

Zgutowicz, R. What effects does language anxiety have on ESL students' decisions to speak English in a middle school classroom? (2009)

This study investigates the effects language anxiety has on ESL students' decisions to speak English in the ESL and mainstream classroom. Data collection instruments include Pappamihel's (2002) English Language Anxiety Scale (ELAS) and qualitative investigations of language anxiety via individual interviews of middle school students in the sixth grade. ELAS results indicate levels of language anxiety in the mainstream and ESL classes, although language anxiety is significantly higher in mainstream classes. Student reports on the ELAS indicate higher levels of anxiety for female students, although language anxiety for males may be more moderate. Causes of language anxiety about speaking via student interviews vary, including peer humiliation, talking in front of native speakers, pronunciation concerns, and classroom environment. Uses of ELAS and recommendations for using this instrument as gathering data via interviews are discussed. Overall suggestions and recommendations for those involved in the educating/training students with language anxiety are discussed.

WHAT EFFECTS DOES LANGUAGE ANXIETY HAVE ON ESL STUDENTS'  
DECISIONS TO SPEAK ENGLISH IN A MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM?

by

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## DEDICATION

To my mother.

I thank God for you. Without you, none of this would have ever been possible. You taught and understood me before others and were there to inspire courage. Your love and inspiration is reflected in this work. It is my honor to dedicate this to the mother I love.

## EPIGRAPH

We acquire the strength we have overcome.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

It was all too familiar. Deplaning and looking for my host family waiting for me at the airport in Alajuela, Costa Rica. I remember the warm greeting by the host mother, then entering a car with them into the world of Spanish. What were they saying? Will I ever be able to communicate with the ease and speed in which they speak? I remembered some of it from high school, self-study, and brief stays in Mexico, but was largely unable to communicate by speaking. This world of speaking in another language was fascinating and mysterious at the same time.

My motivation for living with a host family and attending a language institute was to become fully proficient in Spanish, especially in speaking. It was living with a host family, learning from language teachers and fellow students, and speaking on the streets where this journey began. Learning how to become orally proficient was an incredibly challenging experience. It taught me much more than Spanish. There were many students and people I met along the way with this same quest. It taught me about the power of believing in what you can not see, courage to take risks, and willingness to be surprised.

My intent was to become fluent in Spanish by immersing myself in both the language and culture. I was motivated to become proficient in the language despite being an adult and having taken formal classes at the high school level. I remember perceptions I had about my pronunciation, what others thought about my language use, and

conversations with native English speakers learning Spanish as a second language. There were many challenges to confront about the opportunities of becoming a highly proficient speaker. I found many native English speakers learning Spanish as adults reluctant to take risks in attempting to speak Spanish. Further, many would choose not to speak Spanish outside of the classroom especially around native English speakers.

Even before learning about second language acquisition (SLA) theories in my graduate course work, I was aware of factors that influenced my own propensity to speak Spanish. I was motivated to learn Spanish and believed I could. Today, my oral proficiency in Spanish has provided me with many positive opportunities and adventures that I would have otherwise not had. For example, I am able to communicate with many native Spanish speakers from a variety of Spanish speaking countries and use it to bridge gaps in the classroom. However, learning how to speak in another language presents many challenges.

There are risks associated with speaking another language. Young (1990) discovered that speaking 'on the spot' or in front of a class of students induces the highest anxiety from a students' point of view. As an adult, I was concerned with my comprehensibility in pronunciation or syntax. There were English speaking students who practiced Spanish with me and others who resisted. There were also forms of anxiety that I experienced when speaking that manifested themselves in different ways. For example, when trying to initially speak Spanish I was often misunderstood, which led to frustration. There were also emotive reactions such as language anxiety when not speaking at the same rate of a native Spanish speaker. At the same time, there were

critical turning points that positively impacted my success with the language. I recall starting to think in Spanish. Additionally, there were supportive native Spanish speakers who encouraged me and affirmed my strong level of oral proficiency. These and other experiences in learning a second language helped shape my understanding about SLA. The topic of factors influencing oral language proficiency is a fascinating area of study. I also wrote a research paper on the topic of language anxiety. Along with other learning experiences this suggested the need for further inquiry and investigation on the topic of language anxiety and decisions to speak another language.

Now, as a teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL) I seek to understand what factors influence learners' decisions to speak. What effect do factors such as language anxiety have on ESL students' decisions to speak in the classroom? Taking risks in speaking English is a fascinating area for discovery, especially when taking into account beliefs affecting those decisions. Why are some students of the same linguistic background willing to take risks in speaking and have seemingly minimal fear when speaking? Does the willingness to take risks affect those decisions? Do people or factors affect those decisions to speak? At the conclusion of this research, my intentions are to describe factors that may affect students' decisions to speak English in the classroom. Hopefully, this research can further the discussion and assist in inspiring second language learners' quest to ultimately become fully proficient speakers. By identifying noticeable affective and cognitive factors affecting intermediate and predominantly advanced students' decisions to speak English, this research could present additional insight to current research. Ultimately with this research, teachers, professors, educational

professionals, and others intrigued in learning about factors affecting second language learners' decisions to speak, may find this useful within the worldwide landscape of second language learning and teaching.

The middle school ESL learner has unique factors to consider in the classroom. I have noticed some middle school ESL students are more reluctant to speak in the classroom than others and am aware of the silence an ESL learner projects in mainstream classes. Nervousness, refusal to participate, and limited risk taking in speech are some of the observations I have made. When comparing talking in mainstream to an ESL classroom one advanced English learner said she does not talk in the mainstream classroom. Perhaps a pull-out ESL classroom provides a comfort level to non-native speakers that they can not find in a mainstream classroom. Learning about students who are challenged by these factors and how they respond positively and/or negatively in the classroom may shed light on second language pedagogy. Furthering the study of factors affecting students' decision to speak could suggest current implications to possibly assist teachers of these and other students.

Motivations for this research have also resulted from my personal experiences in speaking another language. I was curious about why certain decisions were made to resist speaking English even when students chose to live in a foreign country and attended a language institute to become proficient in a second language. My teaching career has included both special education and general education within my first five years in the classroom. These years of experience prepared me to begin my past four and half years as an ESL teacher. The environments in which I have taught have included

being a university professor in Central America and teaching ESL at the elementary level, which included newcomers to advanced language learners. My most recent two years have included ESL instruction of predominantly intermediate and advanced ESL students at the middle school level. Hence, my interest and experience in ESL includes both varying ages and developmental stages in learning. Even though this research will concentrate on middle school students, my overall experience with language learning include a broad range of learners.

### Guiding Questions

As I reflected on the topic of language anxiety and oral language, I identified a central question. I wanted to know what effect language anxiety has on ESL students' decision to speak English in a middle school classroom? Other sub-questions included the following: How do students' perceptions of themselves and others influence their willingness to speak English? Are there critical turning points that resilient English Language Learner's (ELL's) experience that propel them beyond challenging obstacles of speaking? Why do middle school ESL students have language anxiety? How does language anxiety in the mainstream classroom compare to language anxiety in an ESL classroom?

### Background of Study

Research suggests there are factors such as language anxiety that are significant areas to consider when speaking (Horwitz, E., Horwitz, M., & Cope, 1986; Krashen, 1988; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Pappamihel, 2001; Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic, 2004; MacIntyre, 2007; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). Anxiety is investigated as an

affective variable and is introduced and presented in the context of Gardner's (1979, 1985) discussion of the socio-educational model. In this study of language anxiety in the classroom, studies done at a university by Horwitz et al. (1986) and Pappamimiel's (1999) research with middle school students is considered. Within the framework of choosing to speak, MacIntyre (2007) presents an intriguing challenge to research within his Willingness to Communicate (WTC) framework, specifically what happens within the 'moment' of language learner's decision to speak. There is a large body of research on language anxiety as a variable in language learning (Horwitz et al, 1986; Young, 1990; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Pappamihiel, 1999, 2001 & 2002; Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic, 2004; MacIntyre, 2007; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). Pappamihiel (2002) found there are different levels of language anxiety with middle school students depending on the context. When comparing mainstream classes compared to ESL classes, it was found that students experienced more stress in their interactions with mainstream students among other conclusions. Investigating how language anxiety affects speaking in the mainstream and ESL classroom may provide more knowledge about English language acquisition. There appears to be limited research in the area of language anxiety and speaking, especially with middle school students. Students in this study compared speaking in the middle school mainstream to speaking in ESL classes. Understanding what middle school students think about speaking may provide direction to meet the learning needs of our students. Additionally, more research may need to be conducted with students in middle school and the effect of anxiety on language learning since it has already been identified as a factor.

### Role of Researcher

The role of the researcher in this study was more of an emic role. I am the teacher of the pull-out students I researched. As a teacher, I interviewed students to try to get their perspectives on choosing to speak English in the ESL classroom compared to the mainstream classroom. The majority of the students researched were advanced English language learners. As a researcher and teacher, I had a certain background knowledge and experience that I observed in the classroom.

Identifying and understanding important factors motivating or de-motivating student's decisions to speak in the classroom can not be overlooked (MacIntyre, 2007). Chiefly, student opportunity to practice speaking and/or be in an environment where they are comfortable to speak was a factor among others to examine more closely. Are there pivotal points that shape current and future decisions to speak? As a researcher, investigating English usage in the classroom may lead to more insight about meeting the learning needs of ESL students. I will have the opportunity to share these findings that are clarified in the methods chapter.

### Significance for Further Research about Speaking and ESL

ESL students account for a significant portion of students in the United States. According to a 2003-2004 census from the U.S. Department of Education, ESL students comprise nearly 3.8 million or 11% of the population in public schools (Hoffman & Stable, 2006). Oral language is an important component of language development, especially in the area of ESL (Cummins, 1994). Students need more opportunities to discuss their learning. Clearly, literacy is critical to future academic success in

education: This is especially true for ESL students learning English in a US classroom. However, comprehensible oral communicative competence in the areas of pronunciation and formulating coherent ideas is also a critical need in the ever-increasing global economy. The need for bilingual workers in our world is important. Identifying and learning about what students need to become successful communicators in English should assist them beyond the years spent in the classroom and benefit them as working professionals and members of society. This investigation may shed further insight to students learning English as a second language and those that assist them in this process.

#### Summary

This study concentrates on the effect of language anxiety for middle school students learning English as a second language. Language anxiety appears to be a component affecting student decisions to communicate in English. Investigating what variables are affecting ELLs' propensity to speak English may be an essential area to consider in SLA. Oral comprehensibility is a critical component for students to master both in school and beyond. Addressing problematic areas affecting students' decisions to speak is an area needed for further research, especially for ESL students in middle school. Learning about what variables are affecting students experiences and choices to speak can provide further insight to both teachers and students in learning how ELLs can effectively communicate.

#### Chapter Overviews

In chapter one, I proposed a purpose, reason, and necessity for this study. The context of this research was introduced, as was the role as researcher, and assumptions

and beliefs I have as a researcher along with my background. In chapter two, I present a review of literature relevant to the study of factors involved with language anxiety and students' decision to communicate in English. The literature review explores a variety of issues about language anxiety, such as Gardner's (1979,1985) discussion of the socio-educational model, Horwitz's, et al. (1986) investigation of language anxiety with university students, Pappamihel's (1999) research with language anxiety with middle school students, and MacIntyre's (2007) willingness to communicate (WTC) research. Finally, this review includes developmental levels of middle school learners and students overall in the area of communication and language development. Chapter three discusses the various methods used for collecting data. Chapter four provides the results of this study. In chapter five, I reflect on the data collected from this study. Then, I address the limitations of the study, implications for additional research, and recommendations for teaching students with language anxiety.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

There are certain affective factors to consider when teaching second language learners. What effect does language anxiety have on ESL students' decision to speak English in a middle school classroom? This chapter begins with a brief overview of second language research in the area of motivation and attitudes in SLA and how the study of language anxiety developed within Gardner's (1979) discussion of the socio-educational model. Language anxiety will be addressed as a salient affective variable as well as how it is identifiable in second language learning. Language learner responses to language anxiety are also considered. This review includes MacIntyre's Willingness to Communicate (WTC) regarding student decisions in language learning. Next, typical developmental levels of students around the adolescent-age with a focus in oral communication are examined. The chapter concludes with current opportunities and the need for future research with language anxiety.

### Motivation Research

Gardner (2006) presents theoretical explanations of motivation from three different vantage points within SLA: societal, activity-centered, and individual. The societal perspective of motivation centers on motives for learning another language within the communal framework. From this perspective, there are varying demands politically or socially for learning a language or maintaining one's first language (L1). This was one of the original perspectives in motivation. Gardner adds that within the

societal perspective, someone may be motivated to learn another language in order to communicate with people such as clients about technical issues in another country or to get a job. Language learners may also learn a language to revive their ethnicity. In both cases, pressures from society motivate the learning of another language (Gardner, 2006).

The second perspective of motivation research is connected to the task at a certain moment in time (Gardner, 2006). From this perspective, Gardner looked at Dornyei and Otto's (1998) explanation of motivation as having three phases in their language learning model: preactional, actional, and postactional. Individuals in this model: include objectives, make goals, perform actions, experience results, evaluate success, and then act in view of that. According to Gardner (2006) Dornyei and Otto's (1998) concept of motivation is more focused on the present and does not examine unconscious aspects of motivation. This "present" aspect of motivation is focused at the conscious level. He believes it is helpful because it provides explanations for certain behaviors at specific points in language-learning (Gardner, 2006). Dornyei (2001) added that Gardner's research can be considered a process and takes into account motivation over time. Finally, the third perspective presents motivation from a more individual perspective. In a review of research, Gardner (2006) presents the "individual perspective" that led up to the socio-educational model.

In Gardner's discussion of the socio-educational model he addresses individual differences. When discussing the model, he "proposes that the beliefs in the community concerning the importance of learning the language, the nature of skill, development expected, and the particular role of various individual differences in the language

learning process will influence second language acquisition.” (Gardner, 1985, p.146). As illustrated in Figure 2.1 in the socio-education model, cultural beliefs are a precursor in the “social milieu” to four individual differences; intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety.

