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The perceptions of five urban early childhood educators on the needs of young English language learners in child care centres : best practices in the field

Olayinka Fakunle
Ryerson University

THE PERCEPTIONS OF FIVE URBAN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS ON THE NEEDS OF YOUNG ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN CHILD CARE CENTRES: BEST PRACTICES IN THE FIELD

by

Olayinka Fakunle, B.A., University of Victoria, 2000

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perceptions of Early Childhood Educators on the needs of English language learners in childcare centres in Toronto, Canada. A modified grounded theory methodology was utilized in the study. Interviews were held with 5 Early Childhood Educators; these interviews were transcribed and coded. 5 themes arose from this qualitative analysis: sensitivity, communication, school readiness, home language retention and socialization. Results indicate that ECEs perceived that English language learners thrive in a caring environment with staff that will guide and support them in language learning, and where the use of their first language is encouraged and used to build the skills in the second language. Recommendations include ensuring the presence of staff that have a first language match with the English language learners, and can speak the same language with the children.

Key Words: Young English Language Learners, Early Childhood Educators, Home Language Retention, Interdependence, Second Language Acquisition.

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Introduction

According to Statistics Canada (2008), Toronto is one of the three metropolitan Canadian cities that immigrants are most attracted to; Montréal and Vancouver are the other two. Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver attracted seven out of every ten new immigrants who arrived between 2001 and 2006; with Toronto being the destination of choice for four out of every ten in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2008). In 2006 alone, 2.3 million foreign-born Canadians lived in Toronto, the largest number of any metropolitan area in the nation (Statisitics Canada, 2007).

For many immigrants English is not their first language, and their English skills are poor. According to the 2006 census (Statistics Canada, 2007a), 70.2% of Canada's foreign-born population reported a non-official language as their mother tongue. Ontario had the second highest proportion of individuals (43.5%) who spoke a non-official language at home in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2007b) with 47% of Toronto's population reporting a non-official language as their mother tongue (City of Toronto, 2009).

As families immigrate to Canada, they often include children who also have a first language that is not English. According to Saville-Troike (2006), "crossing a linguistic boundary to participate in another language community, and to identify or be identified with it, requires learning that language. It is both a necessary tool for participation and a badge which allows passage" (p. 122). Consequently these children become English Language Learners (ELLs); which is a term defined as:

> students …whose first language is a language other than English,
> or is a variety of English that is significantly different from the variety
> used for instruction in Ontario schools, and who may require focused
> educational supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in English
>
> (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 8; Ontario
> Ministry of Education, 2007b, p. 6)

Although the focus of this research project is on children in child care centers; this definition of ELLs is being used because it is used for Kindergarten ELLs and Kindergarteners also fall within the age range of children that attend these centres. Furthermore, while ELLs are formally defined within the school system no formal definition has been found, within the literature, for the purposes of younger children in childcare.

There is robust research literature in the area of English language learners within the school system (Cummins, Bismilla, Cohen, Giampapa & Leoni, 2005; Delpit, 2006; Genesee, Paradis & Crago, 2004; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007b; Roessingh, 2006; Ryu, 2004; Sheets, 2005; Souto-Manning, 2006; Stritikus & Varghese, 2006; Wong-Fillmore, 2000). However there is a paucity of research on English language learners in early childhood centres (Bernhard, Lefebvre, Chud & Lange, 1996; Corson, 2000; Tabors & Snow, 1994; Tabors, 2008).

Bushnik (2006) found, through the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), that 54% of children in Canada between 6 months to 5 years receive a form of non–parental child care, one of which is child care centres. With the immigration rate sky rocketing, many of these children have first languages other than English. The child care environment is thus their first formal exposure to the English language so ECEs must implement practices that will meet the needs of this population within their child care centers.

Early exposure to a second language is critical. Research suggests that it takes approximately 5 to 7 years to acquire sufficient language for academic learning (Cummins 1989). Furthermore, according to Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) (1997), "Language skills at school entry are also related to later academic achievement (p. 4)."

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Literature Review

According to the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services (2007), Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) are:

> "trained professionals specializing in the early development and learning
> of children. They plan and lead activities to stimulate and develop
> the intellectual, physical, emotional and social growth of preschool
> and school age children" (n.p.).

Early childhood educators work in a variety of settings. Some of which include: child care centers, nursery schools, before-and-after school programs, kindergarten and primary grade classrooms, Ontario Early Years centres, home child care centers, parenting programs, special education programs and pediatric playrooms in health care settings (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2008). For the purposes of the current study, ECEs refer to those working in child care centers.

ECEs must have a minimum of a post secondary Early Childhood Education diploma or its equivalent to work in a licensed child care setting in Ontario (Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, 2006). With the creation of the new College of Early Childhood Educators, every ECE must be a registered member of the college in order to practice in this profession. The creation of the college is intended to heighten the professional status of practitioners that work with children (College of Early Childhood Educators, 2008).

Immigration contributes to linguistic diversity. In 2006, the foreign-born population of Canada reported nearly 150 languages spoken (Statistics Canada, 2008). The growing population of children attending child care centers with first languages other than English, brings the issue of linguistic diversity of ECEs to the forefront.

Goddard (1995) did a study with 450 teachers in Western Canada where 62% were monolingual while only 25% were bilingual and 12.5% were trilingual. Such statistics are not

beneficial to English language learners because building upon a child's first language in order to promote second language learning is a unique and critical phenomenon, which will be lacking when there are so many monolingual educators.

In order to effectively engage and maintain a child's use of his/her first language, Bernhard et al. (1996); Coltrane (2003) and Wong-Fillmore (2000), suggest that ECEs be competent in other languages. This is not something that can be trained during an ECE program, except they start requiring that ECEs take on language learning, so why not employ people that have a first hand working knowledge of diverse languages?

A study by Bernhard et al. (1996), where they looked at the linguistic match between ECEs and children in 77 child care centres in three metropolitan cities: Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto also showed a linguistic mismatch between children and ECEs in child care centers, whereas these three cities have the highest influx of immigrants in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2008). Ideally, child care centres with ELLs should have at least a percentage of ECEs who can speak the first language of the children in their care (Coltrane, 2003; HRSDC, 1997).

The significance of Language in Child Care Centers

The ages between birth and six years old are crucial years for children's growth and development (Gestwicki, 2003; Hanvey, 2002; McCain & Mustard, 1999; Rueda & Yaden, 2006) and these years set the foundation for life-long learning (HRSDC, 1997; Rueda & Yaden, 2006). During these first six years, within child care centres, there is a focus on promoting a child's developmental domains and ensuring that particular milestones are reached (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007; Gestwicki, 2003). These domains include physical, social, cognitive, self-help skills and language (Gestwicki, 2003).

Language is significant in child care centers because these centres prepare children for schooling (Dahlberg et al., 2007; HRSDC, 1997). The knowledge accumulated in such a setting is transferable to kindergarten and beyond. Much of the literature (Bushnick, 2006; Dahlberg et al., 2007; HRSDC, 1997; Lockwood & Fleet, 1999) suggests the need for school readiness skills in order to help children adjust to the school setting. School readiness refers to "a child's ability to meet the task demands of school" (HRSDC, 1997) and includes the day-to-day activities that a child engages in within the child care centre, during the first few years of life.

English Language, in particular, is significant in child care centres because it is one of the official languages in Canada (Ménard & Hudon, 2007). Furthermore, learning English makes it possible for children to communicate and socialize with peers and staff members at their child care centers (Tabors & Snow, 1994).

Young English Language Learners

Young English language learners are in a unique position because while older ELLs have fully developed their first language, younger ELLs have not. As some aspects of their first language are not fully developed they are learning their first and second languages side by side (Coltrane, 2003; Tabors, 2008). This makes it inaccurate to assume that their needs are the same as older ELLs. It is noteworthy to stress that the English language learners referred to in this paper are between 1 and 6 years old, and are labeled 'young' to distinguish between them and older ELLs; however, they will simply be called ELLs throughout the paper.

According to Tucker (1999), more children in the world are being educated through a second language than there are children educated in their first language. This is especially true

in Toronto, where many children have first languages other than English. This shift in statistics makes it important to study the area of second language acquisition.

Second language acquisition in young children.

A second language acquired after a first language is at least partly established is known as *sequential acquisition* (Genesee et al., 2004; Saville-Troike, 2006; Tabors & Snow, 1994; Tabors, 2008). In the case of the current study, this would be children who have spoken their first language and have now entered child care where the primary language used is English.

Although not within the scope of the current research, the reader should be informed that there is another type of acquisition that occurs in childhood, called *simultaneous acquisition*; where children, usually less than 3 years old, develop skills in two separate languages simultaneously.

Various bodies of literature look at the *Additive Process*, whereby children gain a second language without the loss of the first language (Coltrane, 2003; Corson, 2000; De Houwer, 1999; Genesee & Cloud, 1998; Tabors, 2008). Genessee & Cloud (1998) emphasize that the additive process dispels the myth that early exposure to two languages can be detrimental to linguistic and cognitive development, although, according to Souto-Manning (2006) and Wong-Fillmore (2000), there are still some well-intentioned teachers and other school staff that advise parents to only speak English at home because they still believe this myth. In response to this, Wong-Fillmore (2000) declares that there is a rapid loss of native languages because of pressures to conform to society and use English. Souto-Manning (2006) performed a critical analysis of how bilingual discourse continues to reflect a deficit orientation in a particular school. She interviewed one of her peers, a special education teacher who seemed to have a preconceived notion that speaking a second language, as opposed to English, to a child at home will cause the

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child to be labeled as needing special education. This teacher, although well-intentioned, had advised her students against speaking their first language. She even advised the researcher in the study to refrain from speaking a second language to her child. The only limitation to this study is that it cannot be generalizable to a population because it is the opinion of just one teacher. Similar occurrences within schools initiate the placement of ELLs into special education classes, which is not warranted because the only issue with ELLs is that they are not proficient in the language, which is not a special need. As Cummins (1989) noted, it takes approximately 5 to 7 years to acquire sufficient language for academic learning, so this needs to be taken into consideration when decisions are made to call an ELL a child with special needs and subsequently placing them in such classes.

