell, was mediating a peer-to-peer scaffolded reading session:

[Teacher instructs Prem and John to move to the table where she is.]

Ms. Campbell: Ready? Are you gonna tell me the sound? Okay, all ready, go.

[Prem says the vowels out loud as the teacher points to them. Teacher asks Prem to get a letter card. He successfully sounds out the letter on the card. He looks at the teacher and utters the sound to her.]

Prem: "l" is the sound. [John and Prem take turns at sounding out the letters]

Prem: Your turn [to John].

[He looks at the teacher and his buddy as his turn comes around.]

Ms. Campbell: This is "E" and it sounds like

Prem: "E!" I know the sound!

John: We're doing the game!

[Prem interacts with John and smiles, looking reassured. Teacher asks Prem to pick a card and he successfully sounds the letter on the card out.]

Ms. Campbell: 'E' the sound is 'e' [says it together with John].

Ms. Campbell: Brilliant! The name is "E" the sound is "e, e, e"

[Prem seems comfortable. He gets sent back to a table with John and goes back with his classmates to get on with their normal rotation activity.] (Campbell ObsM6 p2/11.9.15)

The learning experience above was conducted as a pair activity, where the teacher gave Prem and his close friend, John (also an ELL) the opportunity to feedback information on letter sounds to each other. The teacher also helped John sound out the letter and praised both of the ELLs' work. Prem knew how the lesson worked and even reminded John when it was his turn. Feeding off each other's responses, facilitated by the teacher's role in mediating the exchange, enabled Prem and John to achieve success in the activity, supporting the development of their own communicative agency (Lantolf & Thorne,

2006) by instilling in them the confidence required to become capable peer teachers themselves.

Ms. Campbell's role in teaching the sound and facilitating the student interaction during the session opened up the possibility for Prem to access language knowledge learning from a peer. By collaborating with Prem as the "more capable peer" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86) Ms. Campbell also helped John learn the letter sounds. This approach, which makes use of the "zone of proximal development" or ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), enabled Prem and John to learn together in an environment that was "specifically designed" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 211) to encourage social interaction during the session. The example above highlights the role of the teacher as an effective mediator of peer-to-peer scaffolding leading to language learning – a role that both Prem and Noraj's teachers were able to play, thanks to their extensive teaching experiences with ELLs, which enabled them to specifically tailor their practices to the ELLs in their care.

5.3.3 Mediating cultural awareness and effective cross-cultural communication

Overall, Ms. Campbell's interview responses reflect an understanding that ELLs are social beings who do not require prescriptive standards of language, attitudes, and behaviour in order to learn the new culture. In her classes, ELLs were given opportunities to share a part of their culture, language, and individuality with their peers. This contributed to the establishment of a classroom that offered a safe and secure environment for its ELLs, where they were not treated differently from other students.

The ELL participants in the study belong to different backgrounds and have certain values, customs, and practices in their own culture. Ms. Campbell showed an appreciation for the ELLs' culture, language, and heritage, and acknowledged that teaching does not only come from the teacher, but also the students. She particularly commented on the value of "learning about the child's culture, allowing them to speak or share their own language, and supporting students to make relevant connections across language and cultures." (Campbell Int25 p1/13.11.15)

Ms. Campbell showed a reflective and supportive approach to teaching, which extended to creating and maintaining connections with the ELLs' family and ethno-cultural community. She also acknowledged that the ELLs' home culture and language are particularly important in supporting their learning. Since there might be concepts that young ELLs are still trying to comprehend as newcomers to New Zealand culture, she

found it useful to give ELLs assistance in cross-cultural matters. She understood that what may be normal to New Zealand children might be novel to ELLs, so helping them make links between languages and cultures held great importance in her classroom as a way to promote understanding and language acquisition. Below, Ms. Campbell describes how she clarifies her ELL's understanding of classroom lessons.

I use ways to determine more clearly if they [the ELLs] are actually understanding what is being said in the class or learning context... getting them to show me, explain to me [how much the ELLs understood]... (Campbell Int25 p2/13.11.15)

Duff (2011) agrees with this position, praising the work of teachers who are able to make contributions to ELLs' language proficiency through a focus on the cultural values and practices linked to the L2 and its users in a particular CoP.

Ms. Campbell also placed importance on what ELLs' in her class could contribute to the sociocultural make up of her classroom. She catered for the language needs of ELLs by "allowing the students to be themselves and celebrate their culture and language." (Campbell Int25 p3/13.11.15) She did not appear to have any restrictions on first language use in the classroom, because ELLs were not hesitant to speak in their native tongue when the opportunity arose. For example, Prem, in particular, demonstrated a willingness in sharing personal stories and songs with his friends (see Section 7.3). Prem's parents also supported him in speaking Nepali at home and with his friend, Noraj, so it was fitting that his teacher, Ms. Campbell, encouraged this in her class. This continuity between cultural customs and language practices in the home and the classroom might help facilitate effective social and cultural links between home and school, and enable young ELLs to operate in two languages, hence supporting the development of additive bilingualism. This is supported in Toohey's study (1996) which reinforces the importance of a young Chinese student being able to engage in linguistic interactions with ELLs of the same ethnicity as well as sustaining social networks between Cantonese and English speakers in class. Immersing young ELLs exclusively in the target language in the academic environment may hinder other students' understanding and acknowledgement of their first language and other languages in general, as well as what the L1 represents in the ELLs' real life context. A more accepting approach to first language spoken in schools, as in Ms. Campbell's case, may encourage new learning as well as promoting positive sociocultural attitudes in the classroom.

5.4 Mediating classroom support systems

Resources and support systems for ELLs in the mainstream classroom tend to differ across contexts and depend on what works for both teachers and students. The success of the social structure and dynamics of a mainstream classroom environment may be partly determined by the specific systems already set up by teachers; however, individual choices made by each of the students also play an important role.

In order to establish a positive learning environment, teachers might utilise more expert students, who are able to assist novice learners, since the quality of assistance from the expert is a key factor in achieving language learning success (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). Visual language resources can also assist ELLs in the classroom. The advantages of utilising both peer systems as well as visual language support in the classroom are discussed next.

5.4.1 Peer systems

Prem's teacher, Ms. Campbell ensured that ELLs in her class were offered ample assistance, such as peer systems, to promote language learning. She recognised that assertive participation from ELLs is not always the norm, and that for this reason positive encouragement from teachers and peers is essential in order to allow ELLs to participate in a variety of activities in the mainstream classroom. Ms. Campbell mentioned "...support time for vocabulary learning and development" and "buddy support..." (Campbell Int25 p1/13.11.15) as key strategies in achieving this. A similar strategy is discussed in Gibbon's (2015) study, which suggested buddying up students or grouping them with their own friends to create a supportive classroom environment. The teacher-mediated approach in Prem's class also paved the way for ELLs to engage in "collaborative dialogue" (Swain, 2000, p. 99) which helped them improve their L2 communication. Where ELLs may tend to withdraw or isolate themselves in their new classroom, buddy support systems are helpful in constructing an inclusive classroom environment that offset these tendencies. During buddy supported activities, students in the current study were observed engaging in peer interactions during learning situations, instead of accomplishing tasks independently. In addition, where both peer and teacher help were readily available, ELLs demonstrated more confidence in tackling classroom tasks. More detailed insights on this will be provided in Chapters 6 and 7.

Noraj's teacher, Ms. Rogers was aware of the value of ELLs' observation skills for buddy supported activities. In her interview, she indicated that the ELLs in her class were "...very good observers. They follow and engage with their peers." (Rogers Int19 p5/13.11.15) Ms. Rogers acknowledged that other students have the ability to scaffold ELLs and she encouraged this in her practice, suggesting an awareness of the value of peer-to-peer interaction in ELLs transition between "peripherality and legitimacy" of participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 100).

5.4.2 Visual language support systems

The classrooms of the two focal students were set up in a way wherein all students were well-informed about the location of resources and learning activities available to support literacy learning, illustrating "an interactional frame" (Barnard, 2002, p. 62), within which students could more easily develop the confidence to carry out individual and peer learning tasks efficiently. All students had easy access to clearly labelled reading and writing resources, which were strategically spread around the classroom. One teacher was also observed to assign task numbers to reading groups while she led another group in instructional reading. The following examples illustrate these types of classroom systems. In particular, the observations below show Prem engaging in a task after a teaching transition.

Teacher signals the start of Reading and gives each reading group instructions for the next task. Prem looks at the board for visual aid on what to do.

Prem gets on with his reading activity and retrieves something from the resource shelf. He sits with his male friend, John, who seems to know what to do. He gets some word/writing cards from the bucket to practise with. He sounds out some words and confidently writes some on the word card.

He goes over to the resource table to choose an activity with a classmate in his reading group. He goes back to his table group. His group mates carry on talking. Gary teaches Prem to write a word and says, "You can". (Prem Obs6 p1/11.9.15)

Supportive relationships established in the classroom reflect "mutual engagement" (Wenger, 1998, p. 95) and peer scaffolding among its members. Prem's ability to accomplish tasks independently is supported by his teacher's effective use of classroom systems. In order for the classroom community to operate efficiently, students are required to learn particular structures and routines to support their own learning at the beginning of the year. In essence, these structures and routines represent part of the classroom culture that newcomers need to master in order to move beyond peripherality

(Wenger, 1998), while at the same time functioning as catalysts for social interactions – as in the second observation note above – that promote such a transition. Ms. Campbell’s provision of visual aids on the board also supported Prem’s understanding, while sitting with his friend, John, also allowed for peer interaction and scaffolding for a particular task that Prem initially seemed unsure of. After sitting with John, Prem was able to proceed to the activity he was expected to do, even though he did not directly receive assistance from his friend. Gary, who, on the other hand, offered him some explicit encouragement, and voluntarily taught him how to write a word, even though Prem did not ask for assistance.

Noraj’s classroom teacher, Ms. Rogers, also provided a similar system in running her classroom literacy programme, as observed below:

[The teacher gives an instruction for the class.]

Ms. Rogers: “Task 2 please”. (Students move to the next activity.)

[Noraj moves to another table with his group and picks up the next activity.]

[The teacher asks Noraj what he is doing and reminds him about his spelling book. He retrieves it from his book bag and goes to the teacher.]

Ms. Rogers: Did you check your spelling words?

Noraj: Yes. (He goes off to check his spelling words with Dean)

Dean: I’ve got beautiful writing (Noraj ignores him).

[Teacher transitions the class to Task 3 and tells Noraj to stay on his task.]

Noraj: I’m doing my thing for a while (to Dean)

Dean: What task is it?

Noraj: Task 2 (He carries on checking his spelling list.) (Rogers Obs9 p4/11.9.15)

The above observation shows how the students were already familiar with the classroom system. The structures in place for activities enabled other students to move from one task to another seamlessly while the teacher did instructional literacy teaching with a small group. Students demonstrated agency and knowledge of how tasks operated in class during literacy sessions, suggesting that students in Noraj’s classroom also have the socially-mediated capacity to act as individual learners (Thorne, 2006). Ms. Rogers worked within Noraj’s ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), and directed him to do his spelling task instead of another activity, with the understanding that a peer (Dean) would scaffold his learning, and check his spelling words for him. This interaction between Noraj and his

peer was encouraged by the teacher, and illustrates another mediating strategy utilised in the classroom.

5.4.3 Teachers' role in providing tailored assistance

The teachers of both ELLs in the study provided different types of scaffolding for all students and ensured that this support was given across all learning areas. Teacher-student scaffolding or peer-to-peer scaffolding may both serve as useful strategies to take ELLs to the next level of learning. As in the observation below, a handwriting lesson demonstrated both the teacher and the students in the classroom providing the necessary scaffolding for Prem in order to assist him to accomplish the task required:

Ms. Campbell: You do upper case letters, lower case letters. Got it? (She gives out markers to the class) Oh look, Prem is starting straightaway...

Ethan: S, T, U V, W (Says the letters out loud.)

Ric: Prem, it's R, that's wrong.

[Prem responds to Ric by writing the correct letters quietly, while looking at what the rest of his table group are writing.]

Ms. Campbell: Good boy, hey capital T, capital L (To Prem)

[Ms. Campbell moves on to another child on Prem's table group and tells him what needs correcting.]

Ric: S, T, U

Ethan, (sitting beside Prem) F, G, C, B, A

Prem: Done! (He puts his hand up.) Excuse me, I'm done! We are done!

[Teacher goes over to clarify and check that Prem's work is correct.] (Campbell Obs30 p1/30.11.15)

In this specific part of the lesson, Ms. Campbell encouraged all students to say the alphabet out loud, which enabled Prem to listen and write the letters correctly on his whiteboard. Ric peer-scaffolded his learning by correcting Prem's writing, and he, in turn, responded to the correction. Ms. Campbell followed this up by acknowledging Prem's effort and gave him positive feedback before moving on to another student in the same group. Gibbons (2015) suggests that this pattern provides confidence-boosting affirmation for ELLs. The teacher also encouraged the students to interact within their groups during the activity, thus further promoting peer-to-peer scaffolding. In this context, the ELL was surrounded by people who enabled him to participate, engage, and respond to feedback to develop his language learning. Isolating Prem from such a

collaborative and supportive environment might have produced an entirely different outcome.

The observations above illustrated situations where ELLs were encouraged to work within their ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), wherein they received guidance and support during learning sessions, initially from a capable peer, and their efforts were checked and affirmed by the teacher. Because there was a possibility of ELLs misunderstanding concepts, instructions, certain language structures, and meanings, it is essential for teachers to monitor and cross-check students' learning and understanding. The effectiveness of this practice was confirmed by Prem's teacher, Ms. Campbell, when she described some of her experiences and observations in teaching ELLs through the years:

They quickly learn to interact with their peers, they want to get their learning right, they actively involve themselves in learning, they want to learn, you must be able to read whether they have actually understood what has been said because they will indicate they know what you have said. However the follow-through isn't there. There is a discrepancy between what they can decode and what they actually comprehend in Reading, they need to learn English as both conversational language and language for learning, like specific terms, etc. (Campbell Int25 p1/13.11.15)

Through her previous experiences, Ms. Campbell acknowledged ELLs' ability to engage in effective interactions with their peers during learning sessions. She also showed an awareness of how well some ELLs understood the target language, despite the potential for misinterpreting the teacher's instructions. Although there have been times when ELLs under her supervision indicated their understanding of lessons, Ms. Campbell recognised and noticed the need for close monitoring of ELLs' comprehension of English academic and conversational vocabulary. This awareness was evident in the way Ms. Campbell conducted the handwriting lesson above, where she provided "adult guidance" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86) and gave Prem affirmation by going over to clarify and check that his letter formation was correct. This suggests the need for monitoring through language learning activities and tasks to address inconsistencies with decoding and comprehension strategies.

5.4.4 Summary

In considering the underlying elements that contributed to the ELL's L2 development, Figure 1 below illustrates the ELL encompassed by relevant communities and the related social aspects that work side by side to influence the learner through a holistic approach.