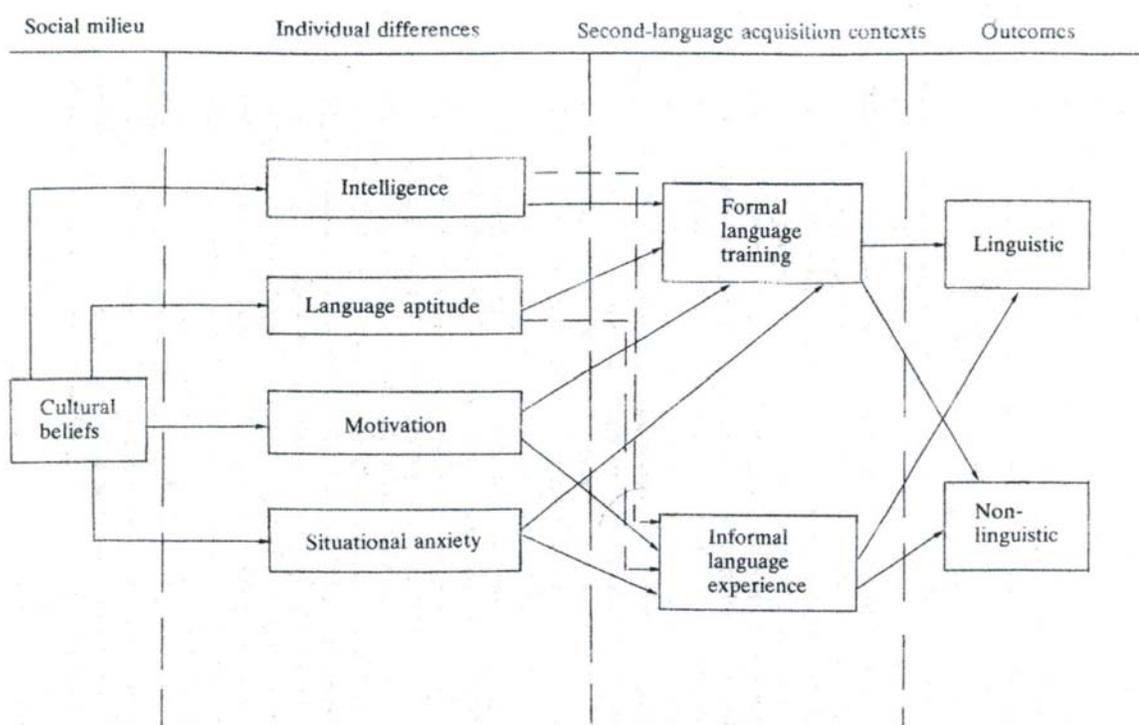


Figure 2.1 Socio-educational Model

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From “Gardner, R.C. (1979). Social psychological aspects of second language acquisition” by Giles, H. and St. Clair, R. N., 1979, *Language and Social Psychology*, p. 196.

## Motivation

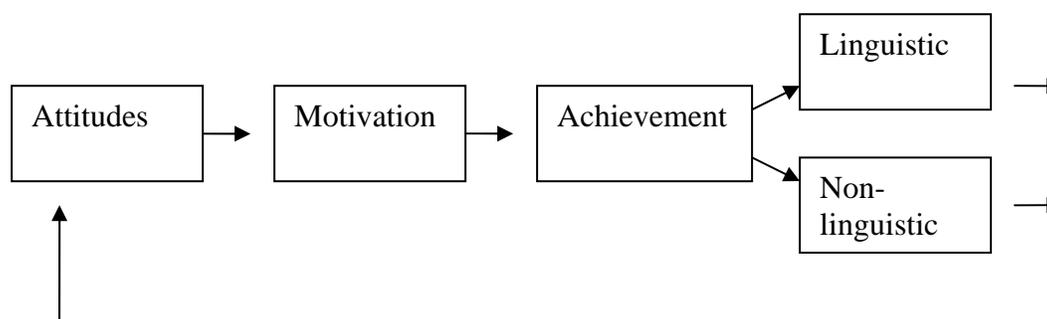
Gardner defines (1985) motivation as pertaining “to the effort, want (desire), and affect associated with learning a second language and is seen as important in determining how actively the individual works to acquire language material” (p. 147). It is important to note that affect is included in Gardner’s definition of motivation along with effort and desire. In defining motivation, Dornyei (2001) suggests that it is necessary to look at the decision of an action and effort made, coupled with persistence. Hence, motivation responds to the complexity of these three underlying questions: “why” humans choose to act, “how hard” they persist in what they are doing, and “how long” they maintain the action (Dornyei, 2001). For example, we could look at how motivated a young basketball player named Luis is to become a better free-throw shooter. Luis may want to become a better free-throw shooter because there is a competition to see who can make the most consecutive free-throws on his team, which answers the question “why”. He may practice everyday which is “how hard” he persists. Practicing for two to three hours after school when he practices tells us “how long” he is motivated to do so.

### Socio-educational Model and Attitudinal Components

According to Gardner (1979; 1985), the socio-educational model developed from numerous investigations is comprised of four classes or variables: intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety. In combination, these variables all impact each other, and combined together they show how effectively a student will perform. This model is used to assess optimal learning conditions in language as evident in Figure 2.1. These variables are not mutually exclusive and interact with one another.

The socio-educational model has two attitudinal components, which are integrativeness and attitudes projected toward the learning conditions (Gardner, 2006). He stresses that these factors work to support and impact motivation in SLA. Further, motivation and language aptitude serve as two central variables that impact what is achieved. When commenting on the complexity of integrativeness Gardner (2006) states, “It refers to the individuals cultural openness and interest in other communities and languages and favorable attitudes toward the target group as well as integrative orientation. Integrativeness is a higher order construct with many levels.” (p.354)

Gardner presents a schematic representation featuring the relationship attitudes have towards motivation, which is then followed by achievement as shown in Figure 2.2.



*Figure 2.2 Attitudes, Motivation and Achievement*

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From “Gardner, R.C. (1979). Social psychological aspects of second language acquisition” by Giles, H. and St. Clair, R. N., 1979, *Language and Social Psychology*, p. 207.

In order to understand how this relationship is formed, there needs to be an understanding of what is meant by attitudes. Gardner (1979) presents attitudes to include a social

component when students learn a language. The ESL classroom and regular classroom can provide this social context for learning a language.

As seen in Figure 2.2, attitudes preceded motivation in the schematic representation. Hence, “attitude serves to maintain the desire and effort in the long and tedious process of acquiring the language” (p. 206, Gardner, 1979). According to this representation, attitude plays a critical role in motivation.

Similar to motivation, attitude has many components (Gardner, 2006). Attitudes involve the projecting of learner perspectives towards something. Gardner (1979) explains that attitudes can refer to the teacher, the language, or group speaking the target language. He adds that attitude can be perceived as a general attitude about a foreign language or at a specific level. A specific level could be learning English where there is a particular activity associated with English, whereas a general attitude could be an overall attitude about learning a language. –

According to Gardner (1979) individual differences in a range of social attitudes influence individual differences in motivation, which consequently are responsible for variance in what is achieved. Achievement in this sense is seen as having linguistic and non-linguistic results and both can impact attitudes as seen in Figure 2.2. Gardner emphasizes that this model would not be valid if attitudes were not viewed as supporting motivation. From Gardner’s (1979, 1985) perspective, the model is largely dynamic: It does not stay the same. The interplay of variables in context creates non-linguistic results that impact consequent affective variables in a process that is ongoing as evident in

Figure 2.1. The following section explores anxiety as a learner attitude that may affect motivation, which is central to the current study.

### Anxiety in Second Language Acquisition

Anxiety is identified as a distinct affective variable in second language research (Horwitz, 1986, et al., Young, 1990; MacIntyre, 1995; Horwitz, 2000; Dornyei, 2005; & Gardner, 2006). Anxiety is not usually identified as a solitary unit, but comprised of parts that have varying characteristics (Dornyei, 2005). Anxiety according to Dornyei (2005) is complex and is useful to examine in comparison with two categorical comparisons. Beneficial or facilitating anxiety versus inhibitory or debilitating anxiety is the first categorical comparison. Within the beneficial or facilitating framework, anxiety tends to not deter performance, but can facilitate it. For example, an athlete may be anxious before a championship game, but use the anxiety to concentrate further in performance. Hence, anxiety facilitated the athlete's performance. Conversely, 'worry' under the cognitive domain can have debilitating effects on performance. An ESL student's excess worry can have a debilitating affect on speaking in front of others. The second categorical framework with language anxiety is trait or state anxiety. MacIntyre (1999) includes situation-specific anxiety within this framework.

Trait anxiety pertains to how a person is predisposed to have anxiety in varying situations (Dornyei, 2005). Dornyei believes this can be due to the disposition of the person. MacIntyre (1999) adds that anxiety can be "situation specific." Situation specific anxiety is similar to trait anxiety because both refer to the probability of being anxious in a particular situation. For instance, ELLs may experience situation specific

anxiety when called on by a teacher to speak English in a classroom situation. Another type of anxiety is state anxiety. State anxiety is the emotive reaction to the present circumstance and is more of a 'moment-to-moment' experience (MacIntyre, 1999; Dornyei, 2005).

In order to understand state anxiety, it is helpful to note its distinction. MacIntyre (1999) differentiates trait anxiety and situation-specific anxiety from state anxiety. Trait and situation-specific anxiety refer to the probability of becoming anxious in a particular circumstance, whereas state anxiety refers to how a person experiences anxiety. MacIntyre (1999) portrays state anxiety as having influences on emotions, cognition, and behavior. He adds that behavioral effects of this state anxiety can include a person trying to leave a situation and bodily effects in the form of a rapid heart beat or a palm that sweats. An example of this could include speaking in front of a large audience.

#### Language Anxiety as an Identifiable Affective Variable

The research conducted in this paper considers language anxiety as a variable that can influence students' decisions to speak English. It is important to consider the varying research conducted in the area of language anxiety. Horwitz, E., Horwitz, M. & Cope (1986) assert that language anxiety is an identifiable variable in learning a foreign language. Specific cognitive characteristics such as self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors are unique anxieties within the aim of learning a foreign language. Additionally, Krashen (1988) acknowledged the effects of the affective filter in SLA in relation to input. The higher the affective filter the less input someone is able to process. This affective filter includes emotive reactions such as language anxiety.

In a study with university students in Texas, Horwitz, et al. (1986) examined the effects working with counselors had on anxiety. At the onset of the study, beginning language class students at the university were offered the opportunity to join a group called “Support Group for Foreign Language Learning”. Initially, 78 out of 225 elected to join the group. Two groups of 15 were formed due to limitations with time and space needed. These support groups assisted in developing the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Then 75 university students, 39 males and 36 females in Spanish introduction classes took the FLCAS during the third week during the semester. In the study, students with elevated anxiety levels stated that they are fearful of speaking a foreign language in front of class, fear of being “less competent” compared to other students or having them negatively critique them, and fear of committing errors. In addition to fear of making mistakes, another finding was students not understanding all language input, which they also refer to as communication apprehension.

Horwitz, et al. (1986) acknowledged that the researchers and theorists had already discovered language anxiety’s role in SLL. They argued in their review that measures of anxiety had not been identifiable in learning a foreign language. They found only Gardner made use of an instrument to measure classroom language anxiety, but with students learning French. Additionally, minimal achievement investigations examined the “subtle effects” anxiety can have on learning a foreign language.

On a different note, there has been debate about the viability of language anxiety as a variable in SLA (MacIntyre, 1995; Sparks, Ganchow & Javorsky, 2000; Horwitz, 2000). Sparks, et al. (as cited in Horwitz, 2000) argue that foreign language anxiety has a

mild affect on language acquisition. They believe that there is a cognitive language disability as the cause for poor performance with a language that is then manifested as language anxiety. In other words, a language disability is posited as the reason for language anxiety. Horwitz, (2000) agrees that this is possible; however, there are language learners who are anxious about learning a language separate from cognitive processing limitations. Language anxiety itself can inhibit language learning. Although there is disagreement between Sparks, et al. (2000) and Horwitz, (2000), this debate centers around reading and language anxiety. This paper focuses on language anxiety and oral communication in a second language.

MacIntyre (1995) adds that the cognitive aspects of language learning involve storage through encoding and processing for retrieving. Anxiety can interrupt these processes by dividing the focus of students. Anxious students concentrate on both the task and how they react to it. An example of this is students focusing on the social aspects of other students in the class when responding to a teacher in front of a class (MacIntyre, 1995). The student's anxiety of peers significantly influences student's efforts to speak.

Dornyei (2005) characterizes language anxiety as an individual difference variable along with WTC, creativity, learner beliefs, and anxiety to name a few. He suggests that the individual difference variable of language anxiety is an essential learner characteristic in acquisition and use of a second language. Language anxiety has a considerable impact with other second language variables. Dornyei's (2005) concern about language anxiety is its integration in paradigms of research. He found that

language anxiety, like other individual difference variables, is an independent variable and at other times a part of a larger structure of research. Even though there are areas where language anxiety is unresolved, Dornyei (2005) predicts it will be a variable to consider in the area of language performance. He believes the “the measurement of language anxiety in one way or another is likely to remain an indispensable background variable component on L2 studies focusing on language performance” (p. 201).

#### Language Learner Responses to Language Anxiety

Language learners can have varying language anxiety responses learning another language. There have been studies or research in the past 20 years which take into account the significance of language anxiety as an affective variable (Horwitz, et al., 1986; Young, 1990; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Young, 1999; MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, & Donovan, 2003; Pappamiel, 1999; Pappamihiel, 2001; Pappamihiel, 2002; DeAndres, 2003; Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic, 2004; Dewaele, 2005; MacIntyre, 2007; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). Horwitz, et al. (1986) found complications with speaking in the classroom with students as the most common concern of language learners at the learning skills center at the University of Texas. These findings are similar to Young (1990), who found that speaking ‘on the spot’ or in front of the class of students induce the most anxiety from the students’ point of view. Horwitz and colleagues identified various anxiety provoking reactions involved in language learning that include apprehension, forgetfulness, sweating, strong heartbeat along with challenges with concentration among others. Pappamihiel (2002) found strategies students use to decrease anxiety are avoidance, responding in Spanish, writing to express, and recruiting friends as

“intermediaries.” Gardner (1985) also discussed how a language learner could use avoidance as a reaction to language anxiety. Hence, responses or reactions students experience in SLA are real and identifiable.

As discussed above, Horwitz, et al. (1986) found in their research that there is a deep level of self-consciousness experienced in their study. There is a risk that is associated with speaking in front of others. Students fear they will not understand all language input, fear not being as proficient compared to peers, and committing errors in a language among other responses (Horwitz, et al., 1986).