Although both types of language acquisition (simultaneous and sequential) have cognitive benefits, these benefits only apply if there is a balance between the two languages (Ricciardelli, 1992). Thus, children who attain a high level of proficiency in only one language and a lower proficiency in the other language will have neither a positive nor negative effect on their cognitive development; but if children cannot attain a high level of proficiency in either language, there will be negative impact on their cognitive development. Ryu (2004) and Genesee & Cloud (1998) both wrote about the *Developmental Bilingual Programs for Language Minority Students,* in the United States, where students receive instruction in their native language while they learn English. Such programs report cognitive benefits for children. In the study by Ryu (2004), the children also experienced social benefits as they adjusted to their peers in their new school environment. There is also a belief that the competence in more than one language can be an additive educational experience (Genesee & Cloud, 1998; Ryu, 2004).

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Sequence of second language acquisition in young children.

As children enter a setting where a second language is the dominant language used, they need to adjust to the new situation. According to Tabors and Snow (1994), there is a developmental sequence that these young second language learners progress through. Within this sequence, the child goes through four stages: the home language use period; the non-verbal; telegraphic and formulaic speech and the productive language use period (Tabors & Snow, 1994). During the first period of *home language use*, children would usually use their first language. Tabors and Snow (1994) observed a child that continued to speak his language, despite the fact that no one understood him; but some children decide against speaking their language when they realize people do not understand. The *non-verbal stage* is a period where children are silent and do not speak. During these two stages, ECEs need to be able to use particular strategies to make ELLs feel included within the group, especially if the ECE is not in a position to communicate with children in their first language. In the third stage, ELLs begin to use telegraphic and formulaic speech. In the study by Tabors and Snow (1994), some children were known to use a few words to get their point across. With formulaic speech, children have been known to use a mixture of words that they have heard other children use. In the last stage, *productive language use*, the ELL is proficient in the use of the second language.

This sequence of second language acquisition, as documented by Tabors and Snow (1994), is beneficial for ECEs in order to understand the adjustment process that ELLs go through. In a study done in the U.S., Facella, Rampino & Shea (2005) support this position as they suggest that, teachers of young children should do research on how ELLs acquire their second language so they can choose the appropriate strategy to support the children. While there is still the issue of consistency in the deliverance of strategies to better serve the needs of the

child care centers today, the school system is moving forward toward meeting the needs of their ELLs.

The school community and the deliverance of services to ELLs.

In the Ontario school system, the acquisition sequence and how to work with ELLs is already well laid out in the Ministry document entitled *Supporting English Language Learners in Kindergarten (*Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007b).

Schools have become a field for exchanging culture, but exchanging this knowledge amongst peers is not enough. The school systems recognize the need to incorporate programs that can meet the additional needs of immigrant children and has therefore incorporated English language programs for immigrant student populations.

In Ontario, education is governed by the Education Act and its regulations (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007c). The Education Act sets out duties and responsibilities for the Minister, school boards and other employees of the school system, as well as the systems. The Ministry of Education develops education policy and administers statutes and regulations that concern education. This includes allocating funds to the Boards of Education to run programs, such as ELL programs, within the schools (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007c). Noteworthy is also the fact that the ELL policy was written to provide consistency in educating English language learners across the province of Ontario. Furthermore, the Ontario College of Teachers regulates the teaching profession and governs its members (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a).

According to the Ontario Ministry of education (2005) document, *Many Roots, Many Voices. Supporting English Language Learners in every classroom,* "creating a welcoming and inclusive school environment for ELLs and their families is a whole-school activity" (p. 36).

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Thus, the goal of the school boards in Ontario is to prepare all teachers to support ELLs, even though they also have specialized teachers that focus on ELL needs (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000a). This preparation is achieved through opportunities for professional development in meeting the needs of English Language Learners (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000a). Furthermore, in regard to staffing decisions, the number of ELLs determines the recruitment of teachers who hold specialist qualifications in English as a Second Language (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000a).

Diverse programs have been set up to reflect the position of the ELL policy within Ontario. Teachers within the schools are also implementing diverse programs to help their ELLs. One of these programs is the *Dual Language Showcase* in a Mississauga, Ontario school where students write books in their language of origin and then translate them to English Language (Thornwood Public School, 2001). Thus, the teachers encourage the children to use their native language along side English Language. This program could give an ELL a sense of identity and self-esteem and provides a basis for a home-school connection, as parents are included within the program. One of the outstanding points about this program is that it allows ELLs to participate in class material in a way that is beneficial to them. They are accommodated and can write these stories in the language they are familiar with.

Cummins et al. (2005) also wrote about encouraging children to use identity text in cases where students are not as proficient in the use of English. *Identity text* is a product of students' creative work carried out in the learning environment and orchestrated by the teacher. Teachers developed both of these programs after recognizing the needs of the ELLs in their schools. Nevertheless, some teachers do experience challenges working with ELLs and some still do not feel prepared enough and others do not have similar linguistic backgrounds with the children

(Balfanz & Mac Iver, 2000; Batt, 2008; Gay & Howard, 2000). Goddard's (1995) research sheds some light on this, as the majority of the participants in his study did not believe that their pre-service program prepared them enough for the challenges that come along with teaching in a diverse classroom. However in comparison to the field of Early Childhood Education, teachers may likely be further ahead in recognizing and meeting the needs of English language learners.

As depicted above, the school system has come a long way in supporting ELLs, although there is still room for improvement, as it has the Ministry of Education putting out policy documents, the school board establishing programs for ELLs and teachers trying to work together to promote good practices for ELLs. The school system is quite established and for this reason it is further ahead in the deliverance of ELL practices than the ECE field.

The field of ECE and the deliverance of services to ELLs.

The field of ECE, on the other hand, has just established the College of ECEs; and the Day Nurseries Act (1990), which is the legislature that regulates the standards that have to be met by child care centers in Ontario does not specifically mention ELLs. The polices in child care centers are mostly written by the individual centers, except that the Metro Toronto Children's Services sets criteria guidelines for child care centers that they serve and although there is a focus on inclusion, anti-racism and access and equity issues, there is no specific mention of ELLs. Although there are some programs that the Metro Toronto Children's Services support, like the symposium entitled *Meeting the Needs of Young English Language Learners* that occur sporadically; attendance at such symposiums are not mandatory for all ECEs.

There is a lack of research on ELLs and learning at the level of the younger children in child care centres despite the enormous number of immigrants that bring their younger children along with them into Canada, and specifically Toronto. This might be because there is currently

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no particular body that ensures consistency across all centers in the area of meeting ELL needs, like there is in the school system. The recent creation of the College of ECEs might bring this into fruition by streamlining the practices of meeting ELL needs across all child care centers and making ELL issues more pronounced within the field of ECE.

The study reported here has the potential to begin to fill this gap. The goal of this current study is to generate data and develop theory to address the key question "What are the needs of English Language Learners in Child Care Centres?" The best way to get information around these needs is through the very ECEs that work with the ELLs. Looking at these needs from the perspectives of Early Childhood Educators will add a significant contribution to the literature on ELLs in the context of child care in Toronto, Ontario.

Methodology

Although English language learners in the Public School System have been the subjects of extensive research, the needs of English language learners in child care have hardly been studied. The lack of research in this area makes the use of a qualitative approach well suited for a study of this nature. According to Creswell (2005), "qualitative research is used to study problems requiring an exploration in which little is known about the problem" (p. 45).

A modified grounded theory strategy was implemented to analyze the data in this study. Grounded theory is a qualitative methodology designed to elicit a coherent set of theoretical constructs from interview data (Charmaz, 2003; Creswell, 2005). Grounded theory builds a theory that is "faithful to the evidence," and to the experience of ECEs, by utilizing their voices in the generation of the theory and including them into the literature around English language learners (Neuman, 2006, p. 60). Grounded theory is a "systematic, inductive and comparative approach for conducting inquiry for the purpose of constructing theory" (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Henwood as cited in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 1).

Researcher Self-disclosure

It is important that the reader understand my social location in regard to carrying out this research. The social constructionist theory bases peoples' realities on their own constructions of processes in a social context (Young & Collin, 2004). This research project is of personal significance. Working with ELLs in a child care centre myself and being able to relate with them from a standpoint of a young child that had to learn a second language provided a specialized insight in this project. Serving as a member of the organizing committee for a symposium entitled, *Meeting the Needs of Young English Language Learners* also gave the author a new

perspective into the questions that ECEs battle with regarding this topic. These factors, coupled with the fact that ELLs in child care had hardly been researched, led me to embark on this research. Following the choice of this topic was the realization that there would probably be various biases that would surface due to my experiences in this area of inquiry. For this reason, I brainstormed various ways to work around these biases. Although being an ECE could put me in a better place to understand participants' responses around the needs of ELLs; having my own views around the topic could also pose a barrier of misinterpreting their responses. Thus, I often asked for clarification so that my personal experiences did not get in the way. Being a young second language learner also made it possible for me to interpret the data from the standpoint of the needs I faced during my own second language learning experience, thus presenting biases. For this reason, during interviews and the whole research process, I kept a self-reflexive journal where jottings of my personal feelings towards answers to questions, and other opinions of the participants were recorded. This helped me, as I was able to reflect on these jottings during data analysis and the interpretation of the findings.