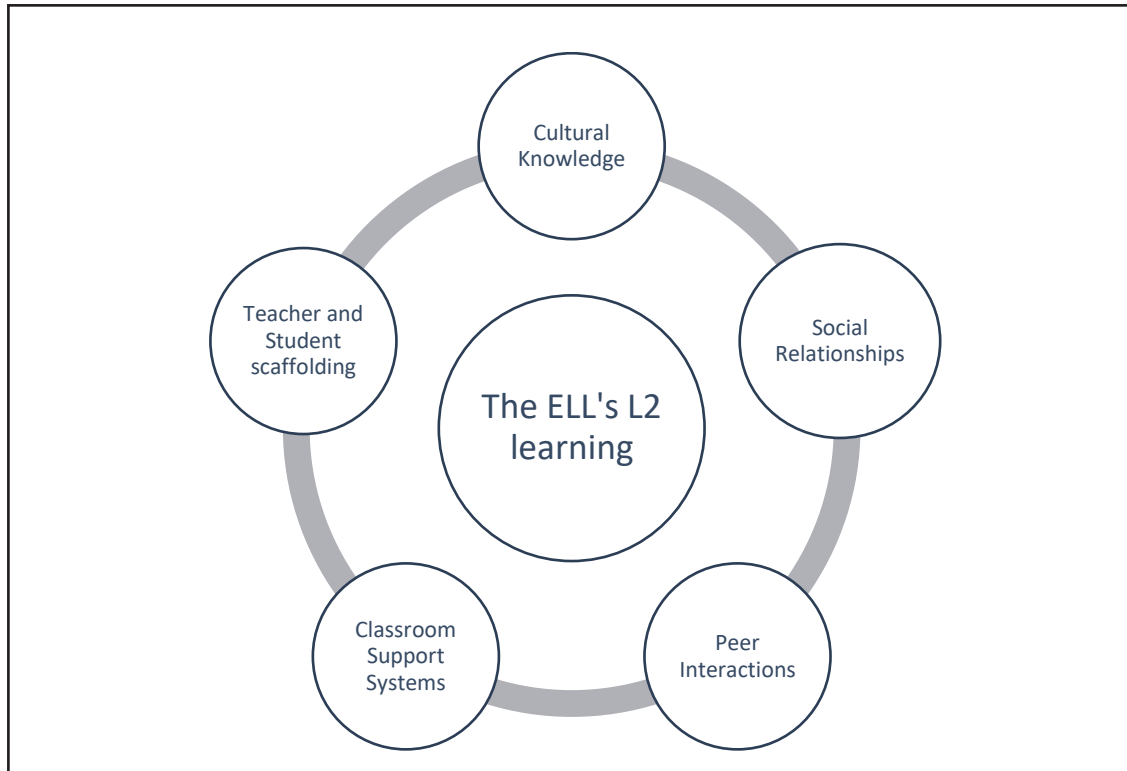


Figure 1: Contributing elements in an ELL's L2 development through the School and Class Communities

The diagram illustrates the idea that within the learning setting, both ELLs' teachers played a key mediating role in ensuring that language learning, cultural knowledge, and social relationships coexisted holistically within the school and the wider community. Therefore, the classroom setting existed as a community of practice consisting of members with various levels of mastery of local knowledge and practices. Beyond the classroom, the extent to which the deputy principal and teachers engaged ELLs in the mainstream classroom depended largely on how socially and culturally connected to the ELLs they were as educators. Previous experiences in teaching ELLs appeared to inform their practices and enabled them to apply new teaching strategies that were best suited the ELLs in their care.

Within their classrooms, both teachers saw the potential of peer-teaching and sociocultural interactions for the benefit of ELLs' language development and actively encouraged student experts to mentor less-capable peers. The support systems that the teachers put in place in the classroom helped ELLs to learn alongside their peers in effectively constructed environments that not only provided clear visual language resources but also allowed ELLs to take advantage of language learning potential at their disposal. Regular routines that all students were taught and learnt at the beginning of the year helped ELLs move from one task to another and enabled them to engage socially and academically with their classmates.

Interactions that illustrated expert learners teaching novices were evident in the findings, and peer-scaffolding was found to be routinely encouraged. Within such carefully constructed supportive learning environments, both ELLs in the study took opportunities to observe activities peripherally as well as actively interacting with other students.

Chapter 6 NORAJ

6.1 Introduction

Noraj was the older of the two focus students in this study. At six years old, he had been at school in New Zealand for close to three years. This chapter identifies the sociocultural factors that were found to influence Noraj's L2 learning. It focuses on answering research questions two, which focuses on how parents act as mediators of sociocultural interactions, and research question three, which focuses on scaffolding between ELLs and their peers, and how these sociocultural interactions acted as mediators of language learning.

The chapter begins with an overview of Noraj's family life and culture at home, and will describe how his parents mediated his L2 development through social connections in the school and neighbouring community. Noraj's parents' cultural practices at home as well as how these contributed to his overall identity will also be discussed. This will be followed by presentation and discussion of findings, based on classroom and playground observations, which highlight Noraj's positioning in social groups, and his sense of agency in performing classroom tasks.

6.2 Family and community links

After living in New Zealand for almost three years, Noraj's family had built a cultural identity within their family and formed links with the wider community. The following findings and discussion highlight Noraj's parents' beliefs about their home culture, as well as their attitude around Noraj's social connections inside and outside of school.

6.2.1 A strong cultural identity

Noraj's parents, Ros and Sita, placed significant importance on their first language and culture. They had a high regard for Nepali, and affirmed this as the main language to be spoken at home by all family members. They wanted to instil in their children the value of their culture and native tongue, as Noraj's father, Ros, highlighted in his interview below:

We speak Nepali in our house because we want them to learn the language and we want to keep it with our children as well.

We don't want to forget our language. We want to teach our children. That is why we usually speak Nepali in the house. (Ros Int24 p5/05.11.15)

The excerpt indicates that Noraj's father viewed Nepali as fundamental to his family's cultural upbringing and heritage – an attitude he wanted to encourage in all his children. Holding on to their first language did not suggest a resistance to the second language, but denoted a form of respect for their background and traditions that linked them to their own culture. Noraj's family therefore seemed to have a strong “social structure” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98) that was socially bound and relational, with its own language systems (Wenger, 1998). The father was regarded as the head of the family and was responsible for managing cultural and social practices at home. Noraj's family had a strong association with their cultural heritage and identity which, in Noraj's case, was significantly “defined by ethnicity and language” (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 246). Strong links to their cultural upbringing and first language use were highlighted by Noraj's parents, who reinforced their intention for Nepali to be passed on to the next generation. Noraj was strongly supported by a large number of family members who all spoke their L1 and upheld the status of Nepali in the home. English as the L2 became a functional language that allowed Noraj's family to operate linguistically and socially in the target culture, which included the wider community.

Values and practices of certain communities within the family domain contribute to the proficiency of second language learners (Duff, 2011). It was evident in the interview with Noraj's father that both parents facilitated their son's cultural identity and L1 fluency through their strict language practices at home. Although external linguistic influences and sociocultural practices are beyond parental control, in Noraj's home context, the language spoken and the cultural traditions practised were highly dependent on the decisions made by the head of the family.

6.2.2 Widening social community ties

Noraj's parents also mentioned that he often time spent time not only with his Nepali friends, but also with other New Zealand friends after school:

Yes. Kiwi friends. He has got friends in the Nepali community but in addition, he has got a lot of Kiwi friends. Yes. They come sometimes, they play with Noraj but they will go back but not sleepover. And sometimes, their parents ask Noraj to go to their house. (Ros & Sita Int24 p6/5.11.15)

It appears that Noraj's parents not only allowed but also encouraged their son's social activities with both Nepali and New Zealand children. Their attitude showed that they also valued the interactions Noraj had with his New Zealand friends. Mediated linguistic

interactions support both L1 and L2 language development of the child, as noted by Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994). Although Noraj's parents were not actively and socially involved with families of their young son's friends, they made reciprocal gains in accommodating his friends in their home, and in turn accepted invitations for their son to join social play with others in the wider community. This approach enabled Noraj to develop linguistically and socially, as he involved himself with other children in neighbourhood.

6.3 Peer relationships

Being in the school for almost three years seemed to have given Noraj the confidence to engage in English social interactions both within and outside the classroom. As an ELL, he appeared to get along with a variety of other children and to have established his social status with his peer group. The following findings and discussion highlight Noraj's capabilities, sociocultural interactions and participation in different L2 contexts, and provide some insights into his social standing and opportunities for scaffolding in the classroom and playground.

6.3.1 Empowerment and agency during play

During break times, Noraj regularly participated in soccer or rugby games with a variety of other children in the junior part of the school. Noraj was confident about asserting his place in the group, as illustrated in the example below, when he was observed playing soccer with a big group of children in the playground.

Noraj: My turn. (He tries to get the soccer ball. He calls to his classmate, Arnold.)

Arnold: He's in our team (Bringing another boy in.).

Noraj: You can't say that! (Noraj ObsP17 p2/15.10.15)

The observation suggested that Noraj saw himself as a member this particular group and that he was an active participant in soccer games. His small frame was not a barrier to his daily games with other New Zealand students. He was quick with his ball skills and sometimes called out strategies to his team mates. Noraj's participation in this interaction suggests he has a strong sense of self-identity and belonging in this particular social group. This is reflected in Corsaro and Eder's (1990) study on peer culture, which highlighted the value of children's peer activities, and stated that "social participation" (p. 214) offered children a sense of belonging.

Noraj expressed himself and had a voice in the activity. His agency and capacity to act (Thorne, 2006) made him a strong participant in this particular context as seen in when he assertively expressed his opinion on who should belong in the team. His resistance to accepting another boy that his team mate wanted to bring in showed his sense of agency and self-perception of his social standing in the group. In the example above, the “social structure” (Wenger, 1998, p. 13) of Noraj’s team was disrupted, which prompted him to make a firm statement on who takes membership. This particular group suggests that “power relations and its conditions for legitimacy” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98) have already established Noraj’s social positioning with his peers. His assertiveness, ability as a soccer player and long-standing membership in the team gave him the confidence to speak out and make decisions on his group’s behalf. With Noraj approaching his third year of primary school, his identity in this social group seemed to be recognised, as he became a regular fixture on the soccer grounds during breaks.

6.3.2 Noraj’s sense of identity and agency in the classroom

As a more capable English speaker than Prem, Noraj demonstrated agency in the way he conducted himself during reading sessions in the classroom. In the following observation excerpt, although he sought clarification from his teacher about his next task, it was evident that he functioned on his own accord most of the time.

Dean: Do you want me to do it again?

Noraj: I’ll just do my own one! I want this one!

[He packs up his book bag.]

Ms. Rogers: One, two, three, four, five...

[Noraj goes back to his table group.]

Noraj: Can I do my printing now? (To his teacher.)

[Teacher asks him what his second task is. Noraj continues to clarify what he is supposed to do.]

Ms. Rogers: Are your spelling cards on you?

[Noraj gets reminded of his next activity before he moves on. He gets his next book and goes to another table with his classmate. Noraj works quietly on his next task and sounds out words before writing them down in his book. He seems to cope well working on his own. He seeks clarification from his teacher but not from his classmates.] (Noraj ObsM5 p4/11.09.15)

Noraj showed that he was an able learner with a sense of agency in the way he operated during learning tasks in the classroom. His approach to tasks suggested that he knew the next steps for his L2 learning, even though he sought some guidance from his teacher. Part of his L2 learning was through “self-talk or private speech” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 26), where he sounded out words to help with spelling. He demonstrated confidence and voiced his intention when he told his classmate, Dean, that he will just do his own activity. Noraj took ownership of his L2 learning and made his own choice of activity. He took part in the routines the teacher had set up as a member of the sociocultural make-up of the classroom, and engaged in learning interactions with his literacy group.

Noraj’s classroom had existing “access to participation and resources” (Toohey, 1996, p. 573), which also contributed to his independent approach to L2 learning. His manner of clarifying tasks with his teacher, Mrs. Rogers, instead of his classmates, seemed to suggest an independent attitude when he decided to work on his own. This demonstrated his confidence in his own capabilities as a student in the classroom who did not require assistance from peers. This is supported in the literature by Donato (2000), who comments on learners’ sense of agency and socioculturally considers what they bring into classroom interactions. Noraj seems to realise that his independence and engagement in tasks draw on the systems put in place in the classroom. Therefore, he was able to self-regulate (Vygotsky, 1978), self-manage, and perform the task at his own pace with proper guidance and mediation from his teacher.

The excerpt above suggests Noraj’s knowledge about how tasks are organised as well as his awareness of his next steps for L2 learning. The way Noraj demonstrated his agency by moving from one activity to another, and making his own decisions over his next task indicate his level of development as an ELL. Learners can actively transform their own world without conforming to the norms and no one can manipulate or redirect the “transformative agency embodied in the learner” (Donato, 2000, p. 47). Noraj’s confidence in his L2 learning suggests that his established identity in his classroom has firmly grounded his capacity to a degree where he recognised his own proficiency and ability to function in the L2 (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1998).

In the next excerpt below, Noraj was observed engaging in an independent maths activity with a small group of children. The activity required the children to arrange numbers in a bag in order, then record them in their maths book. The observation suggests some

confusion over how the task should be accomplished, which caused an argument between Tahu and Noraj towards the end of the interchange:

[Noraj is arranging numbers in order with his peers. Peers are working on the mat together in a small group of 7. Tahu is saying the numbers out loud as he is arranging them. Arnold is teaching another classmate, and they are talking together. Noraj is very quietly saying the numbers out loud as well.]

Tahu to Noraj: You have to keep it [the bag with the numbers] with you. Have you done two? Have you done one, two?

Noraj: I did that. (Tahu tries to help him) Now, people, ten!

Tahu: Have you done two? You can't do two numbers coz it's the same number as that. Don't you know how to play these numbers? That's yours.

Noraj: No, this is mine. I didn't have this. (He carries on writing the numbers in his book.)

[Small group chatter.]

Noraj: Yeah I done that. Why you doing this one? (To Tahu.) You not get up again.

Tahu: No, you have to pass it around.

Nancy: No you're not supposed to pass it on until we've done our five. No one's using the hundreds board. (Noraj ObsM20 p1,2/27.10.15)

Like his classmate Tahu, Noraj used the strategy of private speech to do the task, and quietly said the numbers aloud in order before he recorded them in his book. Private speech, described as a mediated "mental activity" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 206), allowed Noraj to internalise the sequencing of numbers to help with his learning and with making sense of the task. Frawley (1997) supports this concept in stating that private speech aids in mediating the relationship between an individual and his or her mental understanding.

Noraj's assertive exchange with Tahu implied his disagreement when he engaged in a heated exchange with Tahu by saying, "No, this is mine. I didn't have this", and also by refusing to accept Tahu's suggestions after his methods were contradicted. According to Muramatsu (2013), some learners demonstrate resistance when they develop the power to act on their own learning. Noraj's actions also implied a sense of agency as he informed the whole group that he is a capable learner who knows how the task should be done by yelling, "Now, people, ten!" This interaction highlighted Noraj's confidence in his ability to scaffold his peers, as he showed his classmates how the task was supposed to be accomplished, although the right way to do the task was unclear from the observation.