In order to identify the significance of language anxiety, scales have been developed. Horwitz, et al. (1986) pioneered the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and presented reasons for student language anxiety. Pappamihel (1999) devised the English Language Anxiety Scale (ELAS), which was created to measure language anxiety for ESL students living in the United States. In contrast, the FLCAS is used to measure students studying languages like Spanish as a foreign language. The ELAS has been used with 178 middle school students, compared to FLCAS, which includes university level students. Hence, there are tools used to measure language anxiety.

Studies have found teachers can also influence levels of students' anxiety (Horwitz, et al., 1986; Young, 1990; Young, 1999; Pappamihel, 1999; Pappamihel, 2001; Pappamihel, 2002; DeAndres, 2003). In a study of 178 Mexican-born middle schoolers, Pappamihel (2002) found that there were different kinds of language anxiety and significant difference in gender. She used the English Language Anxiety Scale

(ELAS) to statistically analyze general levels of anxiety of these students between ESL and mainstream classes. Focus groups were also conducted that included strategies for coping and how interactions with Chicano students elevated anxiety levels.

According to Pappamihel (2002), there are different levels of language anxiety with middle school students depending on the context. These contexts include a student being fearful of being evaluated in a negative way, anxiety taking tests, apprehension to communicate, and identity. She found that students experienced more stress in their interactions with mainstream students. There is higher overall language anxiety in mainstream versus ESL. She adds that it is hard for teachers and administrators to look at achievement of ESL students as an indication of English language anxiety. However, in ESL class, students experienced anxiety with academics. Pappamihel (1999) believes that English language achievement anxiety is more prevalent in the ESL classroom whereas performance anxiety is found in the mainstream classes with peers and teachers. She believes performance can be overshadowed by peers (Pappamihel, 1999). In ESL classes language anxiety is more associated with academic tasks (Pappamihel, 2001, 2002). Her findings “imply a deeper relationship among English language anxiety, identity development, and interethnic relations” ( Pappamihel, 2002, p.348). Additionally, in terms of gender, Pappamihel (2001, 2002) found girls as more anxious than boys.

The teacher also has a role in impacting language anxiety (Pappamihel, 1999, 2001, 2002). In the mainstream the teacher can serve as a person who mediates among ESL and peers who are native English speakers (Pappamihel, 2002). She added that, “in

the mainstream classroom where English language anxiety is more closely related to interpersonal anxieties, the teachers role is often deemphasized in favor of the importance of peer relationships” (p. 349). In the ESL classroom the anxiety is more associated with ‘academic tasks’ and the teacher can use activities to decrease anxieties in this area (Pappamihiel, 2002). She adds that starting conversations with students who are possibly struggling with high anxiety could decrease the stressors before habits emerge.

Horwitz, et al. (1986) remarks that teachers can assist with students’ cognitive means of dealing with circumstances causing anxiety and can alter the pressure of the context in which students can learn. She asserts that the latter is challenging. Hence, language anxiety has implications with a student learning a second language in both mainstream and ESL classes, gender, and among peers and teachers in the classroom.

In a different vein, Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic (2004) found there was an increase in anxiety among university students for a final rather than a mid-term exam. Yan & Horwitz (2008) looked at learner perceptions around personal and pedagogical factors via interviews with university students in the city of Shanghai. Students with an age range of 17 to 21 with high, moderate, and low anxiety who have studied English for at least six years, were interviewed in focus groups. Conclusions support the negative effect of language anxiety and achievement. Additionally, their study suggests a need for attentiveness to “personal and sociocultural” factors in language learning and motivation’s relationship to anxiety. (Yan & Horwitz, 2008)

When Yan & Horwitz (2008) examined the beginnings and effects of anxiety they discovered that personal concerns as strongly impacting anxiety and context played an

important role. There were certain characteristics in learning a language perceived such as, “good memory, sensibility to language, an inability to imitate and good listening and mental abilities” (p. 159). Also there were perceptions that their fellow classmates had more talents in these arenas. They suggest staying away from comparisons with other students and sustaining “interest and motivation” can be useful as a remedy to anxiety. Pappamihel (2002) focus group discussion found ESL students concerns of non ELL’s laughing at them. The most common coping strategy used by students was avoidance.

Young (1990) also found anxiety concerns of speaking ‘on the spot’ within student perspectives. Yan & Horwitz (2008) posit the importance of research from students’ perspectives as a new avenue of research. Considering the above research it is possible that there are varying affects language anxiety has in SLA. Another way to consider language anxiety in SLA is by looking at the factors that influence students’ decision to communicate.

#### Willingness to Communicate

MacIntyre (2007) characterizes decisions students make to speak in a second language as their willingness to communicate (WTC). WTC is the moving together of processes that are psychological in nature regarding communication at a particular moment in time. Additionally, it looks at conditions to speak (MacIntyre, 2007). WTC is an important direction of study in motivational research but is not used as a prediction in the social motivation models. However, according to Gardner (2006), it is seen as an area for future research. MacIntyre tries to answer questions such as why students who are learning a second language are not second language speakers or apt to speak a second

language. MacIntyre (2007) believes there are many social and linguistic factors to consider in order to answer this question. According to Dornyei (2005), WTC is an individual difference variable that brings together other variables in SLA that integrate both psychological and linguistic components. Dornyei (2005) asserts WTC as the final goal of second language instruction and in this context it can be viewed as both the end and the means simultaneously.

MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, & Donovan (2002) researched WTC with variables such as gender, age, perceived competence, motivation, and anxiety in a second language with seventh to ninth grade students in a French speaking course. MacIntyre, et al. (2002) found that the WTC increased from grades seven to nine along with perceived competence and rate of communication. Interestingly, language anxiety was fairly stable throughout these grades and boys cited higher anxiety levels in grade nine. In contrast, the disparity in WTC became smaller between the first and second language as the students moved through the language program.

Language anxiety and WTC have been studied to investigate students' decision to speak a second language. MacIntyre (2007) addressed the choices to speak as a volitional process in learning a second language. Because students have a free will to speak, the level of WTC can increase or decrease quickly as circumstances change. For example, students' WTC may be lower in a mainstream class with native English speakers compared to an ESL class. Hence, there are states such as language anxiety that can influence second language learner's WTC. According to Macintyre (2007), future research that focuses on the 'moment of decision' in WTC with the individual student can

likely generate intriguing results to complement research. Learning about the forces that stop students from speaking in a moment in time could provide the key to understanding students who do not generally speak in the classroom, but are language learners (MacIntyre, 2007). When considering the above variables, it is important to consider the typical developmental and communication levels among students in the age group under investigation in this study.

### Development and Communication of Adolescent Students

In order to provide a point for comparison to explore language anxiety and speaking, it is essential to take into account the typical developmental level of the middle school students in this study. Language development is a process students experience in their growth through adolescence. When investigating language anxiety, it can be helpful to look at current research of typical language development and communication of students to provide context for research with middle school students. Johnson & Johnson (2005) present four general purposes for language development among children who are in grades four to six: (1) language for information and comprehension, (2) literary uses and expression, (3) critical analysis and evaluating, and (4) social interaction. Johnson & Johnson (2005) elaborate on oral language from the vantage point that students' speaking develops in varying ways. They can read aloud in a classroom to convey mood and read from an array of authors. Students may develop oral arguments for persuasive reasons and are more discriminate when listening. Verbal and nonverbal skills are sharpened to get better at communication. More attention is paid to listening attentively and the varying roles speakers and listeners have when using oral language. Language can be

used both expressively and with style to fit the situation and audience (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). At the age of twelve, students like conversations with adults and students or friends around their age (Wood, 1997). This may be less evident with English language learners who are challenged by expressing themselves orally, since this research was more general in nature.

Wood (1997) also examined developmental levels of students around the age of twelve or sixth grade (which can be considered as the start of middle school) and suggests that there are developmental factors to be considered. He notes that the central developmental struggle is identity and true friendships since learners at this stage have a central need to be around friends. In contrast, they can seek to learn independently as well as work in a group. Wood adds that at this age their adult personality starts to develop, they may be insightful and have more self-awareness. Peers are more necessary to their lives than adults. They may also question authority. However, it is important to note that these students want to “see and feel” the approval from not only their peer group, but adults, as they develop into responsible citizens of the adult community (Wood, 1997). Hence, there are variables that play a role in their development in their relationships with peers and adults.

As students progress to early adolescence (grades six to eighth), they generally understand the workings of friendship. According to Rawlins (2008), students tend to have same-sex friendships which can have strong conformity characteristics. Students consider friends to be treated with sensitivity and justly. This includes the friendships forged within the world framework of family, peers or other students, school, and the

greater society. This suggests that peer relationships are a considerable factor to consider when observing how children learn how to communicate in a language.

According to Nussbaum & Fisher (2008), communication competence is a concern in the development of how people communicate and is connected with competence linguistically from infancy to adolescence. Chiefly, as time passes, communicative competence increases. Nussbaum & Fisher (2008) state that media plays a role and there is still a lack of knowledge of the life-span of communication. Hence, developmental knowledge levels in communication can vary considerably.

Language development should also be considered with ESL students since there are other factors to consider about their second language acquisition. In the field of ESL, language development can be viewed from the perspective of proficiency. Cummins (1994) argued that there are misconceptions about language proficiency among ESL students. According to Cummins, there are cognitive and social demands in which to view how ELLs acquire language. His model contrasts high cognitive demands and low cognitive demands compared to context-embedded and context-reduced. From Cummins' standpoint, in a context-embedded setting, ELLs can negotiate meaning because of all the interpersonal and circumstantial cues. This type of communication chiefly concerns communication outside the classroom. Conversely, context-reduced environment forces ELLs to negotiate meaning from linguistic clues since there are less contextual clues. ELLs are dependent on linguistic cues, focusing on the knowledge of language within itself. Cummins points out that language development in the conversational sense develops at a more rapid rate of about 2 years which is called Basic

Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). This contrasts with Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). CALP is academic English in the classroom. Cummins stressed that there are major individual differences in the pace of SLA and in students reaching the goal of BICS and CALP.

In light of current research and horizons for future research within the area of speaking and language anxiety, there are several questions I would like to address. Chiefly, what effect does language anxiety have on ESL students' decision to speak English in a middle school classroom? Other sub-questions include the following: How do students' perceptions of themselves and others influence their willingness to speak English? Are there critical turning points that resilient ELL's experience that they utilize to propel them beyond challenging obstacles of speaking? Why do middle school ESL students have language anxiety? How does language anxiety in the mainstream classroom compare to language anxiety in an ESL classroom?

It has been established in research that language anxiety is a salient affective variable in SLA. In the examination of credible studies it is more evident that there has been minimal research conducted from the perspective of language anxiety and students decisions to speak English. This research attempts to explore this domain quantitatively and qualitatively by combining the English Language Anxiety Scale (ELAS) and interviews from a case study perspective with middle school students in the sixth grade. Prior research from Pappamihiel, (1999) included ELAS and/or focus groups with middle school students, but did not include individual interviews from student perspectives. Yan & Horwitz (2008) posit the need for future research from student perspectives with their

research with university students. Additionally, looking at the changing circumstances in MacIntyre's (2007) WTC deserves further investigation. Seemingly most research in the area of language anxiety has been with language learners learning a foreign language. This study is unique in that involves an ESL teacher researching ESL middle school students in the context of a middle school setting. The aim of this research is to portray English language learners perspectives on decisions to speak English.

This chapter presented a brief historical background of second language research in the area of motivation and SLA. It addressed how language anxiety developed from the socio-educational model. Discussion of issues in language anxiety established it as a salient affective variable in the area of attitudes and motivation. WTC was also addressed as a variable to consider with language anxiety. Current and future research with language anxiety was presented. Developmental levels of language learners in this study are addressed within the context of oral communication. The next chapter will present methods used to collect data to answer questions concerning the effect language anxiety has on students' decision to communicate.

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This investigation is designed to explore how language anxiety affects ELLs' decision to speak English and to identify the factors contributing to language anxiety inside and outside the ESL classroom. A fair amount of research has been conducted on language anxiety using different research instruments with older students studying languages at the university level as mentioned in chapter two. However, it appears minimal research has been conducted at the middle school level exploring language anxiety. In my study, I would like to know what affect language anxiety has on ESL students' decision to speak English in a middle school classroom. My sub-questions include the following: How do students' perceptions of themselves or others influence their willingness to speak English in the mainstream and ESL classroom? Why do ELL's have language anxiety at school? Is there a difference in language anxiety between mainstream and ESL classrooms? What makes ESL students more comfortable speaking English? Are there critical turning points in ELL's language experience that propel them beyond challenging obstacles in speaking such as language anxiety?

In order to explore these questions and gather data, this study employed primarily two research instruments. First, sixth grade middle school students responded to the English Language Anxiety Scale (ELAS) survey to measure anxiety levels in the classroom. This research instrument was originally designed by Pappamihel (1999) to quantitatively measure language anxiety with ESL students and was used originally with

middle school students. Second, students were selected to participate in an interview based on the results of the ELAS questionnaire and anecdotal observations by myself. Further, the interviews were conducted by me, the researcher.

This chapter provides a description of the methodologies used in this investigation. First, the reasoning and analysis of the research design is posited with the primarily qualitative paradigm of this study. Second, data collection procedures are explained. Finally, the verification of the data and biases are presented within this research paradigm.

### Qualitative Research Paradigm

The design of this study was chiefly qualitative in nature. According to Merriam (1995), qualitative research is looking for meaning that participants created. Interviewing students to find out more about their perspectives of the effects of language anxiety fit this paradigm. Secondly, Merriam added that another characteristic of qualitative research is that the researcher is the chief instrument for data gathering and analysis. In this study, the teacher was the primary researcher and instrument for collecting and analyzing data. A third characteristic of Merriam's framework of qualitative research included fieldwork. The fieldwork included anecdotal observations and interviewing of the researcher's students.

The landscape of this research does have a quantitative component to it. The ELAS questionnaire originally developed and tested by Pappamihiel (1999) was used initially before interviewing students to establish language anxiety. Questionnaires that are created with items where students have to respond to a particular item fit this category

(Dornyei, 2003). The level of statistical analysis, however, for this study did not entirely duplicate that of Pappamihiel's (1999) initial research and Pappamihiel's (2002) additional analysis of her prior study. Her analysis included a paired-t test to analyze general levels of anxiety comparing ESL to mainstream environment and used ANCOVA measurement to include study of variables such as years in U.S., gender, reading, and writing. Pappamihiel also included self-report and focus groups with the ELAS and this study did not. This investigation primarily employed the ELAS questionnaire. This investigation was different from Pappamihiel and others since students were interviewed independently and not in focus groups. Further, human subjects involved in Pappamihiel's (1999) were from a mean average of 2.47 years in the country with a variance from one to 12 years in the United States. Additionally, subjects involved in her study ranged in proficiency levels from beginning to advanced learners. In contrast, this study had students of predominantly advanced speaking proficiency, many who have resided in the country for more than 10 years.