Recruitment

Prior to the recruitment process, a research proposal was submitted to the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board and after careful consideration and meeting the Boards' standards this research study was approved.

The participants were recruited from two child care centres. With permission from the supervisor a flyer, outlining information about the criteria to be met in order to qualify as a participant of the study, was posted in the child care staff room and interested participants could contact the researcher (see appendix A for the flyer).

Furthermore, a date and time was set with the supervisor of the centre to come in and speak to the ECEs about the purpose and process of the research; why such a study is important; and to answer any further questions they might have about participating in the study.

Participants

Participants were five Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) who currently work in child care centres with children who came to Canada from another country; have a first language other than English; and are thus English Language Learners (ELLs). The participants all work in areas of Toronto where there are high immigrant populations so as to increase the likelihood that they actually work with ELLs. From my experience working in child care, I have learned that parents tend to take their children to child care centres that are closer to their area of residence because of the convenience of dropping-off and picking-up their children from the centre.

None of the participants were recruited from the child care centre with which the author is affiliated. This decision was made to avoid researcher bias that could arise if affiliations existed with participants of the study.

Site

In regard to location, two venues were utilized. One venue was a private room in a library close to one of the participant's work place while the other interviews took place in a private room at the participants' child care centre. The second location was chosen out of convenience for the participants.

Data Collection

The data collection tool used for this research project was an open-ended interview. In grounded theory research, interviews are a key data collection tool because they capture the experiences of participants in their own words (Creswell, 2005). The interviews were open-ended because according to Clark (2007), most grounded theory studies have been based on open-ended interviews. Using open-ended questions allowed the participants to give narratives of their experiences with the English language learners with whom they work.

The participants engaged in a one-on-one interview that ranged from 25-35 minutes long. Although interviewing each participant individually becomes time-consuming, using a one-on-one format made the interviews more personal because it allowed for full engagement in the social interaction of the interview. At the onset of the interviews, the purpose and process of the study was reviewed with the participants who were also asked to read the consent form (see Appendix B). Although it was made clear that the researcher would clarify any points that the participant(s) might be unclear with none of the participants asked for clarification. The participants were further reminded of the voluntary nature of the study, their right to pass on any of the questions asked and their right to withdraw their consent and/or stop their participation at anytime during the interview process. Another issue that was brought up was that of reassuring them that their anonymity would be maintained and informing them of the confidential nature of the interview process. Lastly, the participants were assured that the information collected during the interview had nothing to do with judging their competence in working with English language learners; and they were reminded that the sole purpose of the research study is to advance research in the area of ELLs in child care centers. Once all these parameters were understood and agreed with, the participants signed the consent form.

In addition to consenting to do the interview, all the participants also consented to audio-taping of their sessions. Audio-taping the interviews were important because according to Patton (1990), "The purpose of each interview is to record as fully and fairly as possible that particular interviewee's perspective" (p. 249). Audio-taping allowed the researcher to devote all attention to the participants during the interviews. Audio-taping also allowed the researcher to take notes during the interview. Note taking was crucial because these notes were compared with the transcriptions during the coding process (see data analysis section for an in-depth discussion).

After the interviews, the audio-tapes were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were labeled accordingly to protect the identity of participants. The audiotapes, paper copies of transcripts, and signed consent forms were stored in a secure cabinet to maintain participants' confidentiality. All information stored on the computer was password protected so no one else had access to it.

The interview questions (see Appendix C) were derived from the review of the literature. Probes were designed to get the participants to clarify their responses; further elaborate on areas they spoke about; and to get their insights around particular categories that had generated from the data collected from prior participants. According to Patton (1990), probing questions are placed in open-ended interviews at appropriate times. The one-on-one interviews were especially helpful when it came to probing because being able to read their non-verbal cues made it easier to identify when it was okay to probe further into a particular issue.

In order to increase validity, and at diverse points during the interview, participants' responses were reiterated to confirm what they said, this way there was a full understanding and no misrepresentation occurred. At the end of each interview the participants were asked if they had any further information to add and if not, the interview ended as the participant(s) were

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handed a $5.00 Tim Horton's gift certificate in appreciation for their time and contribution to the research.

Data Analysis

To ensure accuracy, the audio-taped interviews were transcribed verbatim; this provided rich data for the analysis. To begin the data analysis, the data was read several times to get a general sense of the data (Creswell, 2005). Interview notes were also reviewed. A line-by-line analysis was used to analyze each transcript, where all words and phrases were closely examined. Labels were assigned to variables that were important for addressing the needs of ELLs, and were subsequently recorded in the margins of the transcripts. Multiple labels arose; and this resultant list of labels was used for the initial coding of subsequent transcripts through a Grounded Theory strategy known as the *Constant Comparative Method* (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). This same coding process occurred for every new transcript until all transcripts were coded with labels. At this point, the labels were examined in more detail: comparisons occurred; some labels were dropped to reduce redundancy; and various categories surfaced. Some of the categories were: Comfort, guidance, cultural awareness, visuals, partnerships, keywords, and promoting social opportunities (see Table 1 for a full list).

Five themes emerged from these categories (see Table 1). At this point, all the transcripts; the notes that were taken during interviews; and the original labels were reviewed again. This was a selective search of all cases that illustrate themes. Engaging in the selective coding process allowed all instances where themes originated from to be compared and contrasted. This allows for reliability of the data, as there is a link between the themes and the actual statements of the participants. This also allows theory to be grounded in the data. In grounded theory validation is

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an active part of the research process, so during the coding process new data was triangulated with emerging categories to make sure that the analysis was valid. As a form of peer debriefing, consultation with the research supervisor occurred as themes were developed.

Findings

The interviews were a source of rich data and several themes emerged. The categories result from the general research questions around the needs of ELLs in childcare centres. These categories have subsequently been organized under five themes. The themes are: Sensitivity, communication, school readiness, home language retention and socialization (see Table 1).

Sensitivity

The ECEs mentioned the need for ELLs to have sensitive staff. The transcripts revealed the following categories under this theme: Comfort, guidance and support, and cultural awareness.

Comfort.

The importance of ELLs being comfortable in their environment should not be underestimated. There are 21 occurrences of the words 'comforting' and 'comfortable' in the interview transcripts.

> …For example, if a child is unable to communicate. We try to make them comfortable and at home. We try to put ourselves in their shoes. It is difficult for them, especially at a young age if they cannot communicate. So we try our best to meet their needs. If there are any special requests from parents, we accommodate that just to make them comfortable with us (ECE 2, 2009).

> …With staff as well, if the child feels kind of alone they have that staff that will attend to their needs. Again going back to trying to make them feel a little comfortable (ECE 2, 2009).

The next excerpt shows the need to make the ELLs comfortable through language. Sometimes ECEs use words in the ELLs home language as a comforting mechanism. One ECE suggested that children gravitate towards their home language because they are familiar with it.

> I think, you know what, all kids once they hear their mother tongue I guess it's comforting for them (ECE 4, 2009).

> We may ask them for different words [in their language], …so that we can communicate or a comforting word so that if they are upset about something, so that we can say something to make them feel better (ECE 5, 2009).

In the past we have used it and we actually encouraged it [home language use] because we wanted the child to feel comfortable. We had an older child from Vietnam and a younger child. The older child knew English so he kind of helped us as well because he spoke the language to help us guide the child. You know [he would ask the younger child] "what is it that you need." (ECE 1, 2009).

One ECE spoke about the progress that ELLs make once they become comfortable in the childcare centre.

...Usually when they move up into the other rooms you can see them and I think like the first six months you see a big change, like after they get comfortable and you see them socializing with the kids and you see the language (ECE 4, 2009).

Guidance and support.

One ECE mentioned the need for ELLs to have staff that can guide their transition in their new second language environment.

When children start in the daycare program and they don't understand English they need people that will guide and support them [to learn English] (ECE 1, 2009).

Since this transition [into the daycare] is going to be hard, starting a new program with all these people that don't speak the child's language. I do feel there is a need for staff to be supportive and guide children (ECE 1, 2009).

In regards to supporting ELLs, one ECE mentioned the need for diligent staff. The fact that ELLs are learning English language does not mean they are not developing language. So far, their language acquisition has only been in their home language and they are now acquiring this new language (English) on top of this (this additive process will be covered in-depth in the discussion section). The fact that ELLs are learning a new language makes it more crucial to be vigilant in recognizing their need for support in the area of English acquisition.

They meet them [developmental milestones] for the most part. It's just that because we don't speak their language we just have to be more diligent in seeing it (ECE 4, 2009).

Developmental milestones are areas of development that a child should attain at certain ages and language is one of the areas. These milestones are often in a form of a checklist.

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Another ECE spoke about how she gets around the English barrier in practice.

> Well, when I do the developmental checklist on the children, when it comes to the language component I do speak to the parents if they are speaking other languages at home. I will ask the parents 'did they speak these words in your language?' especially when their younger [because] the developmental milestones are very much based on language development because their first words are going to be words in their home language. So using English in the childcare, developmental milestones at that, I don't find that works as well. So I will discuss that with the parent when I do their developmental checklist (ECE 5, 2009).

Cultural awareness.

One of these ECEs also mentioned that ELLs need staff that will be sensitive to their culture. ECEs must realize that there might be differences in the ELLs cultural background and must be open and watchful of this, especially since language is one aspect of culture. This excerpt depicts the need for awareness due to the differences that exist in cultures.