6.3.3 Summary

The main findings that are significant to Noraj's learning experiences are shown in Figure 2 below, which highlights the factors which influenced his L2 development:

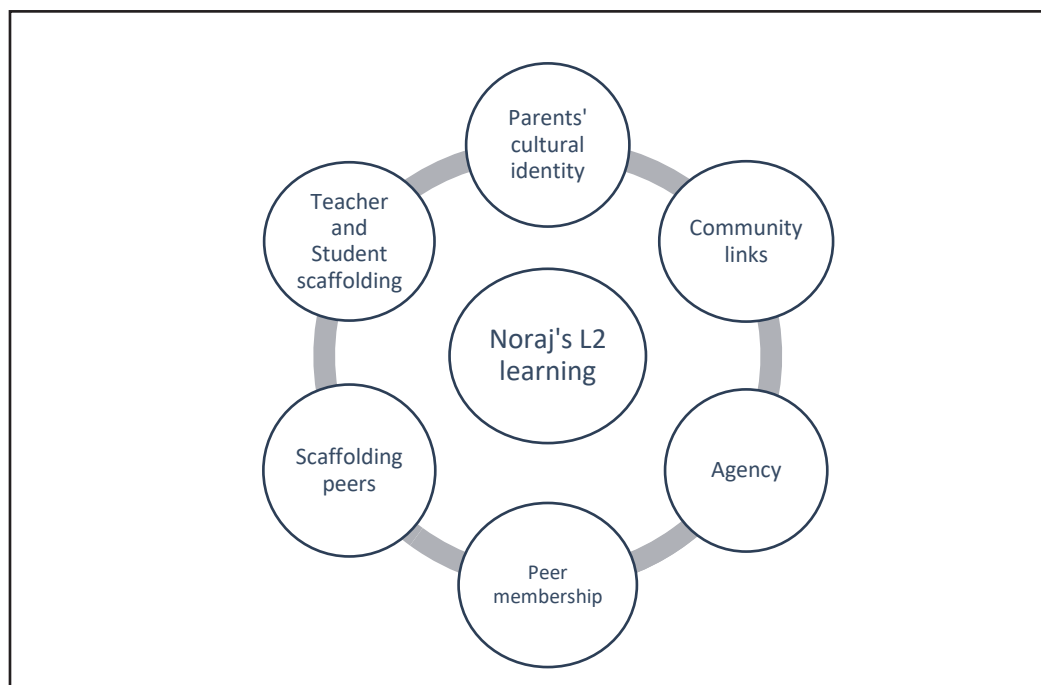


Figure 2: Contributing elements in Noraj's L2 learning

The diagram reveals that Noraj's parents have a strong sense of cultural identity and connection to their first language, and that they intended to preserve this within their family. Noraj's parents, Ros and Sita encourage Noraj to speak Nepali with friends of the same ethnicity when opportunities arose. Noraj's parents also encouraged him to participate in the wider community by letting him join both Nepali and New Zealand children in games and other activities, such as having friends stay over for afternoon play, or accepting invitations from other New Zealand families to have Noraj over at their home. Facilitating Noraj's interactions with other friends, regardless of their ethnicity, demonstrated Ros and Sita's acceptance of his L2 interactions at home, in school, and the wider community.

The findings from this study also suggest that Noraj was a strong and established participant in the overlapping communities of the school, home, and the wider community. Noraj scaffolded his own peers in class and functioned effectively in the L2. His strong sense of agency in classroom tasks demonstrated his independence and ability

to self-regulate, albeit with adult guidance from his teacher at times. In the playground and classroom, Noraj showed that he had established himself within the power structures of existing social groups. He was positioned as a strong and assertive member in the community of play, as well as a knowledgeable peer in his learning group.

Chapter 7 PREM

7.1 Introduction

The sociocultural influences that mediate Prem's L2 learning will be presented in this chapter. Overall, the findings here discussed are seen as contributing to an exploration of the issues at the heart of research questions two and three, which focus on how parents act as mediators of sociocultural interactions and scaffolding between ELLs and their peers, and how sociocultural interactions and scaffolding between ELLs and their peers act as a mediator of language learning. The chapter will explore the mediating factors and processes that operate within and across the different contexts that offer Prem opportunities to utilise the L2. It will begin by drawing on background information from interviews with Prem's parents and focusing on relationships with family and community members, and how these are seen as mediators of L2 development. This will be followed by a presentation and discussion of findings from the classroom and playground observations, which will be used to illustrate and discuss the different strategies Prem was observed to use to establish and maintain interactions with speakers of English around him.

7.2 Family, cultural, and community links

The findings presented in the following sections offer will give some insights into Prem's parents' beliefs on their own culture and first language, as well as how they recognise and acknowledge L2 use in their son's life at home, in school, and the wider community.

7.2.1 Language attitudes and practices in Prem's family

Prem's parents, Kumar and Maya, showed firm beliefs regarding the significance of their L1, Nepali, but were aware that they could not prevent their own child from losing part of his Nepalese identity once in New Zealand, and recognised that the target culture's influences, whether it be peer relationships or personal experiences, may affect Prem's interest and connections to his heritage language and culture. Kumar shared his concern for his son's lack of knowledge about his own cultural heritage and commented that, "He don't know about [his own] culture these days but we are planning to teach him because we don't want [him] to forget his culture." (Kumar Int16 p13/13.10.15)

Prem's parents maintained Nepalese cultural and linguistic practices at home, driven by an awareness of the need to pass on cultural knowledge to their son and concern for the

potential loss of his cultural identity. Gibbons (2015) states that language acquisition is historically influenced by the “cultural capital” (p. 13) of families in the home, the significance of which is highlighted by Prem’s parents’ maintenance of their culture and the L1 support they provided for their son’s English learning. Prem’s parents encouraged him to use English both at home and in school and mentioned that, “...we speak lots of English with him.” (Kumar Int16 p14/13.10.15) The parents’ intention of preserving their cultural practices at home while also facilitating English learning constituted the basis for bilingualism rooted in a sense of value associated with both the heritage and the dominant culture.

7.2.2 A Nepali friend

Prem’s initial year at primary school was challenging because he did not know how to speak English. This left him feeling isolated and without any friends. The other case study student, Noraj, who was a year ahead of Prem at the same school, also spoke Nepali and his family knew Prem’s family, so this may have initially provided some support for Prem.

Prem’s father, Kumar, knew of his son’s difficulties during his first year at a New Zealand school and so welcomed the idea of his son speaking his L1 with a Nepali friend in his class. Previous experiences of his inability to speak English at school caused Prem’s reluctance in socially engaging in his new school environment. Establishing a friendship with Noraj helped him learn the L2, as Noraj translated English to Nepali for Prem. Prem’s father acknowledged Noraj’s efforts at alleviating his son’s frustration with English:

If there is a Nepali friend, yeah. I think his friend is Noraj. At the time he was bored because all of them speak English and he didn’t know what to do – how to speak English. He tell me he doesn’t understand them. He talk with Noraj. At the time Noraj know English and understand. (Kumar Int16 p12/13.10.15)

The excerpt suggests that Noraj’s assistance was a significant contributing factor to Prem’s L2 development. The interactions between the two friends, however, may not have been possible had Prem’s parents not continued to nurture Nepali at home. Thus Kumar’s choice of cultivating L1 development in the home was also instrumental in supporting Prem’s social activities in school and his ability to understand English. At school, Noraj’s assistance in translating for Prem also prevented him from being linguistically disadvantaged. It is not unusual for ELLs to turn to school peers who speak

the same language. Whether it be for linguistic support or friendship, it allows ELLs to identify social groups that can be “defined by ethnicity, by language, or any other means” (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 246). In this case, the two ELLs’ knowledge of their L1 became a vehicle for Prem’s L2 learning and acquisition. Noraj’s assistance also paved the way for Prem to develop his own network of friends, at a time when he could have felt isolated in an unfamiliar environment.

7.3 The classroom and playground environments

For young ELLs, establishing friendships can pose many challenges, especially if one is not familiar with the social dynamics of the mainstream school environment. Although interactions can be facilitated by teachers to encourage young ELLs to engage with others during learning sessions, there is never any guarantee this will actually happen.

In the following sections, we discuss data excerpts from classroom observations that showed Prem utilising different communicative strategies in order to create and maintain friendships at school. The data will illustrate how Prem’s efforts at gaining access to resources strengthened his place in the power relations that already existed in the classroom and playground. The findings will highlight Prem’s use of both non-participatory and participatory strategies in interactions with his teacher and peers to cope with various situations during classroom learning and play. The discussions in this section will also explore how language learning was mediated through teacher scaffolding as well as peer interactions.

7.3.1 Waiting, observing, and following

Observations of Prem highlight his tendency to observe what his friends did in the classroom and playground. He seldom chose an activity on his own, especially during Discovery Time – a learning programme based on student-directed activities (Martin & Hay, 2012). Observing what his friends were up to therefore ended up with him often being one of the last few students on the mat, still undecided on an activity to engage with, long after every choice had been announced by the teacher.

Teacher: Spring scene. Prem, what do you want to do? Do you want to do the Spring scene or not? Just say no. (Prem sits motionless) Large blocks? (Prem still waits) Trucks?

[Prem sees a classmate on the trucks, nods his head and chooses this activity. He finds his classmate towing all the trucks, joins him, then helps tow all the other trucks.]

Prem: I will. (Prem ObsM6 p4/11.9.15)

Prem's decision seems to have been influenced by him seeing a classmate on a truck activity. This could be interpreted as an example of "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 100), where newcomers who are not ready to fully participate in the activities of a group may initially decide to just watch others, and only peripherally engage in activities.

For teachers, persuading young ELLs to initiate interactions can be difficult, as they might still be finding their way around socially and academically. In this case, the teacher's decision to let Prem know that working with a peer would be acceptable appears to have helped Prem overcome the social challenges involved in deciding to participate. By being patient and offering different options, she also provided wait time for Prem to observe around him before making a final decision.

In another observation, Prem did not seem to want to participate in the shared reading activity on the mat, as his reading skills in the L2 were still developing. The following example illustrates Prem's preference for maintaining his distance from the activity in progress.

[Teacher points to the pictures/words in the book.]

Prem: That's easy.

[Girls are instructed to read the big book at the front. They read it together while Prem listens and looks. He looks at a classmate on the mat and smiles. He listens as his classmates help each other read the words on the big book. He mutters quietly instead of reading out loud. He just looks at the book but doesn't try to read. He continues to listen to the teacher and the class, who are now reading the story together. He is enjoying looking at the pictures. He looks at the others beside him while they are reading aloud.] (Prem ObsM6 p4/11.09.15)

During the reading activity, Prem just listened, smiled, and looked at his classmates as they read aloud with the teacher. He muttered some of the words quietly to himself, as perhaps he was aware that others might hear him read some words incorrectly. He observed his classmates read as he tried to learn some of the English words they were saying, and participated peripherally by interacting with others through listening, observing, and looking at the pictures in the book.

A similar example occurred during a handwriting lesson. Here, Prem also utilised self-talk while he learned how to write the alphabet.

[Teacher asks students what the 5 vowels are. Some students respond. Prem writes down the vowels on his whiteboard quietly together with the others. Teacher carries on saying the vowels out loud.

Quiet chat around the room as students prepare for the next set of words. Prem sounds the words out quietly to himself as he writes it.

While the teacher is writing the words up on the board, Prem looks at his male classmate's work every now and then. He marks his work quietly.] (Prem ObsM6 p1/11.9.15)

The excerpt above showed Prem engaging in self-talk (Vygotsky, 1978) or private speech – a form of mediated “mental activity” which Lantolf and Thorne (2007, p. 206) identify as appropriated internal communication. The sounding-out strategy helped Prem write the words in his book, and cross-checking his work against his classmate's secured an opportunity to be scaffolded by a peer during marking time, to check that he was on the right track.

While generally more likely to observe than to engage directly with peers during learning sessions, Prem was also observed to engage in social talk in English during playtime. The observation below occurred when Prem got involved with a large group of children in a game of tag.

[Prem, Ethan and Tito are just getting organised after lunch and decide to run off together as a group. Prem has gone back to the tunnel on the playground on his own. He goes in and out of the tunnel, while John calls Prem to get him to chase him around. Prem ignores John and plays on his own. Some boys decide to play tag with John. Prem realises that the boys were all playing tag so he finally joins in.]

[Lee falls and hurts his hand. Prem goes over to Lee and says, “You okay?”. He stays with Lee for a few minutes and then goes back to playing. He goes down the stairs and calls Ken. He motions for Ken to come over to tag him. John joins in, and then Prem goes back into the tunnel. John follows him.]

[Prem is back in the tunnel with John.]

John: Go Prem!

[Prem sings a Hindi song in the tunnel with John.]

Prem: Catch! I catch you! [To John, as he starts chasing him and Eddie.]

[Prem goes over to Gary on the corner of the playground and tags him. Gary goes under the slide and refuses to join in. Prem joins Gary under the slide and seems

to encourage him to go back to the game by pointing to the others. Gary decides to join again. Prem goes on the other side of the obstacle course bridge. Gary swings it on the other side, laughing. John joins them, together with Sally, Lily, and Anna. Some jump on, jump off, then swing the bridge again and again, as they try to get Prem to tag them.] (Prem ObsP29 p5/24.11.15)

The excerpt above showed Prem's active participation in several tag interactions with a number of other children. As everyone around him was highly engaged in a game of tag, Prem decided to help Lee, who hurt his hand, to check if he was okay. He also tended to Gary, who seemed to have become upset under the slide, and was able to encourage Gary to join the game again. His involvement in assisting other classmates he was not particularly close to showed his increasing confidence to participate in the playground. The excerpt also illustrates Prem's use of physical gestures during social interactions. The literature on sociocultural interactions considers physical gestures as a "very complex system of speech" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 108) which, in this case, allowed Prem to socially interact with others during play. Prem did not communicate much using English but was able to encourage two children to get back into the game. Quietly lending his company to Lee, and pointing to the other children playing tag while with Gary, Prem still engaged in positive interactions with his classmates. The social context of play highlighted Prem's agency in making personal choices, as he considered his own "values and duties" (Donato, 2000, p. 46) to help others. Prem seemed to gain recognition, acceptance and membership from the children he assisted, who acknowledged him as he helped them. The excerpt shows Prem taking a leadership role in interactions aimed at helping others, stepping beyond his usual role as a peripheral participant.

7.3.2 Loyalty to friends

Prem seemed to regularly spend time with a particular group of friends in the classroom, which suggested his desire to belong and identify himself with that particular group. Mitchell and Myles (2004) pertain to this notion as "social identity" (p. 246), which originates from relational emotions within a social group (Hansen & Liu, 1997; Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Within the classroom context, Prem had strong social ties and kept in constant company of John, Tito, and Ethan. He was also observed to follow the same children around the classroom and playground. His attachment to these three children suggested a sense of security and reliance on the familiarity of his relationship with them. Below is another incident where Prem's indecision over Discovery Time activities caused him to choose what his friends did, perhaps to seek affirmation from them on what to do.