In qualitative research, it is important to use more than one instrument to triangulate the data (Merriam, 1995). The ELAS has already been successfully tested with middle school students, so it provided an initial baseline from which to learn more about factors influencing language anxiety among ESL middle school students. The interviews provided a more descriptive analysis of anxiety from students' perspectives to learn more about what anxieties students carry with them and how they successfully manage their anxiety.

The specific method presented in this study was from the case study perspective. McKay (2006) admits that case studies can be challenging to define since they differ in focus and data researched. She adds that a case study focuses on individual participants' perspectives and is concentrated on lively accounts and rich description. Interviewing students placed an emphasis on participants' perspectives. Merriam (1995) emphasizes the importance a case study places on the meaning of those involved. Interviewing students allowed for students to elaborate about what language anxiety means for them. As a researcher, this presented the opportunity to gather a wealth of data. The ELAS was used coupled with anecdotal teacher observations to identify students with high anxiety levels, differences of anxiety between mainstream and ESL classes and students with minimal anxiety.

## Data Collection

### Participants

Students initially involved in this study involved 30 sixth grade male and female ESL middle school students ranging from ages 11 to 13 years old. One was not included in this study since she was a newcomer and majority of the students are advanced speakers with some intermediate students. From these 29 students, six were interviewed and recorded digitally via Audacity. Audacity is a computer software program that allows for digital voice recording among other features. My goal was to descriptively analyze data from four students. All have lived in the United States for at least four years. Four of the students were selected from six. These four students had an overall average residency in the United States of about nine years. They were selected to interview as a

result of the combination of ELAS questionnaire and anecdotal teacher observations. One out of four was given further consideration due to articulate responses to field questions. They were assigned the pseudo-names Juan, Anna, Karina, and Mateo. As shown in Table 3.1, three of the four students interviewed have resided in the U.S. their entire or nearly their entire life and all have at least advanced oral language proficiency. Scores from the Woodcock-Munoz oral language proficiency instrument are included for the four students interviewed. Their scores ranged from 3.5 to 4.0. Their oral language proficiency was derived from a state assessment tool called the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS).

Table 3.1

<i>Years in US and Oral Language Proficiency of Interviewees</i>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Years of Residence in US</b>	<b>Oral Language Proficiency</b>	<b>Woodcock-Munoz</b>
Juan	11	Advanced-High	4
Karina	12	Advanced	3
Anna	12	Advanced	4
Mateo	5	Advanced	3.5

As evidenced in the interview participants, the majority were in the range of advanced oral proficiency. Some of the students in the classroom were Mexican immigrants and others were born in the United States or Puerto Rico, but were predominantly of Mexican descent. Additionally, there were students with Central American ancestry. Most of the students had parents who are native Spanish speakers

except for one Vietnamese student. The majority of students speak Spanish as the primary language at home and some speak English with their parents. All of these students involved in this study are in ESL pull-out classes. The four students interviewed above all speak Spanish as their first language and are of either Puerto Rican or Mexican/Latin descent. A pull-out class is where the ESL students receive integrated instruction in the subjects of Reading and English separate from other students in the school.

#### Location

The middle school was comprised of about 900 students, including grades sixth to eighth. The students serviced by ESL comprised around 10 percent of the school population. Many students in ESL classes received free and reduced lunch and lived in a Spanish-speaking neighborhood. The school was situated in an outlying suburb of a major urban area in the southwestern region of the United States. Students involved in the study were in a pull-out integrated language arts class and were mainstreamed for all of their other core and elective courses, besides several special education students.

#### Data Collection Technique 1

The first data collection technique used was the ELAS from Pappamihel (2002). It was comprised of twenty questions in both English and Spanish as shown in Appendix A. Pappamihel's (1999) has since reduced her original ELAS twenty questions. This study used the English translation from Pappamihel's (2002) ELAS questionnaire for investigation and the newcomer's bilingual Spanish questionnaire was not included as mentioned earlier in chapter. Students rated responses on a scale of 1 to 5 from strongly

agree to strongly disagree. Pappamihel's (1999) ELAS has already been tested and found to have internal consistency reliability, and sufficient construct validity. Using the ELAS questionnaire that was already tested and found to be appropriate with middle school students fit the purpose of this data collection technique. This quantitative instrument assisted with establishing the presence of language anxiety, along with anecdotal observations, and assisted in the selection process for interviewing candidates and final data analysis.

#### Data Collection Technique 2

The second data collection technique was observation. This observation was more anecdotal in nature because of my role as a teacher. Merriam (1995) discussed the role of observer in qualitative research and offers some suggestions. One reason to make observations is to allow for understanding of context or identifiable examples. She believed this can allow for certain points of reference with interviews.

This technique was not exhaustive in nature and was used to help identify and confirm interview candidates of students who demonstrated anxiety and those that did not demonstrate a high level anxiety in the ESL classroom. As a teacher, anecdotal observations had their advantages because of my role as a teacher with the students on a daily basis. Teaching students on a daily basis allowed me to see patterns of classroom behavior. Students were observed directly when I was instructing and when they worked with peers or groups in the class. The main function of the anecdotal observation rubric in Appendix C was to support the ELAS for future interview candidates. Observations looked at reluctance to speak for longer than one sentence responses or students needing

prompting from the teacher. Students who showed avoidance behavior in speaking were noted. These students may have exhibited nervousness when speaking, were not eager to volunteer responses, and/or not confident to initiate conversation in classroom in English although they may have talked with peers. Cultural considerations such as eye-contact were considered as many students do not sustain eye-contact with adults which has little relevance for fear of speaking English. Students on the other end of the spectrum who exhibited little reluctance to speak were also chosen as potential interview candidates.

### Data Collection Technique 3

The final data collection technique employed in this investigation was interviewing. There are suggestions about what makes for an effective interview (Seidman, 1991, Merriam, 1995, Rubin & Rubin, 1995 & McKay, 2006). Interviewing is a deliberate way to learn about what people think, feel, and experiences in their life (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This data collection functioned more as a case study since my role as an interviewer needed to allow for ambiguity and to be open-minded for possible insight that could generate more research in the future (Merriam, 1995).

Before generating questions for my interviews, one important component was selecting the right informants to interview (McKay, 2006). Interview candidates were selected by reporting high levels of anxiety, differentiated anxiety levels from mainstream and ESL classroom and/or low levels of anxiety on the ELAS. Further, one candidate was selected for insightful and elaborate responses when some of the questions were field tested. Some candidates had more characteristics of anxiety from anecdotal observations in the ESL classroom than others. Some candidates were not selected

because students were uncomfortable with the prospect of interviewing and/or other reasons. Interviewing requires willing participants as mentioned earlier. Fortunately, the initial core group of selected interview candidates agreed to be interviewed.

The ELAS provided an objective baseline for looking at how levels of language anxiety affected the students inside and outside of the classroom. The anecdotal observations made by the researcher allowed for a more informed decision of potential interview candidates. Six candidates were interviewed and four were selected for a more descriptive analysis.

To have a successful interview, Merriam (1995) presents varying ways to structure questions in a manageable framework. Interview questions can be identified on three levels from highly structured, semi-structured, to unstructured. Merriam emphasized that the biggest chunk of an interview should be directed by the issues that the researcher is exploring. The precise wording or order of the questions is not entirely outlined ahead of time. By interviewing in this way the researcher can look for what is emerging and possible new concepts to be discovered (Merriam, 1995). The technique for interviewing in this study followed some of these above suggestions since the aim was to get a wealth of data from the students' perspectives. Appendix C lists the interview questions chosen for this study. Students were also asked additional questions after interviews for clarification and further discovery.

## Procedure

### Participants and Materials

All of the sixth grade ESL students that completed the ELAS questionnaire were potential candidates for interviews. As mentioned above the participants were selected based on responses to the questions from the questionnaire. Anecdotal observations were included in this analysis. Participants who experienced high levels of language anxiety were selected as well as students on the opposite end of the continuum.

Six students were interviewed and recorded via Audacity, a computer software program. Students completed the ELAS questionnaire from the original research study by Pappamihel (1999). It was read aloud in class in English for the 29 participants and vocabulary was clarified when necessary. Six students were initially interviewed in the library after taking the questionnaire. The students involved in the interviews were at or above advanced level English proficiency, so the interviews were conducted in English.

### Data Analysis

The ELAS questionnaire was the first instrument used in data collection. Data was analyzed and disseminated from the 29 students. Attempts were made to look for levels of language anxiety that students reported for particular responses. Comparisons were made in regards to individual student responses, mainstream and ESL classroom differences, and gender. This allowed me to make quantitative generalizations of language anxiety levels for sixth grade ESL students inside and outside the ESL classroom. This data is represented in tables as evidenced in chapter four.

Individual analysis of responses was conducted to select interview candidates with both high and low anxiety levels. Anecdotal observations began at the start of the year since that is a natural role of the teacher and most subjects selected for interviewing shared similar language anxiety characteristics. During the study students were identified using the rubric in Appendix C.

Data analysis in interviewing involved coding and notation of student responses into categories (Merriam, 1995). The interviews resulted with me graphically organizing most of my data from interview questions in a table format. I looked for themes from the interview questions. Categories were organized with responses under the questions in Appendix C, which include sub-questions in the context of the research question. For example, student responses were organized categorically in a table about where they are most comfortable speaking. A greater detail and discussion of the categories that emerged will be presented as evidenced in chapter four.

#### Verification of Data

As mentioned above, the ELAS questionnaire was already found statistically to have internal consistency, reliability, and sufficient construct validity (Pappamihiel, 1999). In this study, there was analysis conducted with calculating the percentages of respondents reporting themselves as having language anxiety, neutral or no language anxiety. These quantitative findings were entered in a table and calculated to verify accuracy of submission. Interviews coupled with the ELAS and teacher observations assisted with reliability of findings. During interviews, efforts were made to continue with follow-up questions to assist with triangulation and data gleaned from the ELAS.

Comparing digital recordings to notes confirmed what was actually said. Many student responses to some questions were transcribed via audio recordings to verify what was said and assist with further analysis and synthesis of responses. Other student interview responses required multiple playbacks and attempts were made to transcribe what students said as accurately as possible. This allowed for accurate accounts of emerging perspectives in the interviews to ensure internal validity of data.

### Ethics

Participation of students in this study was voluntary and dependent on consent of parents. Students could at anytime decide not to be interviewed for the study without any negative consequences. Some students chose not to be interviewed. The information shared was confidential and did not have a negative impact on how they were academically graded. As a researcher who is a teacher of the students interviewed it was important to be aware of what McKay (2006) terms as a power relationship. Since teachers are inherently in roles of power she offered some suggestions to reduce bias. Students needed to be made aware of how they could benefit from the interview and how the information would be shared. Throughout the interview I tried to keep the best interests of the student at the forefront and provided ongoing feedback to the student.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, there were various means presented for collecting data as to the effect language anxiety has on students' decision to speak English in the classroom. The ELAS was a quantitative technique to measure the general effects of language anxiety with sixth grade ESL students. Qualitative anecdotal observations assisted with the

selection of potential interview candidates. Furthermore, the data collection technique of interviewing students as a case study was another qualitative method employed to ensure triangulation and internal validity of data collection and analysis. The next chapter provides the results of this investigation.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects language anxiety has on ESL students' decisions to speak English in the mainstream and ESL classroom. This chapter discusses the results of the ELAS and individual interviews conducted. Decisions made during the course of the study regarding the use of the ELAS and the interviews with students are presented. Finally, the relationship between the results of this study and the relevant research discussed in chapter two is addressed.

After administering the ELAS survey with comparison to anecdotal observations, I began the selection of possible interview candidates. Conducting these procedures assisted in providing me with a well-rounded vantage point and insights about my findings from student perspectives. There were many unknowns about what the results of the study would be since there appears to have been minimal research in this area with middle schools and individually interviewing ESL students. This includes research with an actual middle school ESL teacher combining quantitative ELAS survey and interviewing individual ESL students from the case study perspective. At the same time, this research has resulted in noticeable conclusions, namely the effects of language anxiety as a salient affective variable with ESL students in the mainstream (regular) and ESL classroom and factors affecting their decisions to speak English. The data presents both relevant and salient effects language anxiety has with middle school ESL students'

decisions and comfort levels while speaking English depending on classroom environment, peers, and personal experiences with language.

The discussion will begin with the analysis and synthesis of the results of the ELAS survey data set among 29 ESL students. Next, a description of the interviews will be presented. These results and descriptions will be presented in the context of themes and emerging ideas. Synthesis and connections from four interviews and ELAS survey about decisions ESL students make to speak English in the classroom will be presented. Included will be brief discussion of a speaking rubric devised regarding ESL classroom observations as their classroom teacher. This research project has revealed several intriguing findings, especially with students with advanced oral language proficiency and confirmations about suspicions regarding anxieties relating to ESL student decisions to speak English in the ESL and regular classroom. At the end of this chapter, further suggestions, remarks, and analysis of the findings will be proposed.

#### Administration of English Language Anxiety Scale (ELAS)

The ELAS survey questions and scale (Pappamihel, 1999 and Pappamihel 2002) was administered to 30 middle school students in the sixth grade. From these 30 students, 29 were selected for analysis since the other student was a newcomer. There were 18 females and 11 males involved in survey analysis. Even though the newcomer was given the Spanish translation for ELAS, the student was not selected for comparative reasons since she was receiving additional bilingual support from a teaching assistant and/or peers on a near daily basis and had beginning language proficiency. The other 29 students had between intermediate and advanced academic language proficiency and all

had advanced social language skills in English. Special education qualification of learning disabilities among other learning challenges prevented some student(s) from academically achieving the overall advanced oral level. The respondents included students of Mexican, El Salvadorian, Honduran, Vietnamese, and Puerto Rican descent; the majority were of Mexican/Latin descent. Administration of this quantitative research instrument was conducted in several classes. The ELAS survey questions were administered orally along with a document camera to provide visual scaffolding.