> …I guess a bit of it too is understanding in the culture. I'm trying to get my fix on him and I think part of it is cultural because mom has been doing everything for him. [Now] this child is getting ready for Kindergarten so he needs to be able to do it for himself (ECE 4, 2009).

This same ECE spoke about the importance of having knowledge of cultural issues.

> If it is a language that no one [staff] here is familiar with [and] if you can find a parent that you know that speaks the same dialect, and you know there is no political stuff or stuff like that and that you are not stepping on the culture or something like that. It's a lot of understanding of the culture (ECE 4, 2009).

Cultural awareness was also echoed by this ECE who mentioned that physical needs may arise due to cultural differences.

> Well sometimes lunch routine. They might eat a different way. They might get dressed a different way. So physical needs sometimes can be an issue with language (ECE 1, 2009).

Communication

English language learners have a need to be able to communicate with the ECEs and children in the centre. This was further highlighted in one ECEs response to the question, 'what are the needs of ELLs in your centre?' (see Appendix C for interview guide).

Mostly, the communication (ECE 3, 2009).

The theme 'communication' includes the categories: Building English foundation, visuals, gestures and repetition.

Building English foundation.

The following excerpts, from the transcripts, talk about the need around building the ELLs foundation in English Language, as this will be the basis for further development of English skills.

> My role as an ECE is to try and build that English foundation for them. We of course speak English as a first language with them so I have noticed throughout my years with children that don't have the English as a first language that when they come to daycare and they are with us for a certain amount of time, they do tend to pick up on the English Language, which is really good and you just see them develop that way. I think it's very beneficial that they come to the daycare (ECE 2, 2009).

> …Basically when a child comes into my classroom and they are not able to communicate properly or they are trying to learn the language, you know like I said, we try the best that we can to try to help them to build up on that language (ECE 2, 2009).

> We speak slowly with them so that way they can try to pick up on the language (ECE 2, 2009).

> With staff, we usually sit with them and just talk, do a lot of talking but also trying to get some words from home so they understand (ECE 3, 2009).

In regards to building their English foundation, one ECE spoke about the importance of involving the parents in this process so they can continue to build this English foundation with their child at home:

> I have some parents that don't speak English at all, so we write a list of words that we use at daycare everyday; like hat, coat and boots so they [parents] can use it at home too. Sometimes the parents like it too because they are learning also (ECE 3, 2009).

Visuals.

Findings from the transcripts revealed that ELLs need visuals. *Visuals* and *pictorials* are interchangeable. They both mean any picture that enables the child to understand a written word.

They are generally posted alongside the word format of whatever idea it is meant to convey to the child.

The ECEs spoke about the need to use visuals as a teaching tool. *Teaching tools* are any aids used to facilitate learning:

> We do sometimes use the pictorial communication and that also helps, especially at the beginning but they pick up the language very quickly (ECE 5, 2009).

> …We do have that [alphabets] posted in our room and it's kind of funny because a child will learn 'A' is for apple and 'B' is for ball and I think that is a start towards building the language. So I think it does help a little bit. It is also a visual so they get to see and as the language builds up a little more we move to something a little bit more complicated for example, their name or something like that (ECE 2, 2009).

> …We have letters posted on the wall where they are able to recognize the alphabet. Watching and recognizing the pictures may help them. They recognize them really quickly (ECE 1, 2009).

> …In terms of books and circles and stuff like that we use a lot of things with pictures. We would never just start talking or telling a story without pictures and songs and finger plays and all sorts of things like that (ECE 5, 2009).

> Well, we have the pictorials. For instance, we have them [pictorials] in the washrooms; the pictorial of the process of washing your hands; and in the hallway about dressing and undressing (ECE 5, 2009).

Two ECEs spoke about the need for visuals that are used as directives. In ECE "lingo", these *directives* are called *'limits'* and they are used to guide the child. For instance, telling a child how many children can play in a centre or what goes where. The following excerpts further describe the need for visuals to be used as limits, and how these are used.

> …In our room we have a lot of pictures and this helps because they [ELLs] see the picture of 3 children and they know only 3 children can play in that area. Yeah, we have a lot of pictures. I find that they help a lot (ECE 3, 2009).

> Well, again to have a lot of pictures for different areas so they know what goes on where, what is where; if a centre has a policy of 4 children are allowed in this centre then they'll have pictures of 4 children. It's a reinforcement. You know for other children we can just tell them that there are already 4 children here but if they [ELLs] can have a visual, if they don't understand what you're saying to them and sometimes numbers come a little later, then the pictorial does help with English (ECE 5, 2009).

> …We have pictorials on the bins of toys [to show what's goes in them] (ECE 5, 2009).

The ECEs also spoke about the need for visuals for scheduling purposes and during transition times. *Transitions* occur when a child is moving from one activity to another. In child care, there is a need for the children to have some way of predicting what is happening next. This might be a difficult task when ECEs are working with ELLs because, unlike with ELLs that can understand the language, the ELLs are still learning and thus need an alternative way to be able to predict what is going on and when activities will occur. This gives the ELLs a smooth transition from one activity to another, without any surprises:

> Transitions are difficult, which is why I find pictorials very helpful at these times [during transitions]. Also [giving them] warnings with the pictorials. Like letting the child know, this is what we are going to be doing next, you know 'we're going to be going outside', 'we have 5 more minutes, then we'll tidy up and then we'll go outside', but using pictorials so they know what's coming up next, because if they don't that's when the transition becomes difficult for them [ELLs] (ECE 5, 2009).

> I think, uhm, as any child, like a new child to daycare they know [the visuals help them to know] what's coming up next. So they might not know the language but at least they know…okay, lunch is coming up and they have an idea of their day (ECE 4, 2009).

> Well, we use visuals, for example, if its circle time and they are not sure of what's going on, we have visuals that show 'this is what we're doing at this time' so we will show that to the child and it seems to work pretty well (ECE 2, 2009).

> …We use pictorials for snack time to show we're having snack now; it's circle time; it's tidy up time (ECE 5, 2009).

> Uhm, well right now we've been using the pictorial schedule so they can see what's coming up and if you're doing songs, and you use a picture that represents that song, they can catch on (ECE 4, 2009).

Gestures.

It is important to realize that the ELLs need a medium for communication. English speakers can verbalize their needs, but ELLs need a way to communicate theirs. One ECE talked about various ways that ELLs get their information across to their peers:

> Yes, we do have one child in our centre that doesn't speak any English. Mostly when she's playing with child, they play together but I find she does a lot of pointing. I find, like if she wants something she'll point to the child, [or] a toy so it's a lot of body language I find (ECE 3, 2009).

Another ECE spoke about how the ELLs communicate with her:

> …They will either tap your hand, once they're comfortable with you, to let you know they have
> to go to the bathroom or if they want a certain toy. It's been generally tapping or if they've learnt
> an English word then you'll hear the word (ECE 4, 2009).

In some cases, the need for a means to find an alternative way to communicate to a child

is so crucial because of the impact it can have on their well being:

> …Uhm gesturing. I guess you can call it 'crude sign language.' Just saying, "eat" and motioning
> it. Well, like the little boy, today he was sitting there and I said, "eat" and I'm like showing him
> how to pick up the fork [gesturing along as she says this] (ECE 4, 2009).

> For example, if a child is unable to communicate we try our best to read on their body language.
> For example, if a child is unable to say, "can I go to the washroom" we try to read on their body
> language and see if they are doing the dance [moving around or shaking because they need to use
> the washroom] or anything like that. But you know, we try to encourage them [by saying] this is
> time to go to the washroom…Basically, that is how I try to pick up on their needs is to try to read
> their body language (ECE 2, 2009).

Repetition.

Repetition, for the purposes of this paper, is the frequent use of language. If an ECE were

to tell an ELL the same thing over and over, this would constitute repetition. Most of the ECEs

talked about the need for repetition and how this aids ELLs in learning quickly.

> Just being able to practice little rhymes and poems with them, like 'Twinkle, Twinkle', ABC's
> and things like that. The repetition I find definitely help with children… This makes them learn
> quickly (ECE 1, 2009).

> We will literally physically take them so that way they are able to understand what we are trying
> to tell them and then as it becomes a routine they eventually build up on that and then we'll start
> saying "lunch", and "this is the table", and "you can sit in your chair" and we'll just be repetitive,
> repetitive, repetitive and then they start picking up on it and before you know it they are saying it
> themselves (ECE 2, 2009).

The more they repeat the language, the more the ELLs are able to develop their English skills.

This is evident in the following responses:

> Yes, I find that we repeat words over and over so they can understand what it means. Like in the
> room if we are reading a book and learning a word, we'll repeat that over and over so that they
> can understand and we'd say what the meaning is. So, repeating all the time (ECE 3, 2009).

I notice that they learn names very quickly. When they are learning English the first thing they pick up on is the staff names and children's names...Yeah. The staff names are repeated throughout the day (ECE 1, 2009).

This same thought was echoed by another ECE as she mentioned:

…The first thing they learn is probably the child's name because they hear the child's name [repeatedly] (ECE 4, 2009).

School Readiness

School readiness refers to "a child's ability to meet the task demands of school" (HRSDC, 1997, p.4). Data from the interviews yielded the following categories: early exposure to language, one-on-one language support, skill development, and partnerships.

Early exposure to language.

One ECE mentioned the need for ELLs to be exposed to language early so that their English Language skills are polished enough for school.

The earlier they start here, the earlier they are exposed to the language and they are able to learn it earlier in life and when they start school they've already had some exposure in trying to learn the language before they start school (ECE 1, 2009).