[The teacher asks the children who would like to go where. Students start going off to their activities.]

[Prem is still making up his mind while the others go to their activities.]

[He chooses an activity next door with his friends. He chose bubbles. He hangs out with Tito.]

Prem: What are you doing?

[He is seeking clarification from Tito and waits patiently for his turn.]

(Prem ObsM18 p1/15.10.15)

Already familiar with his tight-knit group of friends, Prem decided to join Tito. Although he spent a great deal of time with Tito, his interaction with him denoted a careful exchange, as he patiently waited for his friend to give him a turn at the bubble activity. His politeness suggests that he did not want to spoil his relationship with Tito, whom he seemed to look up to. This is similar to Corsaro and Eder's (1990) findings in a study on peer culture, which yielded evidence of similar behaviour among their participants, which the authors explained as associated with a sense of belonging and "emotional security" (p. 214) around peer groups during play activities. In fact, observations showed that Prem was very close to Tito, as he often spent time with him in and outside the classroom, suggesting the priority he placed on this particular relationship. This was particularly evident in the playground, where Prem often followed Tito around and stayed close to him, as the following observation illustrated.

Prem is following Tito in the playground. They are at the grass area where Noraj is playing soccer with his friends. Tito got the soccer ball off Noraj and kicks it off. Prem copies what Tito is doing, who is trying to joke with him. Tito takes off his jacket and gave it to Prem to put away in the deck area. Prem happily runs and puts it away for him. He then goes back to the grass area to play soccer with Tito, who he stays very close to. Prem gets a chance at kicking the ball with Tito and the others. He is kicking the ball back and forth with Tito and they are playing together. (Prem ObsP8 p1/16.9.15)

When Prem put away Tito's jacket, it seemed as if it was a means to gain entry into the soccer game and the group of children playing soccer. Prem seemed to be in the process of claiming a position in this particular group by cultivating his relationship with Tito, a more established member of the group, thus illustrating an attempt to negotiate a transition from the periphery to a more central position in the group and the group's "shared practice" (Wenger, 1998, p. 96).

It is also worth noticing that, while Prem was generally aware of the soccer games normally held during lunchtimes, usually he tended towards the obstacle course in the playground with his group of friends, John, Tito, and Ethan. This time around, he took a risk in doing something new and joined the soccer game in Tito's company.

As Prem continued to cultivate his relationships with the same group of children, he became more attuned to the language that came with playing with them. The following example highlights Prem's growing confidence during another game of tag.

[Prem is playing in the junior playground with John, Ethan, Tito, and Sally.]

Ethan: He's gotta get you!

Prem: Get me!

Tito: I'm faster than him!

[Prem chases the three boys and tries to tag them.]

Prem: John! Let's chase here!

[The boys run around the grass. Now John and Prem are trying to tag each other.]

Prem: Nah, nah, nah!

Tito: Tag! (to Prem as he comes up the bridge on the obstacle course). Prem loses! Prem loses!

[Prem tags Sally then Sally starts chasing Prem.]

Tito: Sally's in! Sally's in!

[The children run around.] (Prem ObsP22 p2/5.11.15)

Here Prem appeared to have claimed a legitimate position within the group, making effective use of language while playing the game to cement his social ties with.

7.3.3 Trying to fit in

In approaching his second year of school, Prem was still trying to form strong relationships with his friends and classmates and experienced different situations that challenged his need to belong to a secure social group. The example below describes the event wherein Prem and Tito interacted and sang together during a free-choice literacy activity. Prem was in the middle of an interaction with Tito when Gary came over and intervened in a way that distracted Tito.

[Gary goes over to the table and talks to Tito about Lego.]

Gary: I have Lego stuff.

Tito: I went to... [Tito chats with Gary.]

[Prem giggles with the two boys and listens to the story. He leans close to Tito. Another boy, Ken, goes to their table and talks to Gary. Prem tries to talk to Gary and Ken, who ignore him.]

Prem: I can get those! [The Legos.]

[Prem plays with his marker pen, then goes back to colouring his work.

Tito starts talking to Gary, then Prem leans to Tito and whispers something to him.]

Tito: No!

[Prem continues to try to talk to Tito. He tries to interact with Gary and Ken about the colouring pen. He gets ignored. Tito and the other two boys play arm wrestling on the table. Tito turns to Prem and arm wrestles with him.]

Tito: You're cheating! (Prem ObsM6 p7/11.9.15)

The situation above illustrates Prem being ignored when Tito became occupied with some of his other classmates. Prem's sense of belonging seemed to have been threatened by Gary and Ken, but it did not stop him from trying to engage and participate in the conversation. Prem did, however, gain back Tito's attention when he gets wrestled for a brief moment. The excerpt above suggests an interplay of "power relations" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98) between Prem and the other two children, Gary and Ken. This particular social group formed outside of Tito and Prem's close relationship presented a challenge to Prem, and suggests the need for him to competently engage (Lave and Wenger, 1991) in order to assert his place as legitimate member of this group.

7.3.4 Connecting through play and cultural tools

Interactions during play often involve "cultural tools" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p. 202), which may pertain to play objects that ELLs and other young students are familiar with which allow them to function in particular contexts. Prem realised that sharing what he knew about certain play objects presented good opportunities for him to connect with his classmates and friends. The example below illustrates how Prem used Knex (a construction toy) as a means to engage in L2 communication with his friend John.

John: Robot

Prem: Here, here! We need that! (He gets a Knex part and helps John construct a robot.) I use my head! (John and Prem start playing with the robot together.)

John: Look! Look! (Prem gets the robot off John to show him something from the Knex book.)

Prem: Wanna make this? (He shows the Knex book to John.) Look how to make this.

[The boys both look at the Knex in the book, then Prem shows John more ways of improving the robot.] (Prem ObsM11 p1/24.9.15)

Prem took ownership of the activity by saying, “I use my head!” and created an opportunity for “self-transformation” (Muramatsu, 2013, p. 44) by letting his friend know about his expertise in robot construction. With John being unaware of Prem’s knowledge about Knex, Prem showcased his skills by teaching him how to build a robot. The interaction in the excerpt above also highlighted the role of the play object (Knex), which afforded Prem the opportunity to scaffold others’ learning and encouraged him to communicate in the L2.

The excerpt above illustrates Prem’s willingness to take risks in interactions, suggesting his developing need to establish and assert his own individual identity despite his equal need to belong to a group. This and other examples indicated that Prem used play interactions or Discovery Time as social platforms to assert his identity in the particular groups he found himself working with, and within his class group at large. This is confirmed by the fact that Prem was often observed to leave a particular activity when he was ignored, or when he experienced social conflict, he wasn’t able or willing to resolve, as illustrated in the first part of the incident below.

[Prem takes the truck from his classmate.]

Prem: “Hey it’s mine!” (looking worried)

Ric: I need that!

[Prem leaves the truck area then moves to the blocks activity where his friend John and a couple of his classmates are. He looks briefly at the blocks, noticed that John and classmates are ignoring him, then leaves.] (Prem ObsM6 p2,3/11.9.15)

While it is evident that Prem struggled at times to belong to a group, he was also ready to take risks to work his way back into group activities after initial exclusion.

The next extract from same observation shows Prem changing his mind and re-joining the blocks activity and attempting to get his classmates’ attention by showing his stack of blocks while interacting in the L2. He finally gets a reaction from Sally, as indicated below.

[Prem decides to go back to the blocks activity. He finally decides to join John and his classmates. He busily stacks the blocks and shows his classmates.]

Prem: "Mine" (while looking at Anna and Sally), "And this bit!". (Prem starts building a tower.)

Sally: Whoa! Look at this block! (She points to Prem's tower, which was getting higher.)

Prem: Look at my big block! John, John! Look! My one is getting better! (He stacks his blocks higher.)

John: Who wants to build this with me?

Prem: I build my own. My one is getting bigger!

Sally: I'm making my own.

Prem: Watch out! (Prem's stack of blocks is getting higher.)

[Prem smiles at Anna, looking pleased with his tall tower.]

Prem: John, look at mine! (Anna's tower falls while Prem carries on building his tower) I don't need that. (Prem to Sally. His tower falls.) It broke! (Prem ObsM6 p2,3/11.9.15)

Finally, Prem's participation was noticed by his peers, boosting his confidence and leading him to become even more engaged. Wenger (1998) describes this type of interaction pattern as "learning as participation" (p. 13) since it opens up opportunities for ELLs to learn through self-discovery in order for them to take risks and interact with different people through language. Participation assists in the forming of new relationships, helps build friendships, and acts as the social medium which may ensure the stability of young ELLs in the mainstream classroom. "Through these local actions and interactions, learning reproduces and transforms the social structure in which it takes place" (Wenger, 1998, p. 13), which occurred in the observation above after Prem received positive interaction from his classmates.

The following excerpt highlights another form of cultural tool that Prem used to engage in a long discussion in English with his friend about a panda song they have both learned from a music video in class.

[Prem picks up a stencil and stays on his desk. He approaches Tito.]

Prem: Tito, you and me? (Pointing to himself then to Tito.)

[The boys move to another table together.]

Tito: Prem, you need to write a story to go with your picture okay?

[Prem talks to Tito while tracing with the stencil. Prem works closely with Tito and starts singing a song while he works.]

Prem: A-A-aw... Dawww, dawww... (He continues to sing.) Uh-oh-uh-oh...

[Tito begin to sing with him.]

Prem: I like red. I'm done with this. (He continues to sing happily while he is tracing.) Uh-uh-uh-oh-oh.... I like the one with the ...

Tito: I like the poem

Prem: There's a boy, there's lots of boys. My mum. I watch panda. I know all of this.

Tito: I watch this too.

Prem: You know the panda song?

[Tito starts singing the song.]

Prem: I already know that song.

Prem: Tito, do this (He shows his stencil drawing to Tito.) Tito, look at mine, Tito, look at this. (Prem ObsM30 p3/30.11.15)

In the excerpt above, Prem initially established the interaction with Tito to be his buddy ("You and me?") for the stencil activity. Tito took the opportunity to scaffold Prem and clarified the need to draw a story with his picture. Prem began to sing a song during the activity, which paved the way for a full interaction with Tito, who also knew the song. The significance of "culturally semiotic artefacts" (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995, p. 91), such as music and stories enable children to function socially with their peers. The example above is just one occurrence out of many where Prem used songs to initiate and sustain interactions with his friends in the classroom and playground.

Other examples also show Prem making use of cultural objects from home. His father shared that, "He really likes making aeroplane out of paper." (Kumar Int16 p21/13.10.15) Prem was later observed sharing this skill with his friends when he made a plane out of paper during an informal play interaction.

Prem: "I'm gonna make a plane. Yes! Look! It's a game!"

Prem: "Look at the plane!" [To his friend, John, as he throws it in the air.] (Prem ObsP4 p1/4.9.15)

Prem crafted a piece of paper to represent a plane, and drew attention to it by calling out to his friends, then threw it in the air. The interaction above describes the importance of "symbolic play... as a very complex system of speech through gestures" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 108) that give meaning to play objects. The execution of "representational gestures" (p. 108) is central to how children's play interactions function because it

encourages social contact. Prem's ability to create an object out of paper gave him the opportunity to initiate an interaction and use the L2 to communicate with his friend.

Prem also used his knowledge of devices to interact and scaffold others in the L2. The excerpt below shows Prem waiting for a turn on a tablet device during lunchtime.

Eddie: It's his (Prem's) turn. Prem continues to sing a song while he packs up his lunch. Ken takes the tablet.

[Prem goes back to the group then realised that Ken took a turn.]

Prem: What about me? (He wants the tablet.) You'll get into trouble. (He says to Ken.)

[Prem curiously looks at the tablet and sits with Ken.]

Prem: Thank you! Thank you very much!

[Prem seems to thank Ken for letting him sit with him.]

Eddie: Stop being mean (To Ken, who continues to play with the tablet while sitting next to Prem. Prem helps Ken score.)

Prem: Hit that! Hit that jumping frog! (To Ken, who gives the tablet to Tito.) You didn't get that running. No you can't. I know that! You have to kill it! That's a vampire.

Ken: I know.

Prem: I know that! That's a vampire! (Prem ObsP12 p2/25.9.15)

Although Prem's participation in the game was minimal, it still enabled him to interact with Ken by communicating his growing knowledge about the computer game. Missing a turn did not seem to matter to Prem, and he even seemed to appreciate being allowed to sit beside Ken. The example shows the importance of artefacts that pertain to technologies of the communities of practice that play a major part in a culture (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Lave and Wenger maintain that full engagement and participation in social processes, including those related to technology are a requirement in every community. This is especially important now that devices have become a normal part of teaching and learning in schools.

7.3.5 Summary

Having considered the main findings relevant to Prem's experiences within the home and the school domains, the main factors found to contribute to Prem's L2 learning are illustrated in Figure 3 below:

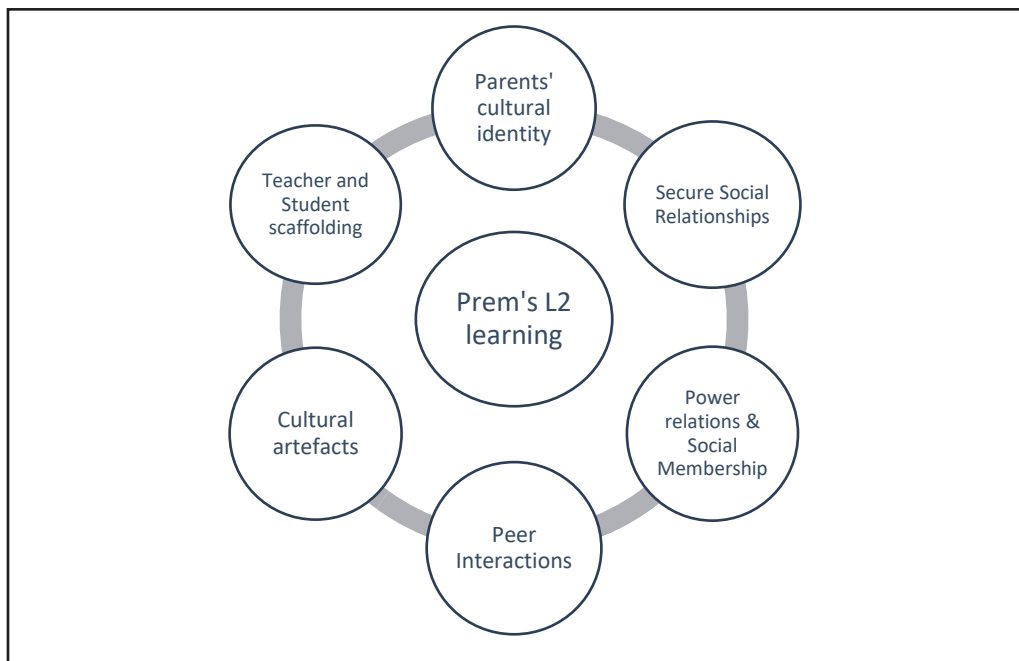


Figure 3: Influencing factors in Prem's L2 learning

The diagram reflects the fact that Prem's parents played an integral role in facilitating Prem's sociocultural interactions within his L1 peer networks both in school and the community. Their positive attitude to second language acquisition and first language use helped to emphasise the importance of each language at home, in school and in their neighbourhood. The findings showed that Prem's parents also contributed to their child's cultural identity by encouraging him to participate in activities that allowed him to socialise with New Zealand and Nepalese children alike. This enabled Prem to function effectively as a bilingual.