At the onset of administration, students needed assistance with interpretation of scaled questions since they did not understand words like *without preparation* or *tremble* included in the questions. Interpreting the significance of the difference in the scale of 1 to 5 in relation to the questions comparing strongly disagree, neutral, and strongly disagree was also explained. An effort was made to reassure students that they would not be in trouble for answering questions in a certain way and/or to write down their responses from their perspective. Suggestions for teachers/researchers with further administrations of the ELAS will be addressed in greater detail and in chapter five.

#### English Language Anxiety Scale Results

The results from the survey clearly indicate language anxiety in both ESL and mainstream classes. In averaging all of the responses of the ELAS that focus on anxiety in the mainstream, 37% of the respondents indicated they agree or strongly agree on the five point scale compared to 24% in ESL classes. Further, 17 % of respondents for mainstream classes were neutral compared to 14% in ESL. Neutral on the five point scale acknowledges a possible level of anxiety, so the overall level on anxiety comparing

regular and ESL classes could be considered higher. Below in Table 4.1 are the ELAS questions listed in Appendix A. This table includes the number of respondents out of 29 who chose each selection on a scale from strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA) below each question. The numeric value is the actual number of respondents out of 29 responding to that question. The numeric value adjacent to number in parenthesis is the percentage of students responding to that item in the question.

Table 4.1

*ELAS Questions and Responses Chosen*

	SD	D	N	A	SA
	1	2	3	4	5
1. In ESL classes, I forget how to say things I know.	6(21%)	6(21%)	11(38%)	5(17%)	1(3%)
2. In regular classes, I forget how to say things I know.	6(21%)	6(21%)	10(34%)	4(14%)	3(10%)
3. In ESL classes, I tremble when I know I'm going to have to speak in English.	12(41%)	5(17%)	6(21%)	2(7%)	4(14%)
4.. In regular classes, I tremble when I know I'm going to have to speak in English.	12(41%)	4(14%)	3(10%)	4(14%)	6(21%)
5. In ESL classes, I start to panic when I have to speak English without preparation.	12(41%)	5(17%)	4(14%)	3(10%)	5(17%)

6. In regular classes, I start to panic when I have to speak English without preparation.

7(24%)      6(21%)      5(17%)      6(21%)      5(17%)

7. In ESL classes, when I speak English, I feel like a different person.

13(45%)      2(7%)      3(10%)      9(31%)      2(7%)

8. In regular classes, when I speak English, I feel like a different person.

15(52%)      1(3%)      3(10%)      6(21%)      4(14%)

9. In ESL classes, even when I'm prepared to speak English I get nervous.

12(41%)      5(17%)      3(10%)      3(10%)      6(21%)

10. In regular classes, even when I'm prepared to speak English, I get nervous.

10(34%)      2(7%)      6(21%)      5(17%)      6(21%)

11. In ESL classes, I'm afraid that my teachers are ready to correct every mistake I make.

10(34%)      8(28%)      5(17%)      4(14%)      2(7%)

12. In regular classes, I'm afraid that my teachers are ready to correct every mistake I make.

6(21%)      7(24%)      7(24%)      1(3%)      8(28%)

13. In ESL classes, sometimes I can't express my true feelings in English and this makes me uncomfortable.

12(41%)      4(14%)      2(7%)      6(21%)      5(17%)

14. In regular classes, I can't express my true feelings in English and this makes me uncomfortable.

11(38%)      2(7%)      2(7%)      5(17%)      9(31%)

15. In regular classes, I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of native speaking students.

9(31%)      3(10%)      5(17%)      3(10%)      9(31%)

16. In ESL classes, I get nervous and confused when I'm speaking English.

14(48%)      7(24%)      2(7%)      4(14%)      2(7%)

17. In regular classes, I get nervous and confused when I'm speaking English.

12(41%)      4(14%)      4(14%)      5(17%)      4(14%)

18. In regular classes, there are so many rules in English, I feel like I can't learn them all.

12(41%)      5(17%)      4(14%)      4(14%)      3(14%)

19. In ESL classes, there are so many rules in English, I feel like I can't learn them all.

16(55%)      6(21%)      4(14%)      1(3%)      2(7%)

20. In ESL classes, I'm afraid that native English speakers will laugh at me when I speak English.

17(59%)      3(10%)      1(3%)      4(14%)      4(14%)

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\*\*These results reflect the entire sample size and percentages are rounded. Questions 15 and 20 are paired for later comparison even though wording is different. Comparison is also made with 13 and 14 with the omission of the word "sometimes" in question 14.

Before I synthesize and analyze the results of the ELAS, it is important to note the wording of four particular questions out of 20. This is because in Table 4.1, the comparison sets of questions between mainstream and ESL are devised in a manner in which they are worded identically other than the onset phrases of "In ESL classes" and

“In regular classes”. One notable exception is the comparison between questions 15 and 20 when comparing speaking in front of native speakers of English.

*Question 15: In regular classes, I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of native speaking students.*

*Question 20: In ESL classes, I'm afraid that native English speakers will laugh at me when I speak English.*

As shown above, there is a difference in the wording of the questions when comparing questions 15 and 20. The other exception is the omission of the word “sometimes” in question 14 about not being comfortable with expressing true feelings in English when compared to question 13. While 14 questions in the ELAS have some reference to oral language, which is the principle investigation of this study, the use “speak(ing) or say” in the wording of questions. The other six include descriptors which could refer to oral/written English. For example, “expressing true feelings, correcting mistakes, and the amount of rules” in English was considered by myself in the context of speaking as the theme even though it may include or be interpreted as some form of literacy.

#### ELAS: Mainstream Versus ESL

There were notable differences in the results of overall anxiety levels between ESL and mainstream classes. Table 4.2 shows the results comparing key differences in three sets of paired questions from Table 4.1. These sets compare ESL and mainstream language anxiety with the entire sample size. In question comparison, there were several noted differences in higher levels of anxiety between ESL and mainstream as noted in Table 4.2. These percentages were calculated and rounded from x number of responses

divided by 29. Respondents who marked strongly agree or agree in their responses are considered to have language anxiety and were included in the responses.

Table 4.2

*Key Differences of Language Anxiety in ESL vs. Mainstream*

Question #/ Classroom Location	Language Anxiety Triggers/Reactions	% Language Anxiety in ESL/Mainstream
Ques. # 18/ ESL*	Rules in English	10
Ques. #19/ Mainstream		24
Ques. #3/ ESL	Tremble to speak	21
Ques. #4/ Mainstream		34
Ques.#20/ ESL**	Afraid of laughter Q 20	28
Ques. #15/ Mainstream**	Self-conscious Q15	41

\*exact wording of each question can be found in Table 4.1.

\*\*As mentioned in chapter, questions 15 and 20 are compared even though they are worded differently. Both Q 15 and Q 20 are with native English speakers.

In Table 4.2, questions 18 and 19 that stated “there are so many rules in English, I feel like I can’t learn them all” had the highest difference of 14% more anxiety in the mainstream classroom. There was a difference of 13% between mainstream and ESL class in question comparison 3 and 4, “tremble when I know I’m going to have to speak English,” and questions 15 and 20 comparing self-consciousness and fear of laughter with native speakers of English. Additionally, there were slightly smaller differences of language anxiety of 10 % in questions 5 and 6 “panic without preparation,” 11 and 12

“afraid teachers are going to correct every mistake”, 13 and 14 “can’t express my true feelings in English”, and 16 and 17 “nervous and confused” while speaking. These comparisons indicate an overall higher level of anxiety in mainstream versus ESL classes and are consistent with Pappamihel (2002). Strikingly, there were higher percentage levels of language anxiety in mainstream classes in every question besides questions 7 and 8. It is important to note that overall anxiety levels were high in both ESL and mainstream classes, with anxiety exhibited over 30% of the time for over half of the survey questions. The highest levels of language anxiety were in questions 13 and 14 on not being able to “express my true feelings in English” in mainstream at 48% when

Table 4.3

*Percentage of Language Anxiety in ESL vs. Mainstream*

Question#/ Class Location	Language Anxiety Triggers/Reactions	% Language Anxiety in ESL/Mainstream
Ques. 13/ ESL	Expressing true feelings	38
Ques. 14/Mainstream		48
Ques. 7/ ESL	Feeling like a different person when speaking	38
Ques. 8/ Mainstream		34
Ques. 9/ ESL	Nervousness when speaking although prepared to speak	31
Ques. 10/Mainstream		38
Ques.#20/ ESL	Afraid of laughter Q 20	28
Ques. #15/ Mainstream	Self-conscious Q15	41

\*Both Q 15 and Q 20 are with native English speakers.

compared to 38% in the ESL classroom. These and other percentages of students reporting language anxiety in questions 7 and 8, 9 and 10, and questions 15 and 20 are listed in Table 4.3.

In looking at the responses it is evident that about one-third of respondents exhibited high levels of language anxiety in the mainstream environment. One of the overall triggers or reactions students had was related to expressing true feelings at 48% in mainstream classes compared to 38% in ESL. Further, feeling “like a different person” from questions 7 and 8 was reported by 34% in mainstream and 38% in ESL. Self-consciousness or fear of laughter when speaking was also a concern reported by 41% in mainstream classes and 28% in ESL. Other notable overall language anxieties in the mainstream above 30% included the following: question 4 “tremble when know I have to speak English” at 34%, question 17 “nervous and confused when speaking” at 31%, and fear “that teachers are ready to correct every mistake” at 31%. According to the ELAS it is evident that there are certain triggers or emotive reactions in the classroom, which include speaking English. There are also notable differences in language anxiety and gender when comparing the mainstream and ESL classroom.

#### ELAS and Gender

In comparing the results with regards to gender, female respondents included 62% of respondents to males 38%. Appendix D includes individual student responses to individual questions from Table 4.1. Students #1 to #18 are girls and student #19 to #29 are boys. The level of anxiety reported by girls was markedly higher, especially in

mainstream classes from the results of the ELAS in Table 4.4. Girls reported higher levels of language anxiety in mainstream classes with the exception of question sets 1 and

Table 4.4

*Percentage Language Anxiety Reported by Girls- ELAS*

Question#/ Class Location	Language Anxiety Triggers/Reactions	% Language Anxiety in ESL/Mainstream
Ques. 13/ ESL	Expressing true feelings	50
Ques. 14/Mainstream		61
Ques. 5/ ESL	Panic to speak without being prepared	33
Ques. 6/ Mainstream		50
Ques. 9/ ESL	Nervousness when speaking although prepared to speak	39
Ques. 10/Mainstream		50
Ques. #3/ ESL	Tremble to speak	28
Ques. #4/ Mainstream		44
Ques. #11/ ESL	Fear about teacher correction of every mistake	28
Ques. #12/ Mainstream		44
Ques. #16/ ESL	Nervousness and confusion speaking	28
Ques. #17/Mainstream		44
Ques.#20/ ESL	Afraid of laughter Q 20	28
Ques. #15/ Mainstream	Self-conscious Q 15 *Both Q 15 and Q 20 are with native English speakers.	44
Ques. 7/ ESL	Feeling like a different person when speaking	39
Ques. 8/ Mainstream		39

2 as well as 15 and 20. Most of the questions were included in the table since the percentage of girls reporting anxiety was fairly high. Girls reported overall ELAS anxiety levels exceeding 30% in 13 questions which included questions 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17. Notably, in Table 4.4, girls reported anxiety levels of 61% in mainstream for question 13, not being comfortable in expressing “true feelings in English”, compared to 50% in ESL classes. In Question 6, 50% of girls reported starting “to panic” when speaking English in the mainstream without being prepared, compared to 33% in ESL (Question 5). Conversely, they reported 50% anxiety in the mainstream, 39% in ESL for question 10, stating that even when prepared to speak there is a feeling of nervousness. Hence, preparation to speak does not seem to affect their emotive responses to speak in the mainstream since their responses are identical at 50%. This suggests that their anxiety is due to speaking with or without preparation.

Question sets 3 and 4, 11 and 12, 16 and 17, and 15 and 20 were identical, with girls reporting anxiety levels of 44% in the mainstream compared to 28% in ESL. The triggers or reactions girls reported included trembling when they know they “have to speak English” (questions 3 and 4), fear of teacher readiness to correct all of their mistakes (questions 11 and 12), and getting “nervous and confused when I’m speaking English” (question 16 and 17). In question 15 in the mainstream 44% of girls reported being self-conscious while speaking amongst native speakers compared to 28% of girls feared being laughed in the presence of native speakers. In question 15, 44% of girls reported being self-conscious while speaking in mainstream classes and comparatively 28% reported fear of being laughed at in ESL in question 20. Additionally, 39% of the

girls reported language anxiety about feeling “like a different person” when speaking in both ESL and mainstream classes (questions 7 and 8).

Cumulatively, girls reported higher levels of language anxiety on ELAS in mainstream classes at 43% compared to 31% in ESL classes. They reported neutral on 11 % in mainstream compared to 13% in ESL. This indicates that their anxiety levels may be even greater. In looking at the difference between their language anxiety comparing mainstream to ESL classes, they reported higher levels of anxiety in mainstream on every question set besides questions 1 and 2. Question set 7 and 8 were identical at 39%.

The highest difference in language anxiety was 17 % with questions 5 and 6 (about starting to speak without preparation). Language anxiety was 16% higher for questions 3 and 4, 11 and 12, 20 and 15, and 16 and 17 as seen in Table 4.4. The lowest level of anxiety reported by girls was 6% for question 19, which talks about the difficulty of learning all the rules in English in mainstream. This level of anxiety reported was 16% less than question 18. In summary, these results suggest that girls have high levels of language anxiety. Boys also indicate levels of language anxiety, but the results are quite different.

In analysis of the ELAS questionnaire, boys reported anxiety levels consistently lower than those of the girls. There are only three instances in questions 7, 12, and 15 where boys report anxiety levels over 30% as seen in Table 4.5. The highest levels of anxiety reported by boys were 36% in ESL classes when feeling like a different person when speaking (question 7). They also reported high anxiety levels of 36% in

Table 4.5

*Percentage of Language Anxiety Reported by Boys- ELAS*

Question#/ Class Location	Language Anxiety Triggers/Reactions	% Language Anxiety in ESL/Mainstream
Ques. 7/ ESL	Feeling like a different person when speaking	36
Ques. 8/ Mainstream		27
Ques. 13/ ESL	Expressing true feelings	18
Ques. 14/Mainstream		27
Ques. 19/ ESL	Too many rules English and feel can't learn all of them	18
Ques. 18/ Mainstream		36
Ques.#20/ ESL*	Afraid of laughter Q 20	27
Ques. #15/ Mainstream*	Self-conscious Q15	36

\*Both Q 15 and Q 20 are with native English speakers.

mainstream with questions 18 and 19. In question 18, 36% reported feeling like there were so many rules that they could not learn all of them and 36% reported being self-conscious with native speakers. The anxiety level was below 20% in six question sets numbering question 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, 9 and 10, 11 and 12, and 16 and 17 suggesting milder level of language anxiety. Similar to girls, boys did report higher levels of language anxiety in the mainstream of 22% compared to 16% in ESL.