Because they are younger, I find that they are being exposed more to the English Language. I find that songs really help as well. Stories really help too. They'll be in care for a month and you'll already start hearing them sing songs like 'Twinkle, twinkle' and things like that. I think the repetition and just because they are being exposed earlier so they have more time earlier in age to start learning the language (ECE 1, 2009).

One-on-one language support.

Some ECEs made reference to the fact that the lower staff/child ratio in child care centres makes it possible for ELLs to access one-on-one language support. The staff/child ratio is mandated by law, through the Day Nurseries Act (1990), in Ontario.

I find daycare really does help, especially if they don't know the language. It is really hard to start school [without language] and there is a lot of staff and they are always helping in different ways so I find that the children learn more [are more prepared for school] if they are in daycare. There is more one-on-one in daycare, especially if the children are young. The ratios [for

preschool] are 1:8 so I think it definitely has something to do with it [getting language support] (ECE 1, 2009).

We will take the extra time, sit one-on-one with them, read to them, and get them to try to read [little words] to us here and there. [Using] flash cards seem to work too (ECE 2, 2009).

Skill development.

Four ECEs spoke about the need for ELLs to build on the skills they will use in school:

…Sometimes we'll send workbooks home for the child to practice their letters, the alphabet, and things like that. That may help with children learning English because they can write specific words and practice those words. Like "Hello" and things like that (ECE 1, 2009).

…I think it is very important that we try our best to prepare them [ELLs], especially since it is preschool, for school and if we see that school is approaching and there is a little bit that we still need to work on we will try our extra best to develop sheets [worksheets], and anything with words and language to help them the best that we can to develop that sort of foundation [in English] so that they are able to understand some stuff that the school teaches them (ECE 2, 2009).

We try to have them [preschoolers] ready by knowing their ABC's, their numbers and writing their names. But in English sometimes it's hard (ECE 3, 2009).

…Right now my priority is more like meeting the self-help [needs], independence, getting some language going and once that gets going then the cognitive will come along (ECE 4, 2009).

Partnerships.

Some ECEs talked about a partnership between themselves, parents and school teachers

and how they all work together to make sure the ELL has a smooth transition into school.

The ones that start [child care] later, I find they still learn (between 4 and 5) and pick up the language and we'll always help by working in partnership with the teacher in the school and that helps as well. Good communication between staff, parent and the teacher is very effective especially when they are learning the language (ECE 1, 2009).

…We ask the teacher how the children are doing. There is a consent form that we need to get signed and we ask the parent how the child is doing (ECE 1, 2009).

…The teachers can't tell us everything because of the confidentiality issues and there are a lot of things they are only supposed to communicate to parents. They do have quite a close relationship with our staff because we have the same staff that takes the children to school and back everyday so they'll tell the staff, because that's the person they see everyday, not the parents. They will say you know, "she's having a hard time" or they may even ask the staff "she seems to be having a hard time with [something at school], do you have any insight?" and we may say well, "yeah, you know she's afraid of this" or "she has a hard time with this at daycare [child care]." So that kind of thing is what we communicate with them (ECE 5, 2009).

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…Parents have parent-teacher interviews at school and if there are any concerns, parents are usually very good in communicating [this] with us. If there are any concerns we will try to do what's beneficial for the child and try to work on the needs (ECE 2, 2009).

Home Language Retention

The ECEs talked about the need for ELLs to be able to maintain their home languages. Discouraging them from speaking their home language will not benefit or advance their English language skills.

The categories that were derived within this theme include: the need to use keywords, English/home language combination, and child/staff language match.

Keywords.

Four ECEs made reference to *keywords*. *Keywords*, in this context, are any particular words from a child's home language that are used to enhance the child's understanding. This is further explained by ECEs dialogue around how they communicate with their ELLs.

Sometimes it is like they don't understand us so we try to learn a few words that the parents say at home so we can communicate with the child (ECE 3, 2009).

…What we tend to do is ask the parent for a couple of words in the language, like 'eat', 'washroom'. Some words that have to do with routines so we know what they mean and sometimes comforting words like 'you're okay' and things like that in their language so they understand (ECE 1, 2009).

Routines, in the child care context, are activities that occur at a scheduled time. They include activities such as: toileting, eating, sleeping and playing.

It's mainly to understand what they need, for instance if they need to go to the bathroom…the parent can give you a few key words (ECE 4, 2009).

…English might not be their first language so we ask for little clues to write down for example, 'if they are thirsty' or 'if they are hungry', what we can incorporate [say] from their language that would help them out. You know we'll ask them and I do this myself. I'll ask the parent, I'll write it down and I use it if the child is not able to communicate that or if they are upset or something

like that. So, I will use, maybe, something in their language that will help me communicate with the child (ECE 2, 2009).

The following excerpt further proves the importance and benefit achieved from using key words. The child being described here is now fluent in English due to this practice.

> One child we had in summer is from Iran and is fluently an English speaker now …
> With this child, we asked the parents for words [in their language] that we can use during transitions (ECE 1, 2009).

English/home language combination.

Three ECEs stressed the need to incorporate the use of both English and the ELLs home language because although they want the child to learn English, this should not be at the expense of giving up their home language. The following are excerpts from the interviews around the use of both languages:

> If the child needs to use the washroom, we'll say it in their language. We'll say it in English as well so they understand that this is the English way of saying it and because they hear us saying it to the other children, they pick [English] up quickly (ECE 1, 2009).

> Well in my room, the toddler room, we do speak their language. We have Spanish and Portuguese children. We do have a few words that we do speak with them, but we also speak the English. We do combine some [English] language with the child's. We encourage it [home language] because at home they're speaking it (ECE 3, 2009).

> I think it's important to have your home language. It's part of your culture. It's your ties to your base. If you're willing to learn a few words and the parent can help you, like 'juice', 'drink', 'washroom' and then say it in English for the child. I know a lot of parents who are ESL [ELL] and they have children who are born here… I've heard people say to them "oh, only speak English" and I disagree with that because a child is young and this is the time when their brains can pick up both languages. Uhm, like I've said to parents, "you know you might speak your language and they answer you in English that's fine, you're keeping your language alive because if you have family back home [like grandparents] they can communicate with their grandparents (ECE 4, 2009).

> We ask them what language they speak, tell them to say a word in their language and we also sometimes post words like, 'welcome' in different languages. Like right now, Chinese New Year is next week and we are learning how to say 'Happy New Year' in Chinese. So we always incorporate different languages in the daycare. We are very multicultural here. Even the staff speak other languages as well (ECE 1, 2009).

Child/staff language match.

There is a need for linguistic diversity in the staff population. This way there could be language matches between the ECEs and the increasing population of ELLs entering child care today. The following is an excerpt that further elaborates on the need for this language match.

> …In my room, we have a few Spanish children and we do have a staff that speaks Spanish and the staff does speak Spanish with the child. First we speak E. with the child, but if we see that the child is not understanding then the staff will speak Spanish with the child and that's how they communicate (ECE 3, 2009).

This practice of having language matches between children and staff is especially needful, as depicted in the next excerpt, when a child is new to the childcare centre.

> When the child first starts, the staff will speak to the child until the child gets comfortable, especially in the toddler room if they haven't been away from their parents and it's their first experience in child care it could be quite difficult for them to feel comfortable. So in the beginning when they are getting used to the routine, that staff will speak to them in their own language and they will ease off once the child starts to feel comfortable with the routine and the other staff (ECE 5, 2009).

Another ECE spoke about the bond and sense of security that develops due to a child/staff language match. She stated:

> They [ELLs] get more attached to that staff, I find, because they know they understand each other. They know that if they need anything, that staff understands the word in Spanish so they tend to be attached to that (ECE 3, 2009).

An important aspect of working with children is working alongside their parents. Communication with parents is crucial. Having staff with diverse linguistic backgrounds is also needful in this area. Two ECEs elaborate on this with the following statements:

> It can be difficult to communicate with the parent about their child, especially if they are new to the country, new to the culture and if English is not their first language. We try to have staff here that speak a variety of languages that we can use as translators and we do have quite a few so in the event that there is something urgent that we need to tell the parent. If we have someone that can speak the language we will ask them to translate it in their language to make sure that they know and understand [what we are saying] (ECE 5, 2009).

> …Also, I have a few parents that are Spanish and they don't speak English, so the staff communicates in Spanish with the parents (ECE 3, 2009).

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Socialization

Socialization, for the purposes of this paper, is any opportunity for the children to interact with each other. This could be in the form of play or during other activities, such as circle time. The categories under this theme are: child language match/mismatch, promoting social opportunities, and learning through play.

Child language match/mismatch.

The vast population of children from diverse linguistic backgrounds makes it feasible for a number of children in the same childcare centre to speak the same language. For the purposes of this paper, this is called a '*child language match*'. When the languages of the children are different, this paper refers to it as a '*child language mismatch*'.

The following statements, by an ECE, show the difference between the extent of a child's socialization when they have fellow children that have similar linguistic backgrounds and when they do not.

> Yes, I find that they [ELLs] **play more together** because they will speak to each other more in their language (ECE 3, 2009).

On the contrary, in situations where there are no children with similar linguistic backgrounds, this ECE said:

> Sometimes I find that they [children] **play on their own** if they have a second language because they do not know how to communicate [with the children speaking English]. [This pertains to] the older ones, because the younger ones usually play all together. But, like preschoolers, I find lots of times they are by themselves (ECE 3, 2009).

Despite the advantages of a child language match, there is also a significant need for a child language mismatch because ELLs are learning English and need to be exposed to English language speakers in order to be familiar with English. One ECE said:

I find a lot of parents put their children in the child care setting because they want them to speak English (ECE 5, 2009).

Promoting social opportunities.