The findings indicate that different sociocultural strategies were employed by Prem, while engaging both in a non-participatory and participatory way in activities in the classroom and playground. Varying degrees of L2 communication and learning were evident in his interactions with the teacher and with his peers, who provided feedback, scaffolding,

access to resources, as well as various opportunities and dynamics for L2 learning. Over time, Prem also began scaffolding the learning of others.

Prem's participation in a group or pair situation relied mostly on close friendships, suggesting security around his preferred peers was important in his L2 development. Observations also demonstrate Prem's struggles in gaining social membership in particular groups because of existing power relations. However, there were instances when Prem agentively took risks and became a clear leader in the group, with the help of a variety of cultural artefacts including play objects, music, and computer technology. These artefacts became a significant part of his strategy to socially communicate and gave him additional opportunities for peer interaction and L2 learning.

Chapter 8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter begins by summarising answers to the three research questions based on the findings from this study. These findings are also discussed in the light of relevant previous research. Next, practical implications of the findings, and insights into the study's strengths and limitations are provided. Finally, possible future directions for future research are outlined, followed by some final reflections on the researcher's personal journey during this study, and concluding remarks.

8.2 Summary of the findings

This study focused on investigating how parents, teachers, and peers of ELLs mediated sociocultural interactions and scaffolding to assist with language learning. In particular, it explored how these interactions and scaffolding influenced the language learning of two ELLs, Noraj and Prem. In this section, the findings from the study are summarised in relation to each of the three research questions.

8.2.1 Research question one

How can teachers act as mediators of sociocultural interactions and scaffolding between English language learners and their peers to promote language learning?

Findings from the study show how the teachers' knowledge of the ELLs' cultural and language background helped inform their teaching approaches in the classroom and enabled them to develop an environment with classroom systems and resources conducive to second language learning. The teachers' acknowledgement of the benefits of ELLs' use of their L1 was also particularly significant in giving the children opportunities to share their cultural identity with others.

Effective teacher modelling and scaffolding, as well as affirmation of ELLs' learning efforts were valuable in facilitating their L2 learning at school. Classroom dynamics that revolved around peer mentor systems, collaborative and social play (which was often mediated by cultural artefacts), created an environment that encouraged ELLs to engage in interactions that allowed them to utilise the L2 in different learning contexts. Therefore, the findings seem to be well aligned with prior research conducted on the language development of young bilingual children, which has emphasised the importance

of social interaction and relationship experiences with teachers, and highlighted their role in L2 acquisition in the mainstream classroom (Walk, Matsup, & Giovanoni, 2015). In the current study, learning through informal classroom interactions was highlighted as being particularly beneficial to further the learners' mastery of English. This finding aligns with Gómez Lobatón's (2011) study of peer interactions that showed the need for teachers to create social dynamics that help facilitate interactional confidence amongst its language learners. In addition, the teacher's recognition of the value of allowing ELLs full control over the negotiation of their peripheral participation, leading eventually to "full participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 100), contributed to their communicative engagement in the L2, and helped deepen the teachers' own understanding of the language learning strategies these children used.

8.2.2 Research question two

How can parents act as mediators of sociocultural interactions and scaffolding between English language learners and their peers to promote language learning?

Parents appeared to play a vital role in facilitating their children's development of English language by encouraging social interactions between them and their peers at home, in school, and in the neighbouring community.

The value that parents placed on their own first language and culture helped their children develop a positive attitude to being bilinguals and contributed to them building a strong sense of cultural identity. This attitude also paved the way for a younger ELL to learn the L2 by receiving translation assistance from another ELL who spoke his L1, as mentioned by one of the fathers during an interview in the study.

By welcoming their children's friends to engage in social play and accommodating them in their home, the parents also helped to establish important wider sociocultural connections that increased their children's opportunities to interact and communicate in the L2.

Furthermore, both ELLs' parents' encouragement in sharing and promoting their own language and culture within their family served as a positive element in their children's progression as L2 learners. Using their L1 in the home, keeping their cultural traditions and beliefs intact, and keeping in contact with the wider Bhutanese community enabled both young ELLs to maintain their cultural identity. This finding illustrates the

importance of family units as influential elements of language learning as also noted in Lantolf and Thorne (2007). It is acknowledged that supporting fluency in the L1 in the home context can also be important for L2 development (Baker, 2006). In the current study, the supportive L1 context in the home was also found to enhance the two young ELLs' attitudes to both their first and second language learning, and this support was further reflected in their school lives.

8.2.3 Research question three

How can sociocultural interactions and scaffolding between English language learners and their peers act as a mediator of language learning?

The study's findings show that through mediated sociocultural and peer-to-peer interactions in the home and school communities, the ELLs gradually established their own place within their peer networks. However, there was still evidence that there were some challenges to maintaining their status in particular social groups, and this also positively influenced their motivation for L2 use. Such challenges have also been noted in Toohey's (1996) research, where hierarchies that existed in the classroom denied one young ELL the opportunity to access learning resources because of social stigma. However, although one ELL in the current study experienced struggles in his peer interactions, his resilience in developing social strategies to overcome these challenges was also evident. These findings indicate and highlight the potential for ELLs to develop agency in power-based, problematic contexts to make way for developing self-identity and confidence in communicating in the L2.

While the second language capabilities of each ELL varied, their L2 use with members of the target culture showed different participatory, sociocultural, and academic interactions with their peers. Their approaches to relationships also differed in the way they strategized to gain social acceptance and friendships. The younger ELL's confidence in the L2 was strengthened through close friendships, which seemed to be essential in encouraging his L2 communication, while the older ELL appeared to establish his identity through opportunities that highlighted his agency and ability to scaffold others' learning in the L2. These findings therefore suggest that peer relationships and opportunities for ELLs to take agency in mentoring their peers play an important role in facilitating L2 development.

The challenges each ELL encountered helped shape their identity within their respective social networks. The classroom environment, social dynamics, opportunities to take ownership of their learning, as well as how the teachers set up and provided access to resources, had a direct effect on both ELLs' agency to operate in the L2. The school had also established culturally acceptable structures that enabled all students to either function alone, with the teacher, or with peers. When both ELLs realised that learning could be approached in different ways, the potential for them to take agency and feel empowered to move towards learning and communicating successfully in the L2 was observed to occur.

At first, peripheral participation was highly evident in the younger learner and this also supported him to develop resilience in challenging situations. Non-verbal strategies, such as observation, gestures, following, and waiting, provided opportunities for obtaining fuller participation. Self-regulation and self-management opportunities that teachers facilitated in the classroom also promoted agency which encouraged ELLs not only to be scaffolded by their peers but also to scaffold their peers academically.

Research on peer interactions has highlighted the value of collaborative dialogue in assisted discovery learning to facilitate the L2, as also confirmed by Caner, Subasi and Kara (2010). Collaborative dialogue was often observed in the peer interactions that occurred during the Discovery Time activities that the two focus ELLs participated in. These activities promoted social play through the use of gestures to reinforce meaning on play objects. Both ELLs also found opportunities to gain membership in the context that they participated in through a variety of social strategies that utilised cultural artefacts, sports, and sharing of academic skills in order to initiate interactions and develop relationships in school.

The participating ELLs in this study have highlighted valuable interactional and scaffolding strategies that can be encouraged in acquiring the L2. Although there were major differences in each ELL's language stage, there were some similarities in their attitudes to receiving and providing peer scaffolding and engaging in sociocultural interactions. Because their mainstream school environment provided them with various linguistic resources, the impact of the sociocultural surroundings and dynamics facilitated by their teachers became evident in the way that they increasingly socialised and communicated in the L2 with their friends and peers. The findings described above therefore highlight how classroom dynamics, resources, sociocultural factors,

opportunities for peer scaffolding, and relationships surrounding ELLs in a mainstream school context can have a strong influence on L2 development.

8.3 Implications and recommendations

The implications of the findings outlined above led to some practical recommendations for teachers, parents of ELLs, and schools. The teachers' and parents' beliefs about the importance of first/second language and culture show the significance of the role bilingualism plays in the ELLs' sociocultural development, not just in the mainstream school environment, but also in their home and wider community.

8.3.1 Recommendations for teachers

As a result of the findings from this study, the following recommendations are made for teachers:

1. Develop strategies and approaches which focus on building sociocultural dynamics, and encouraging students to become peer mentors to ELLs, particularly in mainstream junior classrooms.
2. Be aware of the benefits of investing in an ELL's cultural and first language knowledge in order to promote inclusive cultural practices in the classroom and to nurture the ELL's cultural and self-identity.
3. Undertake professional development on teaching ELLs, not just on an academic level, but also on a sociocultural level, to facilitate awareness of the importance of social interactions in mediating L2 learning.
4. Utilise a range of resources, cultural artefacts, and activities to promote peer interactions in the classroom and encourage ELLs to move beyond partial peripheral participation, to more fully participating in the L2 community.
5. Be proactive in encouraging parents of ELLs to use their L1 at home and in school, and to share part of their culture when opportunities arise.

8.3.2 Recommendations for parents of ELLs

The following recommendations are intended to help and encourage parents of ELLs to enhance their children's identities as bilingual learners:

1. Look for ways to maintain the L1 and first culture in the family, and to develop ELLs' positive sense of identity by allowing them to operate bilingually at home, in school, and the wider community.

2. Take advantage of any opportunities to make new connections with the school and wider community, and to extend their children's social and cultural links.

8.3.3 Recommendations for schools

The following suggestions are provided to assist other schools in helping ELLs to learn effectively in the mainstream classroom environment:

1. Welcome families from other cultures, and celebrate and value their first language as part of the school culture.
2. Encourage inclusive cultural practices on a whole-school level, and extend community links to build effective relationships and support the transition of incoming ELLs and their families.

8.4 Strengths of the study

This thesis has explored and highlighted important aspects of two young ELLs' peer interactions at a micro-level – in a way that has not occurred in previous research. This study also gives the young ELLs a voice, especially those that belong to refugee families, who have previously experienced trauma in their lives. The findings show that when ELLs are given a strong sense of self-identity, they are more likely to develop resilience, generate their own strategies, take agency, and enhance their independence in their L2 environment. The positive view of the young ELLs in this study highlights their potential as learners – a view rarely seen in other literature in this area, which often views ELLs as marginalised members of society.

The interactions and L2 communications that took place between the ELLs, their peers, and teachers during my observations, has shown the value of providing opportunities for interaction which allow the development of positive social strategies. The findings have also provided important insight into what brings together what ELLs do and talk about, as well as how they learn the L2 in their day-to-day lives. Furthermore, the findings have highlighted the different dimensions of context within the wide range of communities that the ELLs operate in, and how these can make an impact on how children learn the L2.

The teachers and DP in the participating school had developed some exemplary practices for ELLs in their care, which may provide an effective model for other primary schools. In particular, the findings highlight their ability to see the relevance of robust

sociocultural dynamics in their classroom, which flow down to how the ELLs manage their interactions within their own peer networks in the playground.

8.5 Limitations of the study

The strong degree of diversity in the school was an advantage for enriching the cultural knowledge that both the DP and mainstream teachers possessed, which in turn helped them to facilitate effective classroom systems for ELLs. However, the situation of other primary schools may differ, and not all schools will provide the same support for ELLs. Data gathered from a different school with dissimilar demographics, and less experienced teachers may have obtained different results.

Other limitations may include the small number of mainstream teachers who participated in the study. Although the DP's participation helped provide useful background information, the study did not include the wider perspective of the junior school's wider teaching community.

Interviewing ESOL support staff (including teacher aides in the school) could have added further data on understanding how ELLs perform in a one-to-one teaching context, or within a group learning situation with other ELLs from different classes.

Because both ELLs in this study are of Nepalese descent, the findings cannot be generalised to a wider population, and may not apply to the language contexts for other ELLs of different ethnicity. Although one ELL participant benefitted from having bilingual skills, if there was just one child from a particular ethnicity on his/her own in the school, that could well result in different findings.

The sensitive nature of the study, due to the young age of potential participants (See 3.7) meant that not all parents and caregivers were prepared to have children in their care take part in the research. This also made collecting observation data more complex, as consent was not given by the parents of all children in the focal mainstream classrooms who might possibly interact with the ELLs.

Finally, because I was working full-time in the school during the course of the data collection stage, it was difficult to obtain release time for data gathering. This led to time constraints on when data could be collected, and did not allow for more extended observation times.

8.6 Directions for future research

The findings from this study have highlighted how teachers, parents, and classroom peers mediate language learning, and therefore contribute to a deeper awareness and understanding about the sociocultural conditions of young ELLs in specific domains. One way to extend this study would be to undertake future research in a range of primary schools with different demographics. Observations of interactions between two participant ELLs could also be useful to include in a future study.

In addition, while young, primary school ELLs have a strong need for language support, as it lays the foundation for their future competencies as second language learners, it could be interesting for future studies to look also at older ELLs within a primary school. There is a wide contrast in the social development of younger and older ELLs in the mainstream primary school setting. Age is associated with different stages of socialisation, and older ELLs' language abilities are likely to be different, especially they have had a longer period of first language and cultural experiences prior to migration. Younger ELLs also may not have had the same amount of social experience that older children have had. Furthermore, because of their sudden arrival as migrants with their families, especially if they did not have any schooling in their home country, resettlement may be challenging. Therefore, comparing young learners from two contrasting age groups could provide useful additional insights in future studies.

The practices demonstrated by mainstream teachers were observed over just a limited time. The development of teacher strategies that encourage sociocultural interactions and peer-scaffolding for younger ELLs may also differ in relation to the availability of resources. Teachers may also need to adopt a more formal approach to social engagement amongst older ELLs in the mainstream classroom, and to developing peer-scaffolding networks in this context. Therefore, more focus on teacher strategies may be useful in future research.

Ultimately, the sociocultural strategies and interactions of the ELLs identified and analysed in this study may represent only a fraction of their potential as second language learners. Therefore, more longitudinal, sociocultural studies focusing on young ELLs in a primary school setting may offer more insight into the benefits of peer-scaffolding classroom frameworks.