In Table 4.5 the highest difference of language anxiety between mainstream and ESL classes was 18% in questions 19 and 18 in Table 4.5 concerning the amount of rules to learn in English. There was also a difference where boys did not report any language

Table 4.6

*Higher % Neutral Responses Reported by Boys than Girls on ELAS*

Question#/ Class Location	Language Anxiety Triggers/Reactions	% Language Anxiety in ESL/Mainstream
Ques. 5/ ESL	Panic to speak without being prepared	7
Ques. 6/ Mainstream		16
Ques. 7/ ESL	Feeling like a different person when speaking	12
Ques. 8/ Mainstream		27
Ques. #11/ ESL	Fear about teacher correction of every mistake	16
Ques. #12/ Mainstream		19
Ques. 13/ ESL	Expressing true feelings	18
Ques. 14/ Mainstream		18
Ques. #20/ ESL*	Afraid of laughter Q 20	9
Ques. #15/ Mainstream*	Self-conscious Q15	1
Ques. #16/ ESL	Nervousness and confusion speaking	3
Ques. #17/ Mainstream		22
Ques. 19/ ESL	Too many rules English and feel can't learn all of them	21
Ques. 18/ Mainstream		7

\*Both Q 15 and Q 20 are with native English speakers.

anxiety for forgetting how to speak about things that they know in question 1 with ESL classes compared to 18% reported in question 2 in mainstream that was not included in this table. What is interesting about boys is their higher percentage of reported neutral

responses in ELAS question sets compared to girls. Table 4.6 reports the percentage difference of neutral responses favoring boys. As you can see in Table 4.6 below, boys report a significantly higher percentage of neutral responses compared to girls in seven out of ten question sets from the ELAS. The highest notable differences in neutral responses that boys reported on Table 4.6 for mainstream was for question 8 of 27% in feeling like a different person when speaking and 22 % from question 17 in having nervousness and confusion speaking English. In comparison, the areas of nervousness and confusion speaking English coupled with feeling like a different person when speaking were rated as high levels of language anxiety among girls in this study. Other notable differences include the 19% reported fear of teachers correcting all the mistakes made in English in mainstream and 16% in ESL. There was a 21% difference in mainstream which reported too many rules and the inability to learn them all. Expressing true feelings in English was reported the same for both mainstream and ESL at 18% higher than girls.

In looking at cumulative neutral responses, girls overall had neutral responses of 13% in mainstream and 11% in ESL classes, whereas boys had 23% of neutral responses in mainstream and 20% in ESL. This is a difference of 10% in mainstream compared to 9% from girls in ESL. This suggests that boys' language anxiety may be higher than it is due to the neutral responses in a higher percentage of questions than girls.

Table 4.7 compares language anxiety between boys and girls in ESL. In combining all of the questions for mainstream and ESL classes, female students

demonstrated higher levels of anxiety of 37% in comparison with male students at 19%, as evidenced in Table 4.7. Girls reported slightly higher overall anxiety of 43% in

Table 4.7

*Language Anxiety Comparison –Gender*

Gender	Language Anxiety Mainstream %	Language Anxiety ESL %	Cumulative Language Anxiety %
Girls	43	31	37
Boys	22	16	19

mainstream compared to 31% in ESL classes. The higher levels of language anxiety for girls in mainstream classes are consistent with prior research among middle school students (Pappamihiel, 1999, 2002). Cumulative language anxiety percentages were calculated by combining total responses in both mainstream and ESL classes for girls and boys. In Table 4.6 girls reported a 37% cumulative level of language anxiety compared to males at 19%. Again, girls demonstrate a significantly higher percentage of language anxiety than boys by 18 %.

In summary, it is clear that language anxiety was present in both boys and girls as evidenced from the responses in the ELAS. Boys and girls reported higher overall levels of language anxiety in mainstream when compared to ESL classes. Girls had significantly higher levels of language anxiety compared to boys on the ELAS. Although males indicated lower levels of language anxiety, their higher percentage of neutral rating

in responses can suggest boys have anxiety like girls, but more moderate in nature. The findings of language anxiety for girls are consistent with the findings of (Pappamihiel, 1999, 2002).

#### Anecdotal Observations

The Anecdotal Observations of ESL students (Appendix C) was another tool to assist with data collection for interviews and was devised from research read on language anxiety. These observations will be discussed later when analyzing the individual student interviews. The categories of the rubric included tendencies to “speak on the spot”, nervousness in speech/avoiding responses in class, willingness to raise hand, and strong reluctance with communication with teacher. In context of the rubric, tendencies to speak ‘on the spot’ were indicated for Juan, Mateo, and Karina and with Anna to a lesser degree. Their real names will not be used, but will be given pseudo names Juan, Mateo, Karina, and Anna. In the second category which includes tendencies for nervousness in speech and avoiding responses in class were not indicated mainly for Mateo and Karina, to a lesser degree with Juan, and higher tendency with Anna. Willingness to raise their hands was a predominant tendency for all informants besides Anna. None really exhibited strong reluctance with teacher.

#### Interviews - Case Study Perspective

The quantitative ELAS survey was used to give an overall picture of language anxiety and to identify individuals for closer analysis through an interview process. Participants to interview were selected chiefly via ELAS. Anecdotal observations were also considered as indicated in chapter three. Information gathered from individuals was

central to this study since its aim included looking for recurring themes, patterns, and insights from student perspectives about their experiences speaking English in both the ESL and mainstream classroom. Interview questions in Appendix B were used to elicit qualitative data on learner perceptions of language anxiety.

Fortunately, the first 6 students requested to interview cooperated. Attempts were made to interview more students, but student personality and/or comfort level deterred them from interviewing. Ironically, those students with no anxiety were less comfortable with the prospect of interviewing. Additionally, another student who reported higher anxiety levels declined. However, I was ultimately successful in interviewing candidates that were on or close to the top of the list for students to interview.

#### Individual Results of Interviews

The results from the interviews will present a snapshot of four students in-depth perspectives in the realm of language anxiety and its effects on their decisions to communicate (WTC) in the classroom. As mentioned in the previous chapter the initial goal was to descriptively analyze data from four students. Four of the students were selected from six and interviewed via digital recording. They were chosen to interview as a result of the combination of ELAS questionnaire and anecdotal teacher observations. The overall criteria among the four selected included those with both the higher differences in anxiety for mainstream classes compared to ESL, along with overall higher levels of anxiety. One out of four was given further consideration due to articulate responses to field questions, which was later found to be insightful in terms of English language learner insight and resiliency. He had nearly identical levels of anxiety reported

in mainstream and ESL in the ELAS. Two of the six interviews were not analyzed in as much depth as the following four due to the limited and somewhat conflicting data from observations and ELAS, which included one girl. The boy out of two participants not selected had virtually no anxiety reported (an initial area of interest). He did report neutral responses in the area of language anxiety to a set of two questions in the ELAS, but was not selected due to limited data. However, it is important to note the unique insight of this student, reporting essentially no language anxiety in mainstream and ESL, but more of a discomfort when speaking Spanish at home.

Anecdotal observations were also made in consideration of the students to interview. As noted in Table 4.8 below, all of the four final interview respondents were of Latin descent and speak Spanish as their first language and the interviews included two boys and two girls. They were all advanced to advanced-high speakers of English and

Table 4.8

<i>Years in US and Oral Language Proficiency of Interviewees</i>			
Name	Years in US	Oral Language Proficiency	Woodcock-Munoz
Juan	11	Advanced-High	4
Karina	12	Advanced	3
Anna	12	Advanced	4
Mateo	4 ½	Advanced	3.5

had lived in the United States for at least 4 consecutive years or were born in the U.S.

The overall speaking proficiency is a state measure of oral proficiency of these students with the exception of Mateo. It is important to note that these proficiency scores were

consistent with the majority of ESL students in this study. If years in US indicates 12, that signifies they have resided and gone to school in the US their entire lives. All interviewees were 12 years old at the time of the study.

A set of questions (Appendix B) was used to guide the interviews. Some of the questions within the set were very close categorically and are synthesized in subsequent Tables 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11 in this chapter. Attempts were made to integrate some of the responses from the ELAS survey as noted in the interview questions in Appendix B. For example, an interviewee, Karina indicated that she felt “like a different person” on the ELAS with a high level of language anxiety. In attempts to incorporate the ELAS in the interview, I asked her about why she felt “like a different person” in mainstream classes and awaited a response to assist in extension of her ELAS response. Many of the questions were intentionally set to be more open-ended in nature to allow for elaboration. Furthermore, they were used to generate more in-depth responses from student perspectives, provide an avenue for follow-up questions and emerging themes, and/or insights to report on. Some direct quotes will be provided from these informants for a more descriptive analysis of this emerging data set as seen below.

#### Data Collected from Interviews

##### Juan

Juan was eager to participate in the interview. In the ESL classroom, this student was very insightful and candid. In the context of the Rubric of Anecdotal Observations in Appendix C, he demonstrated minimal complications speaking on the spot in front of the class. He enjoyed impromptu speaking in the ESL classroom, sharing responses in

the class, and enjoyed higher level questioning. He sometimes appeared nervous when questioning, but usually asked questions. This student had good rapport with peers.

One of the reasons Juan was selected was because the ELAS survey indicated Juan's high level of language anxiety in many domains of the questionnaire, most notably in mainstream classes, compared with anxiety in ESL classes. According to the ELAS, he panics when he has to speak English in the mainstream versus the neutral rating in ESL. He reported high anxiety in regular classes when preparing to speak and forgetting how to say things he knew, compared to having no anxiety in ESL. He feared teachers correcting mistakes and he was uncomfortable with not being able to express his true feelings in English in mainstream classes, compared to ESL where he rates his anxiety as neutral. It is important to note that Juan responded as having high levels in anxiety in both ESL and mainstream; however, this was not evident in his ELAS results.

Juan provided many curious responses about what influences his decisions to speak English or WTC. He rated himself as being very uncomfortable speaking English in school. He reported that he is most comfortable in the ESL teacher's class, "Because it's like a class you that can speak both language than the other classes." His comfort level increased his WTC. This may suggest how the circumstances of being in ESL affected his WTC (MacIntyre, 2007). In ESL class Juan speaks both to peers and his teacher. When asking him about how often he speaks in ESL he states "a lot" and sharing in Spanish as important. Conversely, in mainstream classes, when inquiring about the frequency of speaking, he responded "Not that much. Like really silence."

When I inquired about his perceptions of his own English proficiency, Juan added that he thinks he speaks “like a 40%, something like that” which is surprising because in ESL class his speech is intelligible and almost always understood. He perceives he has challenges understanding others and gave himself a rating of five on the scale of one to five, but later changed it to a level two. It seems that he was trying to portray that his confusion is precipitated by different ways in which native speakers convey meaning with English vocabulary usage. In elaboration on his confusion in listening Juan says, “Like there are some sentences that used to make me say, say it easy but some people they say it confusing, confusing and that’s hard for me to understand.”

When asked about his decisions to speak, Juan presented some interesting perspectives as to what makes him nervous. Ostensibly, being nervous about speaking is because of his concerns about how others will perceive him: “Maybe I say it wrong or maybe I may use it wrong. May might people say use it wrong or say it wrong. Yeah.” Juan did mention his concern about others laughing at his English, “because some people may laugh at me, I don’t speak that much English.” Strikingly, he feels that his peers are the concern for the humiliation, but adds that does not mean that they actually laugh at him. This concern echoes what is said by Wood (1997) about the influence the peer group has for his developmental level in learning. Juan responded to a follow-up inquiry about what teachers can do to help him feel more comfortable. He agreed that they can help by stating to the class that it is ok to make mistakes.

Karina

Karina is a very advanced speaker compared to the other respondents. She has an excellent command of oral communication skills. This includes strong levels of vocabulary usage and excellent pronunciation suprasegmentally. According to the Appendix C rubric in the ESL classroom, there were virtually no complications with her speaking on the spot, forgetfulness, nervousness in speech, and avoiding responses in class. At times she was advised by the teacher to take turns talking since she often has insight to offer in class discussion. She demonstrated her willingness to volunteer responses in class by raising her hand or calling out responses because she seems to enjoy sharing her viewpoints. She shared responses, especially her personal viewpoints and questioning. She had a good rapport with peers in the classroom and shows minimal reluctance to speak with teacher.

Karina was selected because in the ELAS she reported anxiety in mainstream and ESL classes, but had significant differences in comparing anxieties between ESL and mainstream classes. Strikingly, on her ELAS survey she crossed out the beginning of question 20 from “In ESL classes” to rephrase the question as, “In regular classes, I’m afraid that native English speakers will laugh at me when I speak English” and circled the number 5 several times in addition to three stars to demonstrate her strong agreement. In the same vein, her response to question 15 is similar to question 20 which asks about the emotive response of feeling “very self-conscious speaking English in front of native speaking students.” As a teacher of this student, this consistency on anxiety in front of native speakers of English was intriguing when comparing anecdotal observations in ESL

class, which indicated anxiety. Her responses were consistently higher in mainstream on the ELAS compared to ESL classes.

Karina offered significant explanations about her experiences speaking English in the classroom and insight about her WTC in our interview. She rated her comfort level speaking English at school first as a four then teetered to three. In response to what increased her comfort level she mentioned my ESL class. When asking why, she asserted, “because um like in ESL like we are learning English, and like most of the people like don’t know like too much English so like, like talking with each other we can learn more.” When asked about how well she speaks English and how well she understands people she rated herself in the middle. Interestingly, she reported speaking more in regular classes at about a level three. In ESL classes her oral language proficiency was at higher level, but she seemed to not perceive this level for herself.