The findings emphasize the need for ELLs to socialize with English Language speakers. Some ECEs mentioned that this could be accomplished through encouraging and facilitating socialization between ELLs and English language speakers.

> …Some children that don't know English are shy and withdrawn. So just encouraging them to play with the other children, having one staff member play with this child and encourage other children to come and participate so they can socialize together (ECE 1, 2009).

> When they get to be late 3's and early 4's when they're starting to go into JK then the social aspect becomes more important and we try to facilitate that [socialization] with other children that we know. We may know that this child [ELL] has a particular interest with something (for instance dramatic play) and then we may facilitate that with other children [English Language speakers] that we know share the same interests (ECE 5, 2009).

> Usually we have small circles so we rotate to have one staff with one small group and then we will change the staff with another group and even the kids we rotate. We never have the same kids in the same circle (ECE 3, 2009).

Learning through play.

As the ECEs encourage play opportunities amongst children from all linguistic backgrounds, they note that this is significant because of the fact that ELLs develop their language during these associations. The next two excerpts depict this quite well:

> To be honest once I find they [ELLs] start playing with children, they start talking, then they start picking up the language from the other children so they pretty much are teaching each other (ECE 4, 2009).

> I think this is a need because it's an opportunity to socialize with other children, but of course because of that language barrier it might be a little bit difficult at first but they [ELLs] tend to just follow what other children do. But I think it is one of their needs because it's something social for them; it could even be emotional for them. You know they can even pick up the language of the other children (ECE 2, 2009).

Discussion

This study set out to examine the perceptions of 5 ECEs on the needs of ELLs in child care centres. The interview findings yielded many categories, from which 5 themes emerged.

Interpretation involves how we make sense of the data, based on personal reflections and comparisons to the literature (Creswell, 2005). The following section is an interpretation of the findings derived from the data. To interpret the data, the categories generated in the data analysis were linked to the literature and theoretical constructs.

Overall, the findings suggest various needs of English language learners, but all of the needs recognized by ECEs stem from the children's need to learn and understand English language.

Sensitivity

Most of the ECEs felt that the ELLs needed the support of sensitive staff. When ELLs come into an English-speaking environment, they probably feel lonesome, as they have to adjust to their new environment. According to Eric Erikson's psychosocial theory (Berk, 2005), if a child is given warmth and responsive care from a caregiver, there is a sense of security and this goes a long way in the child's view of the world being a good place. All children need to feel secure; and these ELLs even face two hurdles. One is the fact that they are new in a new physical environment, the other is that they have a new linguistic environment, as they enter a second language learning environment. Thus the ECEs opinion of sensitive staff echoes that of Chumak-Horbatsch (2004), as she believes being sensitive to the child's language will help the child's transition into the new environment. This also ties in with the ELLs need around having staff that will support and guide them to learn English, especially during the transitional time.

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Comfort was the most noteworthy category that arose in the findings. During the interviews, the words 'comforting' and 'comfortable' were mentioned repeatedly 21 times, which is not surprising because the literature informs us that "the single most important factor in language learning is the affective component" (Houston, 1990, p. 65). According to one ECE, in describing a situation where they try to make ELLs comfortable, she mentioned,

> "if the child feels alone they have the staff that will attend to their needs.
> Again, going back to trying to make them feel a little comfortable." (ECE 2, 2009).

Communication

We are reminded from the literature, that language is needed for reasons of communication and socialization with peers and staff members at child care centers (Tabors & Snow, 1994). The need for communication happened to be one of the findings as well. The ECEs mentioned various needs that ELLs have in order to communicate their thoughts.

The findings reveal that ELLs need visuals. The ECEs give further insight to the fact that visuals have multiple functions in aiding ELLs in child care centres. Visuals are used as a teaching tool, to give directives, for scheduling purposes and during transitions. This implies that visuals are a very important component of working with ELLs because it is used during different times and for diverse reasons. One ECE likened the use of visuals to reinforcement. So the visual gives the ELL an additional way to understand the message being conveyed. In this study, instead of just saying "four children are allowed to play in a centre," the ECE said showing ELLs a picture of four children has a better impact on their understanding. This supports research that was carried out by Facella et al. (2005) as they recognized that using pictures to elicit meaning of words further reinforced the point conveyed.

Furthermore, one reason why the ECEs use visuals could be because, as noticed throughout the interviews, the ECEs are particular about furthering the understanding of the ELLs English skills. Everything they do seems to support their understanding of language, as we see once again through the use of visuals. It seems like the ECEs are not just interested in the here and now, but in actually furthering the long-term development of the children, so skills they can use beyond this setting and later in life i.e. in school etc. This is also evident in the *school readiness* theme further in this discussion section.

Most of the ECEs mentioned the fact that transitions (the movement from one activity to another) can be hard especially if you do not understand the language, so having visual schedules makes transitions easier. These visual schedules alert the ELLs of what's going on next. Children generally need to be able to predict what's going on next. The need to have predictable schedules was shown in a study carried out with English language learners (Genishi, Stires & Yung-Chan, as cited in Hatch & Barclay-McLaughlin, 2003). Having these visual schedules and knowing what's going on next makes them feel more comfortable and more like a part of the room. The importance of these visual schedules seem to stem from the fact that they allow the ELLs to be included as part of the group; it gives them a sense of belonging and makes their transition into the English Language environment a lot smoother.

As a teaching tool, visuals enhance language as they are posted alongside the word format of whatever idea it is meant to convey to the child. Some ECEs mentioned how using visuals, like ABC posted in their rooms, enhances the learning for ELLs, as they see the picture of an object that starts with the letters. Learning the alphabet and other similar skills will give these children the English foundation they need for school, so the use of the visuals here supports

the long-term language development of the ELL. This also echoes the opinion of one of the ECEs that mentioned:

> …we do have that posted in our room and it's kind of funny because a child will learn "A" is for Apple and "B" is for ball and I think that is a start towards building the language. So I think it does help a little bit. It is also a visual so they get to see and as the language builds up a little more we move to something a little bit more complicated for example, their name or something like that (ECE 2, 2009).

Children often sing before they speak (Houston, 1990), so even for activities such as storytelling and circle times, ECEs use songs in promoting language. One ECE mentioned how she uses a lot of teaching tools with pictures and never starts telling a story or talking without introducing it with pictures, songs and/or finger plays. This is consistent with Facella et al. (2005), as that study mentions how songs and visuals help the ELL link the language and the object. Thus the findings suggest that visuals are needed when working with ELLs because it allows them to get an understanding of concepts that would otherwise be self-explanatory to English speakers.

In regards to gestures as a form of communication, it is important to note that the ECEs revealed that they provide verbal direction as they gesture to the ELLs. By providing the word for the gesture or action, along with the gesture, there is a tendency for the child to understand the point being made more easily. While Tabors (2008) research reinforces the opinions of the ECEs in the current study as she mentions how the teachers in her study *doubled the message* by combining the words with gestures, actions or a directed gaze, the ECEs in the current study made no mention of using a gaze to communicate with the children. I assume that this might be because their focus is on introducing the ELLs to language and although a gaze might direct them in some way, it is not actually giving them the word to associate with the action. Research further recognizes the use of gestures as a well-known technique in teaching ELLs. In this

technique, called *Total Physical Response* (TPR), the student learns new words as the teacher physically demonstrates each word (Schunk, 1999).

The Audiolingual Method (Saville-Troike, 2006) is an approach to language teaching that was widely practiced in second language acquisition. This approach utilizes repetition and habit formation to enhance language learning. Using repetition with English language learners has been further mentioned in research around second language learners by other researchers. Tabors (2008) mentioned how repetition enables an English language learner to understand what is being said and even learn words. In a study by Facella et al. (2005) where they interviewed 20 Early Childhood Educators from two school districts in the United States, they found that the teachers responded that repetition is an effective teaching strategy as it encourages children to practice words. The use of repetition in all these studies aligns with the findings from this current research study; the ECEs interviewed agreed that one of the needs of their ELLs is repetition. Thus the findings suggest that the more they repeat the language, the more chances the ELLs have to develop their English skills. Some ECEs also mentioned the fact that they notice that repetition enables the quicker development of language.

School Readiness

The findings suggest that there is a need for ELLs to be prepared for school. Young children that attend child care centers eventually begin school. The literature review informed the reader that school readiness refers to "a child's ability to meet the task demands of school" (HRSDC, 1997, p. 4). There are various skills that a child has to have developed upon starting school. Teachers in the school system follow a curriculum; (the teacher works under the premise that a child has acquired certain milestones in language development, such as receptive and

expressive language skills; social, cognitive skills etc. (HRSDC, 1997) when they begin school) that presumes the children have reached a certain level in their competencies when they begin school. Child care centers realize this and focus their energy on getting children ready for school and beyond. Language, which is one of the components of school readiness, is a typical example of this. According to HRSDC (1997), "Language skills at school entry are also related to later academic achievement" (p. 4).

Further findings revealed that the ECEs saw a need for ELLs to be exposed to language at an early stage in their life. One ECE made reference to the fact that the younger the ELL is upon starting at the centre, the more time they have to be exposed to English before starting school and the more proficient they can become in the language. Research enlightens us that there is a critical period in the life of a child where a "developing child is especially sensitive to the impact of specific types of experience" (HRSDC, 1997, p. 6). Scientists say children are ready to acquire language between nine months and five years. Furthermore, children's vocabulary increases tremendously if exposed to language between the ages of two and four years old (HRSDC, 1997). These critical periods happen to encompass the ages of children that child care centers specialize in working with.