8.7 Notes on the researcher's personal journey

In the course of this research, I have seen the benefits and advantages of encouraging new ELLs to engage socially with their peers. As I am now working in a new school which considers the importance of raising the value of first culture and language school-wide, undertaking this thesis has given me some useful first-hand experience of seeing how this develops ELLs' self-identity and enhances their ability to communicate in the L2. Rich interactions in a supportive environment enabled the ELLs in my current class to communicate in the L2, break down social and language barriers, and increase self-esteem. Encouraging them to share their individual skills, part of their culture, and language to the class also empowers them as learners, and develops their self-identity. In this context I have also looked for more opportunities to create and extend important links with their families.

In spite of the challenges in implementing a study with young participants from a non-English speaking background, I was able to secure much needed support from the teacher participants, who also offered support to my study by providing information to parents and caregivers and collecting their consent forms. My insider role as a teacher in the senior school was also of immense help in gaining access into the research site, as I was not perceived as a stranger.

The biggest impact that I now realise sociocultural interactions have on the ELLs currently in my care is reflected in their academic progress and social confidence. Although functioning in a new environment initially creates some barriers, the ELLs are more able to overcome the challenges when there is support from peers, teachers, and the sociocultural dynamics in the classroom and school community.

8.8 Concluding remarks

The study has highlighted several elements that have a significant impact on both of the participating ELLs' L2 use and acquisition. Sociocultural interactions between the ELLs and their peers appeared to eventuate through active participation in social networks. This interaction encouraged L2 use, but relational challenges also impeded the younger ELL's ability to socially and linguistically engage with his peers probably because he was still establishing his identity. The desire for both ELLs to belong to the class and school community, and to interact with their peers, however, also brought to the fore particular

strategies that helped them to break into the existing social structures that existed within their mainstream environment.

The dynamics of mediations between teachers, parents, and student peers therefore can be seen as fluid, constantly changing, and does not appear in isolation. When values parents encouraged in the home environment are also supported by teachers, this may influence practices in the classroom environment. These influences are interwoven as part of a holistic network, which can contribute positively to an ELL's language acquisition. Thus, disregarding individualistic beliefs (Bruner, 1986) which may exist in the school culture can, in turn, promote the communal nature of socialisation.

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APPENDICES

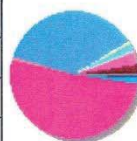
Appendix A: School Demographics

Number of pupils at

015-02-03

| Age Ethnic 1 | 5 | | 6 | | 7 | | 8 | | 9 | | 10 | | 11 | | 12 | |
|----------------------------|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Dutch | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| Other Asian | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| British / Irish | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| Other Groups | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| NZ European | 2 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 11 | 13 | 13 | 15 | 12 | 8 | 14 | 3 | 13 | 11 | 6 | 12 |
| Fijian | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Chinese | | | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | |
| NZ Maori | 4 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 3 | 12 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 8 |
| Niue | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Samoan | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 2 | | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Cook Isl Maori | 1 | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| Tongan | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Khmer/Kampuchean/Cambodian | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No entry | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTALS | 9 | 15 | 20 | 12 | 20 | 27 | 25 | 20 | 24 | 17 | 26 | 12 | 20 | 22 | 11 | 21 |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------|------------|-----|----------|
| Dutch | 0 Males | 1 Females | 1 | or 0.3% |
| Other Asian | 1 Males | 2 Females | 3 | or 1.0% |
| British / Irish | 1 Males | 0 Females | 1 | or 0.3% |
| Other Groups | 2 Males | 1 Females | 3 | or 1.0% |
| NZ European | 77 Males | 78 Females | 155 | or 51.5% |
| Fijian | 1 Males | 0 Females | 1 | or 0.3% |
| Chinese | 1 Males | 1 Females | 2 | or 0.7% |
| NZ Maori | 60 Males | 50 Females | 110 | or 36.5% |
| Niue | 1 Males | 0 Females | 1 | or 0.3% |
| Samoan | 1 Males | 6 Females | 7 | or 2.3% |
| Cook Isl Maori | 6 Males | 3 Females | 9 | or 3.0% |
| Tongan | 2 Males | 4 Females | 6 | or 2.0% |
| Khmer/Kampuchean/Cambodian | 1 Males | 0 Females | 1 | or 0.3% |
| No entry | 1 Males | 0 Females | 1 | or 0.3% |



| | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Dutch | 0.3 % |
| * Other Asian | 1.0 % |
| British / Irish | 0.3 % |
| * Other Groups | 1.0 % |
| NZ European | 51.5 % |
| Fijian | 0.3 % |
| * Chinese | 0.7 % |
| NZ Maori | 36.5 % |
| Niue | 0.3 % |
| Samoan | 2.3 % |
| Cook Isl Maori | 3.0 % |
| * Tongan | 2.0 % |
| * Khmer/Kampuchean/Cambodian | 0.3 % |
| No entry | 0.3 % |

ELLs: 5%

Printed: 2015-02-03

Appendix B: Board of Trustees Approval Letters for Study and Database Use



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

14 August 2015

Board of Trustees

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to request consent to undertake a research project for a Master of Philosophy Degree in Second Language Teaching at Massey University. If you agree, I would like to conduct my study in your school, particularly in the junior syndicate. The aim of the study is to provide teachers with strategies and insights into a greater understanding of the interactive nature of language acquisition among English Language Learners (ELLs) in a primary school setting.

Participants sought for this study are emergent learners of English who are in mainstream classrooms. During the study, it is my intention to make unobtrusive observations of young ELLs in interaction with peers during classroom lessons, playground and Physical Education sessions. I will take notes during the observations when appropriate. The Deputy Principal (SENCO), classroom teachers of the ELLs, and the parents of the ELLs will also be invited to participate in one interview each. Parent and teacher permission will be sought. To protect the anonymity of the school and all participants, pseudonyms will be used throughout the project.

Consent will be sought from all participants according to the criteria set out by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. Participation is entirely voluntary and participants will be able to withdraw from the study at any time up to the completion of the data collection without disadvantage of any kind.

I look forward to conducting this research in your school. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [redacted] es@xtra.co.nz, if you would like further information about the research. You can contact my supervisors, Dr. Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire at [redacted] .nz, pl [redacted] and Dr. Penny Haworth at [redacted] phone: [redacted]

It is hoped that you might find this study useful in the future to provide teachers valuable knowledge and strategies to promote effective language acquisition among ESL students in

Sincerely yours,

Vera Gonzales

cc: Principal
Deputy Principal (SENCO)
Deputy Principal

I certify that this is a true and accurate copy.
Principal

Approved

14/1/2015

School of Humanities

Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T 06 356 9099 extn 81902 F 06 350 5662 <http://soh.massey.ac.nz>



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

14 August 2015

LETTER REQUESTING APPROVAL FOR DATABASE USE

14 August 2015

Board of Trustees

Dear Members of the Board,

Kia ora. I am writing to request approval for use of School's database. This request is being sought in order to gather pertinent information about the school's intake of immigrant students, especially from the refugee or immigrant population in region.

I am seeking the above-mentioned information for my research project that I will be undertaking towards a Masters degree in Philosophy, Second Language Teaching, at Massey University, Palmerston North. The information that I will be using for the proposed thesis will only reflect ethnicity demographics and statistics data in your school and will not divulge any personal information about student names and gender. The study will be entirely anonymous and pseudonyms will be used to protect your institution and student population's privacy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [redacted] s@xtra.co.nz, if you would like further information about the research project. Alternatively you can contact my supervisors, [redacted] B hone: (06) 356 9099 extn 81902 it ne: (06)

Sincerely yours,

Vera Gonzales

cc: Principal
Deputy Principal (SENCO)
Deputy Principal

I certify that this is a true and accurate copy.
Principal

Approved

19/7/2015

School of Humanities

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Appendix C: Covering Letter and Consent form for Child Participants, Parents and Legal Guardians



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

COVERING LETTER FOR PARENTS

Dear Parents of _____,

Your school is taking part in a Massey University research study.

I am currently studying towards a Master's Degree in Second Language Teaching, for the School of Humanities at Massey University in Palmerston North. I am interested in exploring how English language learners (ELLs) learn English through their interactions with their peers both in and outside the classroom.

I am interested in doing some research on an ELL in your child's class. I would like to include your child, _____, in my research. This will involve observing four of his/her lessons with their classroom teacher. Some of your child's playtime activities will also be observed because I am interested in the language learnt among ELL students and their peers during interactions in the playground.

I am seeking your consent to include your child in my observations of the class. Consent means that you will give the researcher permission to make observations of your child.

Attached is an information letter and consent form that explains the research study and who to contact if you have any questions about the study.

If you are a parent of an ELL child, you have a separate information letter and consent form for you and your child. An interpreter may be requested to help you understand the information about the study. Please call the researcher on the number below to arrange this.

Please read all the documents attached carefully before signing it. I would like the consent form returned by _____ please.

If you have any questions about the project, you can contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Thank you for your time.

Best regards,

Ms. Vera Gonzales



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

**A Study on Peer Scaffolding and Sociocultural Interactions in a New Zealand
Primary School**

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR CHILD PARTICIPANTS IN CLASS

My parents have talked to me about Ms. Gonzales' study. I understand about the study and I know that I can ask further questions at any time.

I agree to being observed as part of the study. (YES/NO)

Child's name:

Parent/Guardian's

names

Parent/Guardian's

signature

Date:

Parent/Guardian's

signature

Date:



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

**A Study on Peer Scaffolding and Sociocultural Interactions in a New Zealand
Primary School**

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me.
My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask
further questions at any time.

I give permission for the researcher to observe my child. (YES/NO)

I give permission for the researcher to talk to the teacher about my child. (YES/NO)

I give permission for the researcher to talk to the Deputy Principal about my child.
(YES/NO)

I have discussed the study with my child and he/she is happy to participate. (YES/NO)

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.
(YES/NO)

Child's name:

Parent/Guardian's
names

Parent/Guardian's
signature

Date:

Parent/Guardian's

signature

Date:

.....

I wish to receive a summary of the findings when the study is completed. (YES/NO)

The summary can be sent to me at _____ (email or
postal address)

Appendix D: Information Sheets for Parents and Legal Guardians



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

A Study of Peer Scaffolding and Sociocultural Interactions in a New Zealand Primary School

Information Sheet for Parents/Legal Guardians

My name is Vera Gonzales and I am a part-time masters student in Massey University's School of Humanities. As part of my study, I am undertaking a project to investigate how social interactions with peers in and outside the classroom help English language learners (ELLs) learn English. The project will be conducted in fulfilment of a Master of Philosophy, Second Language Teaching.

The project will be conducted in this school in order to help teachers understand how ELLs learn English from their classmates through their social interactions in the classroom, the playground and during Physical Education sessions. Observations in participating classes, as well as adult interviews will be held in Term 3 and 4. You are invited to participate and take part in this study.

An invitation to participate in the research will be made to ELL students and their parents, their classmates, classroom teachers, and the Deputy Principal.

As part of this project, I intend to seek the consent of two ELLs between 6-8 years old, their parent/s, their classroom teachers, other students who belong to an ELLs' class, and the Deputy Principal. Only students who have given consent will be observed during the study. Giving consent means that participants will give permission to the researcher to undertake observations and interviews. A potential total of 9 main participants will be involved in the project. The qualitative approach to the study requires only a small number of ELLs to be observed. Interviews on adult participants will only be required to seek background information about the ELLs English language learning experiences.

As a parent, you will be requested to give consent to the researcher to make observations in your child's/ELL child's classroom lessons, playground activities and Physical Education sessions. You are also asked to discuss the study with your child. Your child will be observed for a maximum of 10 hours in Term 3 and 4. All observations will be recorded through written notes. If your child is not an ELL and you do not choose for him/her to take part in this study, observed interactions that involve him/her will not be considered for the project. Your child will not be observed while I am in the teaching role.

As an ELL's parent participant in the study, you will be interviewed at a time most convenient to you. You will be interviewed for a maximum of one hour in a suitable venue at the school. Questions will revolve around your child's English learning and background information that will be relevant to the study. A sound recording device will be used to record responses to interview questions.

There will be no financial gain or cost involved during the project.

Only relevant classroom and informal observations between the ELL and their peers will be used for the study. To protect your child's identity, false names will be used throughout the project. Background information and observations will be carefully stored by the researcher's supervisors after the study is completed. The researcher will be responsible for transcribing voice recordings. All participants, including the school, will not have their name documented in the finalized thesis. You have the right to make any changes to the collected data as you see fit within a two-week period after the data has been collected.

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time during Term 3 or 4;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview (only for ELL's parents);

- be given access to a summary of the project findings (translated copies will be provided upon request) when it is concluded.

If you have any questions regarding the project, please contact Vera Gonzales at [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]. Alternatively you can contact my supervisors, Dr. Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire at A.Berardi-Wiltshire@massey.ac.nz, phone: [REDACTED] and Dr. Penny Haworth at P.A.Haworth@massey.ac.nz, phone: [REDACTED].

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 15/37. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Prof Julie Boddy, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 86055, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

Thank you for your time.