In following up on some of her responses with questions 7 and 8 in ELAS about the significant discrepancy of feeling “like a different person” in regular classes she said, “I don’t know. I feel embarrassed because like I don’t know how to say words and like most of the people do.” As mentioned above, she changed question 20 to magnify her high level of discomfort she has with native speakers laughing at her. When responding as to why she changed it she replied, “I don’t know. Because I don’t speak it well.” After asking for elaboration she responded, “Like if I say something wrong and they know how to say it maybe like they will laugh at me.” Laughter was also found as a concern in Pappamihiel (2002). She fears laughter from teachers and peers.

When discussing what makes her nervous she believes it is due to not knowing some words or certain words. This includes not knowing how to respond to teachers. She perceives herself as being less comfortable speaking English. What helped her be more comfortable speaking is the presence of peers and teachers who speak Spanish. According to her, this type of support was prevalent in fourth and fifth grade.

### Anna

Anna is an advanced speaker of English with a strong command of social interaction and academic English. Like the other informants, she has Latin American ancestry, has a good rapport with peers in ESL class, and tends to be more of a timid student, but a willing informant throughout the interview process. She was selected as an interview candidate because of her vast difference in responses in ELAS, showing higher levels of anxiety in mainstream compared to ESL classes. Besides question 20, there was a consistently higher level of anxiety in the mainstream versus ESL. According to my observations in ESL class, she spoke on the spot in ESL class, but in a timid manner. Some nervousness may be present or avoidance in talking in class. She limits her responses in class and is less willing to volunteer responses in class discussion. She looks away from the teacher at times when talking in class.

Surprisingly, at the onset of the interview, Anna reported being very comfortable speaking English on an overall level. She became very comfortable in her speaking proficiency when she chose who was in her private classes in fifth grade. She feels most comfortable speaking English in ESL with other students with similar linguistic challenges. She states that this is so, “cuz other people so probably might have the same

problems as me.” Anna perceives that her “problems” compared to other students are due to not being able to pronounce some words. When inquiring about the quantity of speaking in regular classes she reported, “I don’t really speak. I just stay quiet.” She compares this to her comfort level in ESL, “I feel more comfortable speaking there because they won’t laugh at me.” Chiefly, Anna reports being laughed at by other students in mainstream classes.

Further on in the interview she stated that she understands people speaking English at a higher level than her speaking English. She evaluated her proficiency of English as inferior because of pronunciation and not speaking well. Ironically, she rates herself as comfortable speaking English. What makes her nervous about speaking English is reading while the entire class is listening. This could relate to on the spot speaking (Young, 1990). Anna becomes more comfortable speaking English when she is around others who can not speak English, the presence of peers who speak Spanish, and smaller groups. Additionally, she thinks teachers could make her more comfortable if they let her speak Spanish at times in the classroom. Question 12 of the survey indicated a high level of anxiety in regular classes with fear of teachers correcting all the mistakes committed. Furthermore, her ELAS score indicates high levels in trembling, nervousness and confusion, and self-consciousness about speaking English with native English peers. Interestingly, she also reported high levels of native English speakers laughing at her in ESL, yet in a follow-up question reported she is more comfortable speaking in ESL because students will not laugh at her. Overall, Anna had significantly higher levels of anxiety in regular classes compared to mainstream as indicated on the survey.

### Mateo

This last student was one who provided intriguing insight in the field testing. He demonstrated resiliency in speaking English even in the presence of language anxiety which may provide insight or strategies for other ESL learners to speak more. As a researcher, having informants provide you with in-depth responses can help clarify and identify student meta-awareness. Mateo met this description. Like the other students, he is Hispanic and speaks Spanish as his first language and is of Puerto Rican decent. Mateo is highly proficient in speaking in English and has mastered oral proficiency both with suprasegmental expression and higher levels of vocabulary usage. He has a strong grasp of academic English and was very elaborate with responses in class and displayed a very positive attitude. In analyzing his responses on the ELAS, Mateo had mild language anxiety. Anecdotally, he will speak on the spot, responds often in class, enjoys acting out vocabulary words, volunteers responses such as reading the agenda for the day, and is willing to speak with the teacher. His moderate language anxiety was nearly identical when comparing mainstream and ESL classes, with mild anxiety differences higher in mainstream.

He rated his comfort level speaking English as a three on a scale of one to five. His resiliency or confidence to speak English began with basic English instruction. He used the example of learning, “small words like *when, where, what* and *all that.*” He also mentioned how television aided his proficiency in English with shows like *Tom and Jerry*. He reported repeating the words from television.

When asked about where he felt most comfortable speaking English he preferred school versus home. When probed about why he felt like a different person when speaking English, he believed he had different voices and that his second voice was “weird.” Even though Mateo reports this “weird” experience, his attitude does not convey this. Part of what Mateo insightfully reported, “There’s like like two personalities to me. A Spanish and a English....like in my house I am like the Spanish person and like in like school I am like the English person. I have like two personalities.”

Mateo asserted that he speaks “pretty often” in ESL and mainstream classes, but this is dependent on the teacher calling on him. He believes he speaks English very well and pointed out some suggestions teachers made about where there was room for improvement. He seemed to handle criticism with a positive attitude when responding and this was also evident in the ESL classroom. Gardner (1979) discussed the importance of attitudes as a precursor to motivation. Perhaps Mateo is highly motivated because he mastered this habit of using attitude in a positive way.

When discussing his ability to understand people, he rated himself as “very good.” Curiously, he added insight about how he processes speaking bilingually, “one is like English when they speak to me and then like my mind processes it in the other half... it like tells me like in Spanish...like in like letters, like the letters in my head.” When discussing what makes him nervous speaking English he mentions his concern with peers laughing at him if he commits an error with a word. Teachers and friends can help him be more comfortable, and this includes friends that do not laugh at him. Mateo believes teachers are helpful because they instruct English and other subjects. Mateo agreed that a

teacher can help students with speaking with “art stuff” and projects. Pappamihel (1999, 2002) discussed the role of teachers. This again suggests Mateo’s willingness to look to teachers to help not only with his improvement of English, but they also decrease anxiety levels as well. On a different note, talking about something interesting also makes him want to speak English.

#### Discussion and Further Analysis of Interviews

Administering the ELAS questionnaire and interviewing students provided some intriguing results from the data. Before discussing the results, an analysis of several tables synthesizing data from interviews will be addressed. Tables 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11 present student beliefs and perceptions and data analyzed through interviews. In Table 4.9 below there are two categories: confidence/resiliency speaking and the location of comfort level. The category of confidence/resiliency pertains to ESL students’ confidence in how comfortable they are speaking English. A scale score of five indicated a low level of perceived comfort, whereas one indicated that a student was very

Table 4.9

#### *Confidence/Resiliency—Comfort Level Speaking*

<u>Name</u>	Confidence-Comfort /Resiliency 1 (high)-----5(low)	Comfort level-Location
Juan	5	ESL class preference
Karina	4, Spanish speakers in room	ESL class preference, Spanish speakers
Anna	1, private/small classes	ESL class preference, students with problems like her
Mateo	3, learning basics and television	School in general

comfortable speaking overall. In terms of resiliency, there were interview notes added about student feedback or confirmation about what assists in their resiliency. Note that Juan rated himself at the highest level 5, so there were no additional comments about resiliency. The second category is the location at school where students are most comfortable speaking English.

In looking at Table 4.9, student comfort level in speaking was very uncomfortable for Juan at five and Karina at four followed by Mateo at three. However, Anna reported that she was very comfortable speaking English, rating herself as a one. This contradicts her unwillingness to speak in other classes and followed the more descriptive interview analysis. Juan's decisions to not speak are reflected in his comfort level. Karina speaks English a lot in mainstream and ESL classes, but was uncomfortable speaking it. In terms of resiliency all respondents, besides Mateo reported higher levels of resiliency or confidence speaking English when they were in the presence of peers and/or adults speaking Spanish. This suggests the importance of (Wood, 1997) of the role of peers and it seems that similar language reduces that anxiety. In terms of location to speak English Anna, Karina, and Juan were more comfortable speaking in ESL class which was consistent with responses from their surveys and the higher levels of language anxiety in mainstream classes. This may relate to a higher comfort level of speaking English because of circumstance or location (MacIntyre, 2007). This difference suggests that language anxiety which is present in classroom was consistent with prior research findings on the validity language anxiety as an affective variable (Horwitz, 1986, et al., Pappamihel, 1999). Mateo was comfortable in both environments.

Another group of categories from the interviews is presented in Table 4.10. Table 4.10 addresses frequency of speaking in ESL versus mainstream classes, beliefs of speaking proficiency, and comprehension of English speakers. In terms of frequency of speaking Mateo, Karina, and Juan reported speaking a lot in ESL classes. Karina and Mateo spoke more often in mainstream, compared to the stark difference of near non-speakers Juan and Anna in mainstream classes who reported their decisions to not speak. Anna does speak in ESL class, but chooses not to in mainstream.

Table 4.10

*Frequency of Speaking and Self-beliefs of Speaking and Comprehension*

<u>Name</u>	Frequency of Speaking ESL vs. Regular class	Beliefs of Speaking Proficiency	Comprehension of English speakers 1 low-----5 high
Juan	ESL- a lot Regular- silence	Like a 40%	2, sometimes confused and some say things confusing
Karina	ESL- a lot Regular- a lot, speaks more here	In the middle	Middle, some words and other not
Anna	ESL-more comfortable Regular- stays quiet	Not that good because of pronunciation, but comfortable	Understand more than talk
Mateo	Both—pretty often	Very well, sometimes confused with some words	Very good, discussed bilingual mind processing comparing English, and Spanish language acquisition

The second and third category in Table 4.10 addressed students' self-beliefs of English and their beliefs about what they could comprehend from speakers. These interviews

revealed that Juan, Anna, and Karina had a level of discomfort when speaking. It is curious to note that advanced middle school speakers of English have this discomfort. At the onset of being interviewed, Mateo reported significantly lower levels of anxiety on his ELAS, so his comfort level for speaking and understanding was not surprising. However, students having some discomfort speaking reported anxiety in understanding English as well. All of these students, as most in this study are around advanced oral language proficiency.

Table 4.11 includes results from interviews in terms of nervousness or causes of speaking anxiety and what assists with language and anxiety and comfort level. It is noteworthy that what assists students with this anxiety can be considered a form of resiliency in speaking as already demonstrated earlier in Table 4.9. The informants reported varying causes of speaking anxiety. Most anxiety in mainstream classes was deduced from interviews and added under the category of nervousness and causes of speaking anxiety. Student beliefs about possible triggers to anxiety included regular classes, peers and/or teachers, fear of pronunciation errors, and large class size. However, the common thread in all respondents in this study is the humiliation effects of others, especially peers. In addition to other causes of anxiety, fear of peers laughing at them had a salient impact on their anxiety and decisions when speaking English. The focus on social aspects of peers can influence language anxiety (MacIntyre, 1995). Being laughed at by peers is a very important component of language anxiety since this has been a common thread. It was addressed in focus groups in research (Pappamihiel,

Table 4.11

*Nervousness/Causes of Anxiety and What Assists with Comfort Level*

<b>Name</b>	Nervousness or Causes of Speaking Anxiety	What Assists with Anxiety/Comfort Level
Juan	Say it or use it wrong, peers laughing at him, most anxiety in mainstream classes	ESL class, translate in Spanish, if teachers letting class know it is acceptable to make mistakes
Karina	Do not know some words, do not know how to say answer from teacher, teacher or peer laughing at her in regular classes, not having Spanish speaking peers, most anxiety in mainstream classes	ESL class, and friends that know Spanish in regular and ESL class helps, teachers who speak Spanish
Anna	Reading in front of class, regular classes of larger size, getting laughed at by others, not having Spanish speaking peers in room, most anxiety in mainstream classes	ESL class, when others can't speak English, prefers smaller groups/private classes, other Spanish speaking students, and teachers letting you speak Spanish sometimes
Mateo	Messing up in front of friends and fear of getting laughed at by others, does not appear to have ESL/regular classes specific anxiety	Teachers and friends, friends that don't laugh, getting taught English and learning other subjects, teachers can help with "art stuff" and projects

2002). Fear of speaking another language presents the issue of the fear of others as evidenced with research with university students (Horwitz et al., 1986; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). The anxiety of middle school students was similar in that regard as it was with adults. Could the intensity of language anxiety be more intense with middle school students since they hold peer relationships in a higher regard? Is their fear of speaking less when speaking with teachers?

The descriptive data contained within Table 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11 clearly indicated that some degree of language anxiety is present among all students. In many instances there are clear gaps surrounding what they believe about their proficiencies and capabilities surrounding speaking. In comparing student preference of location to speak English, ESL classes trump mainstream classes considerably. Strikingly, the location of where students are more comfortable speaking (Table 4.9) correlated with higher frequency in speaking, which in these interviews indicated ESL class. Further, Table 4.11 indicates that ESL class for more anxious students interviewed (Juan, Karina, and Anna) assisted with their speaking anxiety as well. Hence, ESL is not only a more comfortable environment to learn in, but decreased their language anxiety as well. These results are also consistent with higher levels of anxiety in mainstream classes when compared to ESL classes.

First, language anxiety was evidenced as a salient affective variable from both the ELAS and individual interviews. Second, there was an overall higher level of language anxiety in mainstream compared to the ESL pull-out classroom as evidenced in the ELAS and via individual interviews. Further, the individual interviews added further insight to these higher levels of language anxiety. Third, girls reported significantly higher levels of language anxiety compared to males. Therefore, boys' anxiety may be more mild in nature.

The interview respondents with significantly higher levels of language anxiety reported mixed results in frequency from silent behavior to minimal apprehension to speak orally. Strikingly, interview respondents who spoke a lot in mainstream classes

perceived higher levels of anxiety in this area. Further, they did not believe their oral language proficiency was as high as it actually was. They reported their comprehension of English as low even though they had resided in the United States with an average of about 10 years. All had a preference to be in ESL besides Mateo, who did not mind either environment. This is intriguing since Mateo has resided less than half the time in the United States (four and a half years) compared to other interview respondents who were in the United States for at least eleven years.

As evidenced in Table 4.4 most interview respondents also reported a preference to be in ESL class and/or around Spanish speakers or students with a similar second language issue for their comfort level. The interviews also revealed nervousness or causes of speaking anxiety. Responses included saying it wrong, peers laughing at ESL students, mainstream classes, not knowing how to say answer to teacher, lack of speakers who speak the same language (Spanish), teachers, reading in front of class, larger size of mainstream classroom, and making mistakes in front of friends. Language anxiety was definitely evident as noted in the varying responses in interviews on causes of nervousness and most anxiety appeared in mainstream classes. In reporting from interviews on what assists with anxiety/comfort level in speaking students reported ESL class, translation in Spanish, teacher acceptance of student mistakes, friends that speak Spanish in mainstream classes, being around others who can not speak English, smaller groups/private classes, teacher letting students speak Spanish, teachers and friends, art projects, English instruction and learning other subjects, and friends that do not laugh.