ECEs relate to the need for one-on-one language support for ELLs. The lower staff/child ratio in child care promotes more one-on-one opportunities for ELLs to access this language support. The Day Nurseries Act (1990) regulates the standards that have to be met by child care centers in Ontario. The younger the age group, the more staff they have available to them, which is quite different from the school system as teachers are responsible for larger numbers of children, even in the lower grade levels. Having one-on-one support for ELLs aligns with research done by Facella et al. (2005), where teachers mentioned this as an effective

teaching strategy for their ELLs. Working with them individually makes it easier to ask them questions and elicit more discussion; the more the ELLs have opportunities to be verbal, the more they build their English language skills. One ECE specifically mentioned using the one-on-one time to read to the ELL and vice versa. Having this personal time with the ECE, as opposed to during a group activity with all the other children present, can make it less intimidating for the ELL and thus make them more willing to open up to information with the ECE. Houston (1990) echoes this opinion in mentioning that one-on-one time with ELLs gives them an opportunity to speak without the competition of first language children. This also gets these ELLs ready for what they'll face at school, as one of the skills they are expected to possess is being able to "have the skills to express ideas, feelings and experiences in a way that is understood by others" (HRSDC, p. 4).

Many ECEs agreed that skill development was an area of focus when preparing ELLs for school. While building their English foundation is crucial, ECEs see a need to work toward their overall development. One ECE addressed this when she mentioned that her priority while working with a particular ELL was meeting his self-help skills, independence, language and cognitive skills. Recall from the literature review, that an ECE is "a trained professional specializing in the early development and learning of children." (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2007, n.p.). She identified some milestones that he was yet to reach and began building on these. This resonates with the fact that language is only one component of school readiness; there are many other areas that have to do with the overall development of the child. In fact, The National Association for the Education of Young Children (n.d.), stresses the fact that all developmental domains should be included and be built upon to ensure school readiness. Working with the ELL in diverse aspects of development also correlates with what

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seems to be the overall goal of the ECEs interviewed, which is to help the ELL with the furtherance of language development and other skills that will be beneficial to them in the long-run.

The findings suggest the need around a partnership between parents, teachers and ECEs in order to facilitate English language learning. It is important to note that while a child is in child care, a family-centred approach is promoted. This views the child as a part of a larger system. Thus, communication is maintained with the parents. According to Deiner, Dyck and Hardacre (1999), "the parents are the experts of their children. The family is the constant in the child's life" (p. 9) so there needs to be constant communication with the family.

This partnership allows the work that ECEs do with the ELLs in the centre to complement that which is done at home with the parents, thus both complementing each other to bring about better results in the child. In an article by Facella, et al. (2005), connecting with parents is stated as an effective strategy to use with ELLs. For instance, the use of keywords that the ECEs mentioned; on one hand, the parents provide these words in their language so it can be used with the ELL at the centre; on the other hand, the ECEs provide the parents with English words so the parents can extend the English learning to the home. This collaboration is exactly what Tabors (2008) is alluding to when she proposes that ECEs work with the parents of second language learners.

This work with parents also enlightens ECEs about cultural issues. Cultural awareness makes one more sensitive to cultural differences. One ECE mentioned how they were learning how to say *"Happy New Year"* in Chinese. This can be an opportunity to take advantage of the partnership with parents and ask them about it. Another ECE shared the fact that these cultural differences are sometimes apparent in the physical needs of the children, for instance, eating

habits. This echoes Tabors (2008) work as she mentions that this has been the case in her research. Although, Tabors (2008) also mentions how this can be used as a learning opportunity where the parent comes in to speak to the children about the difference in culture. This broadens the experiences of the children, which can also lead to further interactions between the children as they act out such scenarios during dramatic playtime. This becomes possible because of the collaboration that the parent and the ECE have. This is what Coltrane (2003) points out in mentioning that parents and caregivers should work together in nurturing and educating young children. All these benefits only occur when a partnership is maintained.

It is noteworthy to mention the fact that the practices around cultural awareness issues that the ECEs have incorporated within their programs also mirror the research around anti-bias curriculum (Corson, 2000; Derman-Sparks, 1989, 1993). Corson (2000) mentioned that, "an environment rich in possibilities for exploring diversity sets the scene for practicing anti-bias curriculum" (p. 2). Anti-bias curriculum is an area of culture that has received much attention by researchers and practitioners in the field of ECE.

In regards to school readiness, the ECEs mentioned that there was a need for ELLs to benefit from partnerships developed between parents, school teachers (if possible) and themselves. It is important to note that although forming this partnership with the ELLs teachers (after they start school) is beneficial; this is not always possible due to confidentiality issues around sharing student information with others. This being said, some of the ECEs noted they are often able to shed some light on important information that makes working towards the success of the ELL possible. It is important to inform the reader that although the ECEs sampled in the current study mention that there are some restrictions here relating to what can be shared between the teacher and ECEs, there are some programs in Toronto, Ontario that provide

a seamless day program (Colley, 2005). The *Toronto First Duty* (City of Toronto, 2008) is a pilot project where Kindergarten, child care and parenting supports are within a single program. Thus, the principal and the ECE Director jointly run the program, and the children move through their day going from child care to school, within the same building. I believe such a program is a model for what the ECEs refer to here; and such a program can also alleviate the need to get around the confidentiality issues of exchange of information between ECEs and teachers and promote a barrier-free and stronger partnership needed to support ELLs.

Home Language Retention

The findings suggest a need to use keywords that the ELLs can recognize. Tabors and Snow (1994) suggest that children in new second language environments respond in one of two ways: they either speak their home language or they stop talking. Using words from their language communicates the message that the home language is acceptable, valued and important enough to be used here (Tabors, 2008).

Another explanation around the use of keywords is that these are words that children are familiar with; and this familiarity allows the children to feel comfortable in the English language environment. This ties in with the finding around child/staff language matches. ECEs mentioned the bond and sense of security that the children feel as they realize that staff can speak their language. While having a bond can be comforting to the children, research also talks about the fact that language retention is enabled when staff and children have language matches (Bernhard et al., 1996; Coltrane, 2003; Wong-Fillmore, 2000).

With the ever-increasing population of immigrants in Toronto, and Canada as a whole, there is more literature around the topic of home language retention. Research informs us that

children benefit from cognitive advantages that arise as a result of retaining one's home language (Genessee & Cloud, 1998; Ricciardelli, 1992).

Although the ELLs are learning English, findings from the ECEs further reveal the need for ELLs to be exposed to both their home language and English in the child care centres, as this brings about progress in their English acquisition. This is the case because children can hear the connection between these words; one said in their home language and then repeated in English, their new language. This is a well-stated fact within the research on second language learning. Cummins' (1981) *Interdependence Theory* clarifies the fact that one language can be used as a bridge for the second language. Building on knowledge from a first language and using this to develop competency in another language makes it quicker to acquire the second language.

The *Additive Process* (Genesee & Cloud, 1998) further elaborates on the use of both languages, where one is gained without losing the use of the other (home language). This way, there is no language loss. This seems to be what one ECE meant while speaking about the importance of keeping a child's home language: "it's a part of your culture", "you're keeping your home language alive because if you have family back home they can communicate with their grandparents." These statements are rooted in research as the retention of home languages does allow for continued communication between extended families (Bernhard, Landolt & Goldring, 2005; Menjivar, 2003).

Socialization

The ECEs revealed the difference between the extent of a child's socialization when they have fellow children with similar linguistic backgrounds and when they do not. The findings show that they will play more with children that speak their language whereas the opposite is the

case when there is a language mismatch between them and their peers. In one study by Tabors and Snow (1994), the English–speaking children treated ELLs as infants because they saw the ELLs inability to speak English as parallel to an infant that couldn't speak.

While the retention and use of home languages is a significant need, there also has to be opportunities for the children to interact with English speaking peers. By so doing, ELLs enhance their English speaking skills. Thus, socialization is a need for ELLs because they are not able to fully interact with their peers, without English. Furthermore, research shows that the child interactions aid language learning (Berk, 2005). Another ECE alluded to the fact that some parents place their ELLs in child care to learn English. This is because it is true that the interaction that goes on in child care makes it possible for ELLs to learn English skills. Houston (1990) suggested that the time it will take ELLs to learn English depends on how much opportunity they have to interact with competent English speakers.

Promoting social opportunities between ELLs and their English-speaking peers is an important facilitator of English language learning. One ECE mentioned how she rotates the children during small group activities so they get ample opportunities to play with one another. Encouraging social opportunities is extremely needful as Saville-Troike (2006) points out the fact that English expands when fluent English-speaking children join the group. Promoting social opportunities is also needed in situations where a child is shy or withdrawn, because, as Tabors (2008) notes, a child that is shy may have a tendency to be more cautious in the second language learning environment. Yet, the personality of an ELL can determine how quickly the child learns English. This point seems to resonate with some ECEs as they found this to be the case as they work with their ELLs.

Findings revealed that ELLs learn through play. Children will only explore their environment, which includes seeking out play opportunities, once they become comfortable and feel secure. The unique thing about this is that ELLs hear their peers talk, imitate them, and learn English, while playing with their peers (Tabors, 2008).

Conclusion

This research informs the reader that ELLs experience diverse needs during childhood years; those that attend child care centers have a need for sensitive and caring staff that are aware that these ELLs can become effective English language speakers if they devote their time and resources to this cause. Furthermore, the promotion of a second language-learning environment can earn ELLs competence that surpasses our imagination. If the staff at the centre have similar linguistic backgrounds as the children and encourage them to refrain from being silent but communicate by any means possible, be it through gestures or their home language, these children will thrive in their new English language environment.