Vera Gonzales

Massey University School of Humanities

Appendix E: Translated Covering Letter, Information Sheet, and Consent Form



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

A Study of Peer Scaffolding and Sociocultural Interactions in a New Zealand Primary School Information Sheet for Parents/Legal Guardians

मेरो नाम VeraGonzales हो र म मेसे विश्वविद्यालयमा मानवीयता र सामाजिक बिज्ञनकी बिधार्थी हु। मेरो पडाइको सिलसिलामा, मौले एउटा योजना दुवारा सामाजिक इस्तरमा समकक्षा साथिसंग कक्षा बाहिर अनी भित्र अंग्रेजी भाषा सिक्ने हरूलाई कसरि सिक्न सहयोग पुग्छ भन्ने जाच गरने योजना गरेकी छु।

ये योजना चै दोश्रो भाषा सिकाइनेमा दर्शनको मास्टर तहमा पुर्ति को लागि सन्चालन गरिन्छ ।

यो योजना एस बिध्यलयमा सन्चालन गरिन्छ कारण, कसरि आंग्रेजी भाषा सिक्नेहरुले वाहाहरुको समकक्ष्य साथि बाट समाजिक अन्तर्क्रिया गरि कक्षाकोठामा, खेलमैदामा र शारिरीक शिक्षा सत्रमा सिक्छन् भन्ने शिक्षकलाई सहयोग पुगिर्याउन । कक्षामा सहभागिता दूवारा निरिक्षण अनी अविभावक अन्तरवार्ता सबै Term 3 तो 4 मा गरिन्छ । हजुरलाई यो पडाइमा भागलिने निमन्त्रना गरिन्छ ।

यो पडाइमा भाग लिने, आंग्रेजी भाषा सिक्ने, उनिका अबिवाक्क, उनिका समकक्ष्य साथि, कक्षा गुरु र सह प्रध्यपक् सबैलाई निमन्त्रना गरिन्छ।

यो योजनाको भागमा मैले दुइ जाना 6 देखि 7 उमेरका आंग्रेजी भाषा सिक्ने बिधार्थी, उनका अबिवाक्क, शिक्षाक, अरु उहि कक्षाका बिधार्थीहरु र सह प्रध्यपक संग अनुमति लिने चाहाना गरेकी छु । जो बिधार्थीले अनुमति दिएको छ उसलाई मात्र निरिक्षण गरिन्छ । अनुमति दिनु भनेको सहभागीहरुले आनुसन्धान कर्ता लाइ निरिक्षण र अन्तरबार्ता गर्न लाइ मन्जुर हुनु हो । यो योजनामा क्षामता भएका जम्मा 9 जाना सहभागीहरु समाबेस हुन्छन् । गुणस्तरिया फल निकाल्नका लागि सनो सडखियामा आंग्रेजी भाषा सिक्ने बिधार्थी लाई लिइन्छ । अबिवाक्क लाइ अन्तरबार्ता लिनु चै नानिहरुको आंग्रेजी भाषाको अनुभाव बुझ्नु मत्र हो ।

हजुरलाई अबिवाक्कका नाताले आफ्नु नानिको कक्षाकोठा पाठ, खेलमौदानका क्लयकलापहरु र शारिरीक शिक्षा सत्रहरुमा आनुसन्धान कर्ता लाइ निरिक्षण गर्न अनुमति दिन बिन्ति गरिन्छ। हजुरलाई अप्नु नानि संग पनि सरसल्लाहा गर्नु भनिन्छ। तपाइको नानिलाइ बेसिमा 10 घन्ट जति Term - 3 तो 4 मा निरिक्षण गरिन्छ। सबै निरिक्षण लाइ लिखित नोट बनाइन्छ। यदि तपाइको नानि आंग्रेजी भाषा सिक्नेमा छैनन अनि तपाइले नानिलाइ यो पडाइमा भागलिने अनुमति दिनुभएन भने नानिलाइ यो योजनामा समाबेस गरिने छैन। मेरो पडाइको कक्षामा तपाइको नानिलाइ निरिक्षण गरिन्दैन।

तपाइलाई यो योजनाको आंग्रेजी भाषा सिक्ने सहभागि अविभावक मा तपाइलाई आफ्नो मिल्दो समयामा अन्तरबार्ता गरिन्छ। तपाइलाई बडिमा 1 घन्ट जति विध्यालयको सजिलो ठाउमा अन्तरबार्ता गरिन्छ। प्रश्नहरु नानिको आंग्रेजी भाषा सिक्ने सम्बन्धमा सुचना मुलक हुन्छन्। अन्तरबार्ताका प्रश्नहरु धुवानी रेकोर्ड गर्ने यन्त्र

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द्वारा रेकोर्ड गरिन्छ।

यो योजनामा कुनैपनि आर्थिक कमाउनु वा गुमाउनु छैन।

यो पडाइमा आंग्रेजि भाषा सिक्नेहरु र उनिका साथिहरु लाइ मात्र सम्बन्धित कक्षाकोठा र अनौपचारिक निरिक्षण प्रयोग गरिन्छ। तपाइको नानिको परिचयालाई सुरक्षा गर्न, यो योजनाभरिने झुटो नाम लगाइन्छ। यो पडाइ सकिए पछि यस्मा भएको सुचना र निरिक्षण लाई अनुसन्धान कर्ताको सुपरिक्षकले राम्रो संग राखनेछन्। धुवानी रेकोर्ड बाट लिखित रुपमा लान अनुसन्धान कर्ताको जिम्मेवर हुनेछ। यो शोधग्रन्थको पूर्णतामा सबै सहभागि लगाएत विध्यालयको पनि नाम हुने छैन। तपाईसङग अन्तरबार्ता लीए पछाडी यदि केही फेरबदल गर्नु परोभने तपाईले दुइ हप्ता भित्रमा गर्न सक्नु हुन्छ।

तपाईले यो निमन्त्रना मान्ने पछि भन्ने छैन। यदि सहभागि हुने बिचार गर्नु भयोभने तपाई संग निम्न अधिकार हुन्छन्।

कुनैपनि प्रश्नको उत्तर नदिन सक्नु हुन्छ।

Term - ३ तो ४ भरिमा कुनै पनि समयमा यो पडाइबाट छोडन सक्नु हुन्छ।

सहभागिताको समयमा यो पडाइ सम्बन्धि कुनै पनि बेलामा कुनै पनि प्रश्न सोध्न सक्नु हुन्छ।

तपाईले अनुसन्धान कर्ता लाई अनुमति नदिए सम्म तपाईको नाम लगाईदैन सुचनाहरु आपसि बुझाबुज्मा राखिन्छ।

अन्तरबार्ताको कुनै पनि समयमा धुवानी रेकोर्ड लाई बन्द गर्न भन्न सक्नु हुन्छ।

जब यो योजना सकिएपछि हजुरले एस्को नतिजाको सारंश हेर्न सक्नु हुन्छ।

तपाइलाई यो योजना बारे केही प्रश्नहरु भएमा Vera Gonzales लाई

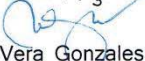
अथवा इमेल:

मा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोला। तपाईले मेरो सुपरिक्षकहरु Dr. Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire र Dr. Penny Haworth लाई पनि निम्न ठेगानामा सम्पर्क गर्न सक्नु हुन्छ। इमेल: A.Berardi-Wiltshire@massey.co.nz phone: (06) 356 9099 ext. 83558. P.A.Haworth@massey.ac.nz Phone: (06) 356 9099 ext. 84446.

यो योजनाको निबेदन १५/१७ लाई मेसे विश्वविध्यालय मानवीय आचार सहिता समिती

Southern B ले पुनरावलोकन गरेर स्वीकृत गरेको हो। तपाइलाई यो योजना सन्चालन सम्बन्धमा केही चासो भएमा निम्न प्रध्यपकलाई सम्पर्क गर्नुहोला। Prof Julie Boddy, Chair Massey University Human Ethic Committee: Southern B, telephone (06) 350 5799 ext. 86055, email humanethicsouthb@massey.co.nz

धन्यबाद हजुरको समय लाई


Vera Gonzales

मेसे विश्वविध्यालय मानवीयता र सामाजिक बिज्ञान विध्यालय

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MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

A Study of Peer Scaffolding and Sociocultural Interactions in a New Zealand Primary School

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER'S PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS

यो पडाइको बारेमा मलाई सबै सुचन दिईएको थियो। एदी मलाई केहि प्रश्नहरु भएमा मैले वहाका निरिक्षक लाइ सोध्न सकछु भन्ने मैले बुझे।

मैले मेरो नानि संग सरसल्लाहा गरे र उनि यो पडाइमा भागलिन खुशि छन् । (YES/NO)

मैले आनुसन्धान कर्ता लाइ मरो ननिको आनुशरण गर्न अनुमति दिए। (YES/NO)

मैले आनुसन्धान कर्ता लाइ मरो ननिको बारेमा शिक्षक संग सोध्ने अनुमति दिए। (YES/NO)

मैले आनुसन्धान कर्ता लाइ मरो ननिको बारेमा सह प्रध्यपक संग सोध्ने अनुमति दिए। (YES/NO)

म मेरो ननिको प्रिस्टभुमि सुचना सम्बन्धि अन्तरवार्ता गर्न मन्जुर छु अनि मैले बुझे यो विध्यालयमा बेवास्था गरिन्छ । (YES/NO)

म यो अन्तरवार्तालाइ धुवानी रेकोर्ड हुन मन्जुर छु । (YES/NO)

सुचना पत्रमा दिएको सर्थ का आधारमा म यो पडाइमा भाग लिन मन्जुर छु । (YES/NO)

ननिको नाम: मिती:

अविभावकको नाम: मिती:

अविभावकको हस्तलिपि: मिती:

जव पडाइ सकिए पछी म एसको परिणामको सारंश बुझ्न चाहान्छु । (YES/NO)

म यो सारंश अंग्रेजी/नेपाली भाषामा पड्न चाहन्छु अनि यो निम्न ठेगानामा पठाउनु होला ।

.....
.....

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MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

A Study of Peer Scaffolding and Sociocultural Interactions in a New Zealand Primary School

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR ESOL CHILD PARTICIPANTS IN CLASS

Ms. Gonzales को पडाइको बारेमा मेरा अविभावकले मलाई भन्नुभएको थियो ।
मैले वहाको पडाइ बारे बुझे र मैले चहेमा अगाडि प्रश्न सोध्न सकछु ।

म वहाको पडाइमा अनूसरणीया हुन मन्जूर छु । (YES/NO)

नानिको नाम: मिति:

अविभावकको नाम: मिति:

अविभावकको हस्तलिपि: मिति:

School of Humanities

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Appendix F: Information Sheet for Participant Teachers



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

A Study on Peer Scaffolding and Sociocultural Interactions in a New Zealand Primary School

Information Sheet for Teacher Participants

My name is Vera Gonzales and I am a part-time masters student in Massey University's School of Humanities. As part of my study, I am undertaking a project to investigate how social interactions with peers in and outside the classroom help English language learners (ELLs) learn English. The project will be conducted in fulfilment of a Master of Philosophy, Second Language Teaching.

The project will be conducted in this school in order to help teachers understand how ELLs learn English from their classmates through their social interactions in the classroom and informal school settings. Observations in participating classes, as well as adult interviews will be held in Term 3 and 4. You are invited to participate and take part in this study.

An invitation to participate in the research will be made to ELL students and their parents, their classmates, classroom teachers, and the Deputy Principal.

As part of this project, I intend to seek the consent of two ELLs between 6-8 years old, their parent/s, their classroom teachers, other students who belong to an ELLs' class, and the Deputy Principal. Only students who have given consent will be observed during the study. Giving consent means that participants will give permission to the researcher to undertake observations and/or interviews. A potential total of 9 main participants will be involved in the project. The qualitative approach to the study requires only a small number of ELLs to be observed. Interviews on adult participants will only be required to seek background information about the ELLs' English language learning experiences.

Should you agree to take part in this study, classroom and outside interactions between an ELL and his peers will be observed in Term 3 and 4 for a maximum of 10 hours. The researcher will be discussing the most suitable time for you to have these observations take place. One or two of the lessons observed will be a Physical Education (P.E.) session that will be taught in the school grounds. All observations will be recorded by means of written notes.

You will also be asked to take part in one semi-structured, one-on-one interview which will last for a maximum of one hour. The main questions will revolve around background information about your ELL's English language learning experiences around peer scaffolding and sociocultural interactions. The interview might also include your opinions and outlook on the above-mentioned topics. You will also be asked about strategies you use to help ELLs learn English in your class. The interview will be arranged at a schedule that is most convenient to you, in Term 3 or 4, in an agreed venue in school that suits you.

There will be no financial gain or cost involved during the project.

Only relevant classroom and informal observations between the ELL and their peers will be used for the study. Pseudonyms will be used throughout the project to protect you and your students' privacy. Background information and observations will be carefully stored by the researcher's supervisors after the study is completed. I will be responsible for transcribing voice recordings. You have the right to make any changes to the collected data as you see fit within a two-week period after the data has been collected.

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time during Term 3 or 4;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings

If you have any questions regarding the project, please contact Vera Gonzales at [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]. Alternatively you can contact my supervisors, Dr. Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and Dr. Penny Haworth at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 15/37. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Prof Julie Boddy, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 86055, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Thank you for your time.

Vera Gonzales

Massey University School of Humanities



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

**A Study on Peer Scaffolding and Sociocultural Interactions in a New Zealand
Primary School**

TEACHER PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me.
My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask
further questions at any time.

I give permission for the researcher to observe my lessons. (YES/NO)

I agree to be interviewed for the study. (YES/NO)

I agree to the interview being sound recorded. (YES/NO)

I wish to have my recordings returned to me. (YES/NO)

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.
(YES/NO)

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

I wish to receive a summary of the findings when the study is completed. (YES/NO)

The summary can be sent to me at _____ (email or
postal address)

Appendix G: Information Sheet and Consent Form for Deputy Principal



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

A Study on Peer Scaffolding and Sociocultural Interactions in a New Zealand Primary School

Information Sheet for the Deputy Principal

My name is Vera Gonzales and I am a part-time masters student in Massey University's School of Humanities. As part of my study, I am undertaking a project to investigate how social interactions with peers in and outside the classroom help English language learners (ELLs) learn English. The project will be conducted in fulfilment of a Master of Philosophy, Second Language Teaching.

The project will be conducted in this school in order to help teachers understand how ELLs learn English from their classmates through their social interactions in the classroom and informal school settings. Observations in participating classes, as well as adult interviews will be held in Term 3 and 4. You are invited to participate and take part in this study.

An invitation to participate in the research will be made to ELL students and their parents, their classmates, classroom teachers, and the Deputy Principal.

As part of this project, I intend to seek the consent of two ELLs between 6-8 years old, their parent/s, their classroom teachers, other students who belong to an ELLs' class, and the Deputy Principal. Only students who have given consent will be observed during the study. Giving consent means that participants will give permission to the researcher to undertake observations and/or interviews. A potential total of 9 main participants will be involved in the project. The qualitative approach to the study requires only a small number of ELLs to be observed. Interviews on adult participants will only be required to seek background information about the ELLs English language learning experiences.

Should you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to take part in a semi-structured, one-on-one interview which last for a maximum of one hour. The main questions will revolve around your background knowledge on ESL students enrolled in the school, and steps that you, as part of the management team, endeavour to undertake for these students' language learning, as well as their families' adjustment to the wider school community. The interview might also include your opinions and outlook on the above-mentioned topics. A small voice recorder will be used to record responses to interview questions. The interview will be arranged on a schedule that is most convenient to you, in Term 3 or 4, in an agreed venue in school that best suits you.

There will be no financial gain or cost involved during the project.

Pseudonyms will be used throughout the project to protect your privacy. Background information and observations will be carefully stored by the researcher's supervisors after the study is completed. I will be responsible for transcribing voice recordings. You have the right to make any changes to the collected data as you see fit within a two-week period after the data has been collected.

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question; withdraw from the study at any time during Term 3 or 4;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings

If you have any questions regarding the project, please contact Vera Gonzales at [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]. Alternatively you can contact my supervisors, Dr. Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire at [REDACTED] and Dr. Penny Haworth at P [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 15/37. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Prof Julie Boddy, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 86055, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Thank you for your time.

Vera Gonzales

Massey University School of Humanities



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

**A Study on Peer Scaffolding and Sociocultural Interactions in a New Zealand
Primary School**

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me.
My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask
further questions at any time.

I agree to be interviewed for the study. (YES/NO)

I agree to the interview being sound recorded. (YES/NO)

I wish to have my recordings returned to me. (YES/NO)

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.
(YES/NO)

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

I wish to receive a summary of the findings when the study is completed. (YES/NO)

The summary can be sent to me at _____ (email or
postal address)

Appendix H: Data Collection Table

Data Collection Table

| Data no. | Date | Data Type | Location | Duration | Participants (All names indicated are pseudonyms) |
|----------|----------|-------------|------------|----------|--|
| 1. | 02.09.15 | observation | playground | 30 mins. | Prem, John |
| 2. | 04.09.15 | observation | playground | 30 mins. | Prem, Eddie, John |
| 3. | 04.09.15 | observation | classroom | 20 mins. | Prem, Tito |
| 4. | 10.09.15 | observation | classroom | 30 mins. | Prem, Tito, Ms. Campbell, Kane, Gary |
| 5. | 10.09.15 | observation | classroom | 20 mins. | Noraj, Ms. Rogers, Nancy |
| 6. | 11.09.15 | observation | classroom | 40 mins. | Ms. Campbell, Prem, Sally, John, Tito |
| 7. | 16.09.15 | observation | playground | 30 mins. | Prem, John, Ethan |
| 8. | 16.09.15 | observation | playground | 30 mins. | Prem, Tito |
| 9. | 17.09.15 | observation | classroom | 30 mins. | Ms. Rogers, Noraj, Dean |
| 10. | 22.09.15 | observation | playground | 20 mins. | Prem, Ethan, John |
| 11. | 24.09.15 | observation | classroom | 20 mins. | Prem, Ethan, John |
| 12. | 25.09.15 | observation | playground | 15 mins. | Prem, Eddie, Ken, Tito, |
| 13. | 25.09.15 | observation | classroom | 20 mins. | Ms. Campbell, Prem, John, Tito |
| 14. | 30.09.15 | observation | classroom | 30 mins. | Ms. Campbell, Prem, John |
| 15. | 30.09.15 | observation | classroom | 30 mins. | Ms. Rogers, Noraj, Kane |

| | | | | | |
|-----|----------|-------------|------------|----------|---|
| 16. | 13.10.15 | interview | residence | 1 hour | Kumar (father), Maya (mother) |
| 17. | 15.10.15 | observation | playground | 15 mins. | Prem, Noraj, Ethan, Tito, Arnold |
| 18. | 15.10.15 | observation | classroom | 15 mins. | Ms. Campbell, Prem, Tito, Sally |
| 19. | 16.10.15 | Interview | school | 1 hour | Mrs. Rogers (Teacher) |
| 20. | 27.10.15 | observation | classroom | 30 mins. | Noraj, Tahu, Nancy, Ms. Rogers, Kane |
| 21. | 02.11.15 | observation | classroom | 40 mins. | Ms. Campbell, Ric, Tito, |
| 22. | 05.11.15 | observation | playground | 15 mins. | Prem, Tito, Ethan, Sally, John |
| 23. | 05.11.15 | observation | playground | 15 mins. | Noraj, Ken, John, Prem, |
| 24. | 05.11.15 | interview | residence | 1 hour | Ros (father), Sita (mother), interpreter |
| 25. | 13.11.15 | interview | school | 1 hour | Ms. Campbell (Teacher) |
| 26. | 17.11.15 | observation | playground | 10 mins. | Prem, Ric, Noraj |
| 27. | 20.11.15 | observation | playground | 15 mins. | Prem, Tito, Eddie, Ken |
| 28. | 20.11.15 | observation | classroom | 15 mins. | Prem, Tito, Lily, Anna |
| 29. | 24.11.15 | observation | playground | 20 mins. | Prem, Ethan, Tito, John, Noraj, Lee |
| 30. | 30.11.15 | observation | classroom | 40 mins. | Ms. Campbell, Prem, Ethan, Ric, Ken, Tito |
| 31. | 30.11.15 | observation | classroom | 40 mins. | Noraj, Ms. Rogers, Lee, Kane, |
| 32. | 30.11.15 | Interview | school | 1 hour | Mrs. Keith (DP) |

Appendix I: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PARENT PARTICIPANTS

(Some of the questions below may or may not be taken up as this is a semi-structured interview design)

NAME:

DATE:

TRANSLATOR:

1. When did you move to New Zealand?
2. Why did you move to New Zealand?
3. Do you have any other family here?
4. Did your child go to school in your home country?
5. What was school like over there? Can you please describe it?
6. Can you please describe your home life in your home country?
7. Did your child have many friends in the neighbourhood in your home country?
8. Do you still speak your native language at home with your children?
9. Do you let your child speak his own language in school? Does he share cultural / or things from your country with his teacher and friends?
10. Why did you choose this school for your child?
11. Do you know anyone in the school?
12. How is your child in school?
13. Is he happy?
14. What do you think makes your child happy in school?
15. Did your child have any problems in his first few days of school here?
16. Does he still have problems understanding some of his classmates?
17. Who do you go to for help in the school?
18. Does your child have friends in school? Does he learn some English from them?
19. Do you notice any new English words that he has learnt in school?
20. How do you think he learnt these new words?
21. What things does he like doing with his friends in the classroom and on the playground?
22. Does he have a favourite thing to do at home or in school? A game or activity?
23. Does he play with some of his friends or classmates after school?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

NAME:

DATE:

(Some of the questions below may or may not be taken up as this is a semi-structured interview design)

1. What kind of ESOL training was provided to you by the school?
2. What strategies offered by the ESOL PD are most useful to you?
3. What kind of experiences can you share about teaching English language learners (ELLs)?
4. Have you taught many ELLs during your time in the school?
5. Have you encountered any difficulties, especially with very young and emergent English language learners?
6. What solutions or strategies have you tried to manage such difficulties? What worked well for you?
7. What can you share about your professional relationship with the English language learner's families?
8. How do you initiate contact with these families?
9. Do they actively participate in Student-led Conferences or informal meetings?
10. Do they bring an interpreter or translator in during one-to-one meetings with you?
11. What background information about the English language learner and his family can you provide?
12. How do you cater for the language needs of ELLs in your class?
13. How can you describe best practice in the language education of ESOL students?
14. What is your opinion on peer scaffolding and social interactions among ELLs and their classmates? Do you think that there is a place for this in the mainstream classroom?

Deputy Principal Interview statements

- The role of the Deputy Principal as Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) in the education of ELLs
- Steps undertaken in ensuring a seamless transition for new ELLs and their families
- Staff involvement in ensuring a seamless transition for new ELLs and their families
- Best practice in the language education of ELLs
- Effective social and academic learning strategies or motivation for ELLs

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

(Some of the questions below may or may not be taken up as this is a semi-structured interview design)

NAME:

DATE:

1. What is your role in coordinating the learning and teaching of ELLs in the school?
2. Can you describe your professional and social links with the wider ESOL community?
3. What kind of background knowledge do you have regarding our ESOL families in the school?
4. Are families familiar with what you can offer as SENCO to new ESOL families?
5. How do these links flow into mainstream classrooms?
6. Do you have any expectations from teachers on how they should cater to ESOL students, especially emergent English language learners (ELLs)?
7. What resources were provided to you in ensuring that language learning is delivered appropriately in the mainstream classroom?
8. How are the needs of parents and legal guardians of ESOL students addressed?
9. Have you encountered any social and academic challenges in the past regarding ESOL students and their families?
10. How were these problems solved?
11. How can you describe best practice in the language education of ESOL students?
12. What is your opinion on peer scaffolding and social interactions among ELLs and their classmates? Do you think that there is a place for this in the mainstream classroom?

Appendix J: Confidentiality Agreement for Interpreter/Translator



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

Confidentiality Agreement

For an interpreter/translator

Project title: A Study on Peer Scaffolding and Sociocultural Interactions in a New Zealand Primary School

Project Supervisor: Dr. Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire & Dr. Penny Haworth

Researcher: Vera Gonzales

- ☐ I understand that the interviews meetings or material I will be asked to translate is confidential.
- ☐ I understand that the content of the interviews meetings or material can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ☐ I will not keep any copies of the translations nor allow third parties access to them.

Translator's signature:

.....

Translator's name:

.....

Translator's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

Date:

Appendix K: Pilot Study Letter for Staff



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

3 August 2015

Dear Staff,

Kia ora. As part of my research study on sociocultural interactions and peer scaffolding in the primary classroom, I will be doing a pilot study in order to refine the methodology design for my master's thesis. During this time, I will be making and noting down brief observations of students engaging in linguistic interactions in class, during P.E. sessions, and in the playground. This exercise will give me an opportunity to pilot observation strategies before I embark on the actual data collection this term.

The pilot study will be conducted during Weeks 3 and 4 in some junior classrooms as well as on the playground. I will be focusing my observations on students only and not the teachers. Each observation will be kept to a minimum of 20 minutes and will be unintrusive. I am kindly requesting your support in making this happen.

This study will hopefully shed light on language learning opportunities for our ESOL students as well as give primary teachers and other researchers in the field relevant theory-based information on how to best address linguistic needs. My aim is to also help teachers develop a better understanding on how young ESOL students acquire a second language in the primary school setting.

If you have any questions about the above, please contact me via school email or mobile at [REDACTED].

Thank you very much for your time.

Best regards,

Vera Gonzales

Appendix L: Observation and Interview Data Codes

| Codings for Interviews and Observations | |
|---|--|
| Code | Data type: Interview |
| DP Int | Mrs. Keith, Deputy Principal |
| Campbell Int | Ms. Campbell, Yr 1-2 teacher |
| Rogers Int | Ms. Rogers, Yr 2-3 teacher |
| Kumar Int | Kumar (Prem's father) |
| Maya Int | Maya (Prem's mother) |
| Ros Int | Ros (Noraj's father) |
| Sita Int | Sita (Noraj's mother) |
| Code | Data type: Mainstream Classroom Observations |
| Campbell ObsM | Ms. Campbell, Yr 1-2 teacher |
| Rogers ObsM | Ms. Rogers, Yr 2-3 teacher |
| Prem ObsM | ELL, Prem |
| Noraj ObsM | ELL, Noraj |
| Code | Data type: Playground Observations |
| Prem ObsP | ELL, Prem |
| Noraj ObsP | ELL, Noraj |

Note: The above references are indicated by the name of participant, data type (interview/observation), location of interview, the data number, and page number and the date when the interview or observation took place.

For example: (Campbell ObsM5 p7/10.9.15) refers to Ms. Campbell's classroom observation, data number 5, page 7, dated 10 September 2015.

Appendix M: Samples of Manual Coding

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | is saying the letters out loud, S, T, U V, W,.... | |
| | it's R, that's wrong. <i>-> Scaffolding?</i> | |
| | Tchr: Good boy, hey capital T, capital L | <i>-> Tchr contributing to identity.</i> |
| | She moves on to another child and says wh, at needs doing. | |
| | : S, T, U | |
| | writes the letters quietly | |
| | who is sitting beside ? is saying the letters out loud, F, G, C, B, A, | |
| | : Done! (he puts his hand up) | |
| | excuse me, I'm done! we are done! | |
| | Teacher goes over and clarifies that his work is correct | <i>-> Affirmation to contribute to identity</i> |
| | : F, G, H, I, J, K, L!.... | |
| | Teacher stops the class and does the next dictation for the letter sounds: | |
| | A, E, I, You shld have, O, E, I, E, O, U, A, E | |
| | , ticks his correct letters on his whiteboard | <i>An atmosphere of COP in this instance. Teacher created/afforded stdn's the ability to verbalize teaching points to benefit others</i> |
| | Q, SSSSS, FFFFFFFF, D, Y, You B, H, W, ticks his work, | |
| | rub it off, let's do a sentence. | |

| | | |
|------|---|---|
| 9:44 | <p>He moves beside J1. J1 talks to him and they carry on a conversation. He seems not to know what to do. He gets word card then starts writing something on it. He keeps looking at J1 and starts talking to him.</p> <p>S1: "You can go to my house".</p> <p>He carries on talking to J1.</p> <p>S1: I know you....He talks quietly to J1 and doesn't do his work.</p> <p>J1: I got....</p> <p>Teacher calls on S1, J1 and two other boys for an instructional lesson.</p> <p>Teacher instructs S1 to move to another chair. "Ready?" Are you gonna tell me the sound....</p> <p>Okay all ready go:</p> <p>S1 says out loud the vowels as the teacher points it to them.</p> <p>Teacher asks S1 to get a card. He successfully sounds out the letter on the card. He looks at the teacher and utters the sound with her.</p> <p>"I" is the sound....</p> <p>Boys take turn at sounding out letters.</p> <p>Your turn, S1: "o"</p> <p>He looks at the teacher and his buddy as their turn comes around.</p> <p>This is "E" and it sounds like S1: "E!"</p> | <p><i>Noted</i></p> <p><i>'Social interaction?'</i></p> |
| 9:52 | <p>S1: I know the sound</p> <p>J1: We're doing the game.</p> <p>S1 interacts with J1 and smiles. Looking reassuredly.</p> | <p><i>Noted</i></p> <p><i>Scaffolding is mediated by the teacher.</i></p> |

Appendix N: Coding for Emerging Themes

CODING FOR EMERGING THEMES

| Question 1 How do teachers act as mediators of sociocultural interactions and scaffolding between English language learners and peers? | Question 2 How do parents act as mediators of social interactions and scaffolding? | Question 3 How do sociocultural interactions and scaffolding between English language learners and peers act as a mediator of language? |
|---|---|--|
| Activity-based learning | Community Links | Announcing |
| Clarification with teacher | Recognition of cultural identity | Assertiveness |
| Community links | Recognition of L1 use | Attachment |
| Cultural links to learning | Family links to school | Clarification with peer |
| Affirmation and praise | English language resources | Confirmation with peer |
| ESOL PD/ESOL background | Recognition of Cultural identity | Copying |
| Family links to school | Cultural Tools | Cross-checking with peer |
| Knowledge of ELL students' background | Music | Drawing attention |
| Knowledge of ELL students' cultural background | | Following |
| Language resources (peripheral learning resources) | | Friendship |
| Peer-to-peer support system | | Friendships in community |
| Recognition of Cultural identity | | Group interaction |
| Recognition of First language use | | Group interaction |
| Teacher feedback to ELL | | Helping |
| Teacher noticing ELL | | Helping/assisting a peer |
| Teacher scaffolding | | Indecisiveness |
| Teacher-directed learning | | Independence |
| Community | | Interaction with friends in classroom |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | Non-compliance/resistance/refusal |
| | | Non-confrontation |
| | | Noticing/looking at a peer |
| | | observing a peer |
| | | Offering/giving |
| | | Peer-to-peer feedback |
| | | Peer-to-peer interaction |
| | | Peripheral learning (visual aids/resources) |
| | | Private speech |
| | | Questioning |
| | | Seeking attention |
| | | Seeking friends |
| | | Sharing of knowledge to peer |
| | | Singing (artefact) |
| | | Storytelling |
| | | Video/computer games (artefact) |
| | | Waiting |
| | | |

Appendix O: MUHEC Approval Letter



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

23 June 2015

Vera Gonzales

PALMERSTON NORTH 4414

Dear Vera

Re: HEC: Southern B Application – 15/37
A study on peer scaffolding and sociocultural interactions in a New Zealand Primary school

Thank you for your letter dated 23 June 2015.

On behalf of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are now approved. Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Prof Julie Boddy, Chair
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B

cc Dr Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire
School of Humanities
PN242

A/Prof Kerry Taylor, HoS
School of Humanities
PN242

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council

Research Ethics Office, Research and Enterprise

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E humanethics@massey.ac.nz; animalethics@massey.ac.nz; gtc@massey.ac.nz www.massey.ac.nz