It is important to note that, although, the initial purpose of this research project was to identify the needs of young English language learners through the lens of ECEs. Embarking on the interviews with the five ECEs brought about the realization that these particular ECEs have become well versed in the practices of working with ELLs in their child care centers. It is the opinion of the author that the findings could be quite different assuming the ECEs that participated in this study did not work in areas with a high percentage of recent immigrants. Furthermore, the implementation of these practices in the child care centers that these ECEs work in may not be representative of all centers, especially those centers that have not had

experiences working with linguistically diverse children. Such centers could benefit from this literature as they implement such practices toward working with ELLs in their centers.

The author, being particular to allow the voices of participants to be heard, decided to acknowledge this by sharing all information given in the interviews. This includes the ECEs perceptions of the needs of their ELLs and the way they meet these needs; which ultimately seem to echo the best practices within the field of ECE.

The ECEs in this study felt it is the use of a combination of ways in meeting their English language learner needs that matters, so it is important that the reader be informed that using one method in isolation will not suffice, but a combination of different methods is what is important. Thus, watching and understanding the child's needs are important.

Implications

The practices depicted by the ECEs in this paper informs this research and in turn can serve as a guideline for other ECEs that need support in working with ELLs in their child care centers. The dissemination of this information, by its inclusion in the literature, around English language learners in child care centers can bring about great strides in the Early Childhood field.

ECEs can reflect on what they practice in their centres and how to even improve in this area. The influx of immigrants is increasing so even child care centres that are not situated in highly populated immigrant areas of the city are being surrounded by increasing immigrant settlement; their young children are thus attending child care centres all over Toronto and surrounding areas.

This research brought the issue of home language retention to the forefront. It also embarked on shedding light on the importance of allowing ELLs to learn English by building on the already acquired skills from their first language.

English language learners can begin to learn a new language without feeling excluded from the group, since they can use their first language in communication till they have sufficient language in English.

Another implication of this research is that it will allow English language learners to appreciate their linguistic background, and thus their culture; and allow them to keep the language within their lineage, thus promoting healthy family ties.

Children, of all backgrounds, will be able to learn acceptance and diversity within a multi-lingual environment, as ELLs come from diverse backgrounds.

Limitations

The number of participants for this study was minimal. Only five Early Childhood Educators were interviewed so their statements cannot be viewed as generalizable to all other populations of ECEs that work with ELLs. Thus, a larger sample of ECEs could have produced a different and/or wider set of needs.

Also, ECEs work in a vast majority of settings, but this study was conducted with ECEs from child care centres only, thus the needs that ECEs specified here could possibly be different from those experienced by ECEs from other settings. The time restrictions for my project made it necessary for me to limit its scope.

In grounded theory, although category generation is to be completed when no new categories are emerging from recently sampled data, the time constraint associated with this

project did not allow for this. It is the opinion of the researcher that more categories might have surfaced if the time permitted. Thus, the modification of the grounded theory approach here is a limit to the study.

Although there were some limitations to this study, these limitations are not sufficient enough to negate the findings.

Recommendations

With the ever-increasing population of second language learners in child care, I recommend that there should be provision for environments where diverse languages are spoken, thus retaining the child's home language. This should include the presence of staff that have linguistic backgrounds that are representative of the children in their care so the children can benefit from these language matches.

Child care centers should provide opportunities for children to use their first languages in a meaningful way to add value and help in their acquisition of English language.

Although the findings brought many needs of ELLs to the forefront, one might be tempted to pick and choose which needs to meet, but the key to working around these needs is not picking which one to meet, but meeting them in their entirety. There needs to be consistency in the field of ECE so that all child care centers become accustomed to the use of the best strategies to use with ELLs.

Future Research Directions

It is important to realize that the diverse populations in child care today make it critical to engage in research on such topics. Having said this, language is only one aspect of culture but it

is not the only area that is lacking research; more research should be carried out in the area of cultural diversity in child care centers.

Table 1

Themes and categories derived from data analysis.

Themes	Categories
1. Sensitivity	1. Comfort 2. Guidance 3. Cultural awareness
2. Communication	1. Building English foundation 2. Visuals 3. Gestures 4. Repetition
3. School Readiness	1. Early exposure to language 2. One-on-one language support 3. Skill development 4. Partnerships
4. Home Language Retention	1. Keywords 2. English/home language combination 3. Child/staff language match
5. Socialization	1. Child language match/mismatch 2. Promoting social opportunities 3. Learning through play

Research Study Participants Wanted

Are you an Early Childhood Educator who currently works with children that came to Canada from another country, speak a first language other than English and are currently learning English Language?

We are looking for ECEs to participate in a research study entitled:

The Perceptions of Early Childhood Educators on the Needs of Young English Language Learners in Child Care Centres

What is required of participants: 1-2 meetings with you to interview you around the needs of English Language learners in your child care centre. Each session will be 45 minutes long.

Benefits: Information gathered from you will allow the voices of ECEs to be included in literature around English Language learners, thus providing a significant contribution to research.

Investigators:

Yinka Fakunle, ECE, B.A., Masters of Arts in Early Childhood Studies, School of Early Childhood Education, Ryerson University. ofakunle@ryerson.ca; (905) 799-2536
Jason Ramsay, PhD, Ryerson University, School of Graduate Studies; j2ramsay@ryerson.ca

How do I get more information:
If you are interested in participating in this research study or have any questions about it, please contact Yinka Fakunle at (905) 799-2536 or ofakunle@ryerson.ca
Tear off and take one of the numbers along with you.

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6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6

Appendix B – Consent Form

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Ryerson University
Consent Agreement

The Perceptions of Early Childhood Educators on the Needs of
Young English Language Learners in Child Care Centres

</div>

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to be a volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Investigators: Yinka Fakunle, B.A., MAECS program, Ryerson University, ofakunle@ryerson.ca
Jason Ramsay, PhD, School of Graduate Studies, Ryerson University, j2ramsay@ryerson.ca.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of my study is to get Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) perceptions on the needs of young English language learners in child care centres.
There will be 5 participants recruited for this study. The participants will be Early Childhood Educators that currently work with children who have come to Canada from another country, have a first language other than English and are thus currently learning English.

Description of the Study:
In order to understand the perceptions of the ECEs on the needs of young English Language learners I will conduct open-ended interviews. These sessions will be audio-taped, once you consent to this.

Sample question includes:
What do you perceive as the needs of young English Language learners in your childcare centre?

Location: In a private "booked" room in a library close to your home or workplace, or a private convenient location of your choice.

Time: The interviews will range between 1 to 2 sessions. Each interview will be 45 minutes long and will take place on weekday evenings or weekends.

What is Experimental in this Study: None of the procedures used in this study are experimental in nature. The only experimental aspect of this study is the gathering of information for the purpose of analysis.

Risks or Discomforts: I realize that you might feel that your competence around working with English Language Learners (ELLs) is being scrutinized and/or judged and this might make you uncomfortable in answering questions. I assure you that the information I collect during the interview has nothing to do with judging your competence in working with English Language Learners. The sole purpose of this research study is to advance research in the area of ELLs in child care centres. In fact, if you are uncomfortable at anytime during the interview you may choose not to answer any question(s) without providing reasons for your decision.

<div align="center">53</div>

Benefits of the Study: This study will allow me to gain experience in conducting research, which will be of use to me in my present and future work in the area of research. On the other hand, it is hoped that participating in this research project will allow the voices of ECEs to be included in the literature about English Language learners. My hope is that this research study will also provide a theoretic framework around the needs of English Language learners in child care centres. I cannot guarantee, however, that you will receive any benefits from participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The data obtained from you will be used for the purpose of research. All data will have codes to identify you so no names will be used, thus maintaining your confidentiality. Excerpts of what you say (without identifying your name) may appear in the final paper. The data will only be accessed by and discussed with my Major research supervisor. The report derived from this data will be accessed by the members of my research panel, which include the second reader of my research paper and my Program Director. The report will eventually be placed in the Ryerson University library for public access and could possibly be published in a journal in the future. The audio taped data from these interviews will be transcribed so data analysis can occur. The audiotapes and transcription notes will be stored in a secure filing cabinet for 1 year at which time the data on the audiotapes will be erased and the transcription notes will be shredded. Any information stored on a computer will be password protected on my personal laptop computer so no one else can access it.

Incentives to Participate: Although you will not be paid to participate in this study, you will receive a single $5 Tim Horton's gift certificate, as a token of appreciation for your time. This will be given once, at the end of the first interview. This single $5 gift certificate will be given whether or not you complete the study and whether or not you participate in 1 or 2 interviews.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with Ryerson University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are allowed.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions about the research, at a later time, you may contact.

Investigator/Study Coordinator: Yinka Fakunle
Telephone Number: (905) 799-2536

If you have questions regarding your rights as a human subject and participant in this study, you may contact the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board for information.

Research Ethics Board
c/o Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2K3
416-979-5042

Agreement:

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to participate in this study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this agreement to keep.

You have been told that by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

_____

Name of Participant (please print)

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

Note: By signing below, you agree to allow the researcher to audio-tape the interview(s).

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

Appendix C – Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Research Study: The Perceptions of Early Childhood Educators on the Needs of
Young English Language Learners in Child Care Centres

Date of Interview:
Time:
Interviewer:
Participant (coded):
Other relevant info:

Sample Questions:
- What are your perceptions on the needs of English Language learners in your centre?
- What role does literacy play when working with ELLs?
- Tell me about any needs portrayed by ELLs as they socialize with other children
- Tell me about how your daily routines impact ELL needs.
- Tell me about any needs around preparing them to start school.
- Tell me about any needs around their home language

I will probe for more descriptions when the need arises.

Probes:
- Can you tell me more about that?
- You mentioned….Could you be more specific?
- What would be an example of that?

References

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