There are further implications for language anxiety and decisions students ultimately make to speak English. The anxiety students reported in ELAS and interview data suggests language anxiety as a factor in the learning environment as evidenced in prior research (Horwitz, et al., 1986; Young, 1990; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Young, 1999; MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, & Donovan, 2003; Pappamiel, 1999; Pappamihiel, 2002; DeAndres, 2003; Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic, 2004; Dewaele, 2005; MacIntyre, 2007; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). Students tend to have higher levels of language anxiety in mainstream classroom compared to ESL classroom (Pappamihiel, 1999, 2002). In terms of gender, girls tended to have more anxiety than boys (Pappamihiel, 2002).

In summary this chapter provided some interesting results. In short, language anxiety in speaking among the ESL student was evident. Language anxiety manifested itself in different ways and increasing comfort levels in speaking can vary among students as highlighted in this chapter. Fear of humiliation among peers seems to be a common feature, however. What do these results mean? Chapter five will discuss the significance of the results of the effect language anxiety has on ESL students' decisions to speak English in the classroom and will generate conclusions and suggestions from this research.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

What effects does language anxiety have on ESL students' decisions to speak English? This was the overarching research question that guided my research and led to other insights and discoveries when trying to learn about language anxiety from the perspectives of ESL students. This chapter will include the discussion of central findings, connections with prior research and implications for teachers, students, and those involved with the education or training of ESL students. Those researching and directing ESL educational models and practices for teaching and learning can also consider these findings and applications. Further, limitations of this study will be addressed, especially with ELAS, recommendations for future research will be suggested.

The results of the ELAS and interviews concluded that language anxiety is a significant affective variable to consider, which is consistent with prior research (Gardner, 1979, 1985; Horwitz et al., 1986; Pappamihiel, 1999, 2002; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). The data suggested that ESL students experienced higher levels of language anxiety in mainstream classes compared to ESL classes. A primary fear students have is humiliation using English among other language anxiety reactions. Students also experienced higher levels of comfort speaking in ESL classes and peers influence their propensity to speak among other factors. Interviews provided more insight on speaking English via student perspectives (Yan & Horwitz, 2008).

### Notable Findings and Discussion of ELAS

The anxiety students reported on the ELAS and interview data suggested language anxiety as a factor in student learning. Students tend to have higher levels of language anxiety in the mainstream classroom compared to the ESL classroom. As mentioned in the results (Table 4.2) from chapter four, questions 18 and 19 stated “there are so many rules in English, I feel like I can’t learn them all” had the highest language anxiety percentage difference between mainstream and ESL. This question is intriguing in the context of language anxiety since students in the researcher’s class receive instruction in both reading and writing in English within the ESL classroom and do not receive “grammar instruction” from a teacher per se in regular classes. This may indicate that ESL students feel more anxiety in mainstream classes because of their perceptions of English bearing rules in a more native speaking environment. Some of these findings contrast Pappamihiel’s (1999) research findings about the ESL language anxiety in ESL as more academic in nature compared to the social anxiety in mainstream. Perhaps “rules” signify an increased importance of cognitive academic language, which warrants further investigation.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there were slightly smaller differences of language anxiety in questions 5 and 6 “panic without preparation,” 11 and 12 “afraid teachers are going to correct every mistake,” 13 and 14 “can’t express my true feelings in English,” and 16 and 17 “nervous and confused” while speaking. In retrospect, there is an overall higher level of anxiety indicated in mainstream versus ESL. Strikingly, there were higher percentage levels of language anxiety in mainstream classes in every

question set besides questions 7 and 8. Overall, anxiety level percentages for respondents exceeded 30% in half of the questions in both mainstream and ESL. The highest levels of language anxieties were in question 13 and 14 on not being able to “express my true feelings in English” in mainstream at 48% when compared to 38% in the ESL classroom. There was also the 13% difference when comparing responses to questions 3 and 4 “tremble when I know I’m going to have to speak English”, and questions 20 in terms of afraid of laughter, and 15 about self-consciousness in front of native English speakers. This feeling of unsteadiness could suggest key emotive reactions that students need to learn to overcome. Not being prepared is consistent with Young’s (1990) research with students about speaking ‘on the spot.’ in learning another language. These emotive reactions are supported with previous language research on university and middle school students (Horwitz, 1986 et. al; Pappamihel, 1999, 2002)

Conversely, in reporting no levels of anxiety on a 5 point scale of rating a one or two on the survey, 69% of respondents reported no anxiety with native speakers in ESL class in question 20 compared to 41% of respondents reporting no anxiety in regular classes in question 15. As alluded to in chapter four these questions are not identically worded like the others above, but the difference suggests a higher level anxiety in mainstream because of the higher percentage neutral difference of 28 % which could favor language anxiety in some areas.

#### ELAS and Gender

As mentioned when synthesizing results from chapter four with regards to gender, female respondents demonstrated higher levels of language anxiety compared to male

students. The ELAS shows girls had significantly higher overall higher levels of anxiety when looking at cumulative responses in ESL and mainstream combined. This is consistent with prior research with middle school girls (Pappamihel, 1999, 2002). Girls reported higher overall anxiety in mainstream. Equally, boys indicated higher overall anxiety in the mainstream in comparison to ESL classes. Although boys had overall lower anxiety than girls, the data presented in chapter 4 suggests that boys have anxiety like girls, but is more moderate in nature since it may be masked by their neutral ratings on the ELAS.

Quantitatively, it is evident that a total of three ESL classes was a smaller sample size than Pappamihel (1999). The data do suggest anxiety in both mainstream and ESL, but more predominant in the mainstream. Interestingly, these findings are among predominantly advanced ESL students in which the majority of students who have lived the United States for over 10 years. This contrasts with Pappamihel's (1999) sample which used beginning to advanced students with a mean number of years in the country of 2.47 years. Quantitatively, these results should take into consideration that the sample sizes were smaller than Pappamihel's. The percentages of girls responding to the survey of my study were higher than males. Larger scale studies even at a district or administrative level with ELAS could provide more reliable findings for those interested in quantitative level explanations of language anxiety and factors effecting students' decisions to speak. The quantitative results of this study do suggest higher levels of language anxiety in mainstream classes and markedly higher levels of language anxiety for girls. There also needs to be more research comparing language anxiety in learning a

foreign language versus language anxiety in ESL. Overall, findings of anxiety as a salient affective variable and higher levels of language anxiety are indicated.

#### Influence of Peers

This study found ESL students have a perceived fear that they will be laughed at by their teacher and/other students. The influence of peers on general development has been noted (Wood, 1997). Further considerations about the influence peers have on ESL students decisions to speak in regular classroom is recommended. Social concerns among peers in middle school was noted in prior research (Pappamihel, 1999, 2001, 2002). Gardner's (1979, 1985) research on the social components of language also addressed this. Additionally, learning and exploring instructional ways to provide a more comfortable learning environment to learn another language as found in Young (1999) is an area for future consideration.

As evident from the results in chapter four, there were some varying responses in terms of student anxiety about speaking English. Responses included saying it wrong, peers laughing at ESL student, mainstream classes, not knowing how to say answer to teacher, lack of speakers who speak the same language (Spanish), teachers, reading in front of class, larger size of mainstream classroom, and making mistakes in front of friends.

ESL students with language anxiety concluded a preference of being around peers who speak the same language and an increased comfort level speaking in ESL class. This was also supported by Pappamihel (1999, 2002) where she mentioned how being in ESL class can decrease performance anxiety which tends to be more influenced by peers. This

should be taken into consideration in light of research at this developmental level on friendship and peer support (Wood, 1997 and Rawlins, 2008). This further suggests the benefits of pull-out ESL where student have the opportunity to practice English among other second language learners, in particular those with the same linguistic background. This may contradict advocates of the full inclusion model because students indicated comfort of being around native speaking peers and students reporting being more comfortable in ESL class.

The inclusion model has implications for both ESL and mainstream teachers. First, the current inclusion movement of moving ESL students for reading and English is not necessarily the cure-all as evidenced by advanced ESL students' higher levels of anxiety due to larger groups of students. Larger classes will be present within the inclusion model which was seen as a deterrent in interviews. Second, it is important to consider the solidarity ESL students have among native speaking peers and its significant influence on comfort level when speaking as evidenced in the ELAS and via interviews. Third, the inclusion model needs to consider the higher level of language anxiety that exists in mainstream compared to ESL classes. The ESL classroom environment was found to be a more comfortable environment for students in interviews. Further, students reported overall lower levels of language anxiety on the ELAS. This may suggest that the comfort level of the ESL classroom may increase the amount of English spoken orally.

From a qualitative perspective, the interview candidates suggested ways to increase resiliency such as encouraging risk taking, positive attitudes of learning, student

acceptance of teacher feedback, teaching with art, and allowing students to negotiate meaning at times in their first language. Students also reported learning in environments with smaller number of students and friends with the same first language. Teacher acceptance of mistakes, art projects, and friends that don't laugh is also considered. Gardner (1979) addresses the precursor attitude has on motivation, which ultimately influences students' beliefs about speaking. It also appears that having the opportunity to be among native language speakers and in an ESL classroom increased students comfort level.

In this setting for research, there have been concerns expressed to me that my ESL students were speaking too much in Spanish. Factors that ESL teachers, support professionals, and mainstream teachers need to consider are that ESL students speak in their native language as a way to increase solidarity. Highly anxious advanced speaking ESL students have suggested this more descriptively via interviews. In the classroom we should consider that ESL students' first language may be used to mask their discomfort in their decisions to speak for fears of humiliation from native English speaking peers, pronunciation problems, inability to use cognitive academic language, criticisms of teachers, nervousness, and the like as evidenced in ELAS and interviews. These perceptions or realities of ESL students, whether accurate or not, when ignored by the teacher or those assisting with ESL instruction affects students' decisions to speak English, most notably in the mainstream classroom. MacIntyre (2007) discusses circumstances and its effect on volition to speak. Something in the circumstance of the mainstream classroom may decrease students WTC. This phenomenon especially affects

students with higher language anxiety decisions to speak English and indicates the need for further investigation.

Mateo suggested his use of the second language of English was like another personality. Although this not may be the case literally, it does suggest that students can feel or perceive speaking differently when speaking a second language. Other students like Juan and Anna talk about making decisions not to speak in mainstream classes in their perceptions of a second language and seem to have a more negative connotation about speaking in mainstream classes. This was fascinating since they had resided in the United States nearly twice as long as Mateo. The negative connotations about speaking reported by interview respondents include: pronouncing words wrong, peers laughing, not knowing how to respond to teacher, lack of Spanish speakers, reading in front of class, or teacher laughing. Our goal as teachers may be to find more ways to make the time to bridge the gap of students' apprehension or fear of being humiliated so more students speak. Current national educational movements that are driven by standardized testing to measure literacy gains may mask the time for developing oral communication skills and competency. However, learning ways to provide ESL students the time to speak in the classroom need to be considered as viable practices in the context of peer and adult support. This not only can build rapport among students and teachers, but higher levels of communicative competence and resiliency for all students.

#### Using the ELAS with ESL Students

Administering the ELAS for ESL students is recommended as a routine at the onset of the year after the first three to four weeks of school. The use of the ELAS is

recommended for ESL teachers, educational professionals, or administrators concerned with increasing communicative competency of ESL students in an environment that respects the affective and social domains of learning. One of its uses could be as a means to foster more objective communication amongst ESL and mainstream teachers. The ELAS can be used as a talking point between teacher and students in the context of conducting short interviews in the classroom. By communicating and addressing these oral language needs, teachers can better identify the socio-pycho linguistic needs of students. Both mainstream and ESL teachers could also follow-up and consider these ESL student needs with acute language anxiety. The ELAS survey could also be used within an ESL classroom without collaboration with mainstream teachers. ELAS can also be shared with mainstream teachers or educational professionals supporting and teaching these students. Pappamihel (1999) echoes this concern as the affective concerns of students is more of a “community project.” Pappamihel (1999, 2002) addresses the role a teacher in addressing language anxiety and role of the teacher in reducing anxiety can not be underestimated.

There are also recommendations for teachers with students ranging from middle school to university students with language anxiety (Horwitz, 1986, et al.; Pappamihel, 1999; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). Teachers should be aware of nonverbal and verbal language students communicate before students decide to speak. A primary finding in this study was the fear students have of humiliation and their responses when communicating in front of non-native speakers. Students can experience strong emotive reactions such as nervousness and confusion, trembling, and panic when speaking. I have

found teachers can respond to these students by listening, encouragement, strategies, and guidance to allow students to better understand how to decide to speak despite emotive challenges related to speaking. It is noteworthy that ESL teachers in general have to be cognizant that some students with acute anxiety may not be comfortable talking about it or presenting accurate information via ELAS. This places more an emphasis on students' nonverbal behavior in speaking.

#### Further Analysis and Limitations of ELAS

Chiefly, the ELAS questionnaire devised by Pappamihel (1999) proved to be a valid measurement for language anxiety and was the springboard for follow-up questions in research. The findings of this study of language anxiety were consistent with Pappamihel's findings from her use of the ELAS questionnaire with girls. The ELAS survey also marked the presence of higher language anxiety in mainstream versus ESL classes, which was validated via interviews. As mentioned earlier, the questions were worded identically except for using "regular" classes to mark the difference between "ESL" classes to allow for transparent results.

A limitation of the ELAS is the use of the word "sometimes" in question 13. It should also be omitted from question 13 about not being comfortable with expressing "true feelings in English" or used in question 14 to be consistent as a mirror question set for a more accurate measurement. Another significant exception was with question 15 and 20 which used words such as "self-conscious" and "laugh at me" when comparing students perceptions of speaking with "native speakers" in mainstream and ESL. These questions would have allowed for more reliable results if they mirrored the same format

as the other 16 questions. As noted when interviewing ESL students, all of the students reported fear of being laughed at by peers. This was the case even with Mateo who reported a general low anxiety in speaking. Indicating this fear of being laughed at in question 15 rather than being “self conscious” would have made it more consistent when comparing questions 15 and 20. Moreover, since all students interviewed reported this fear, it would have been more suitable for reliable and valid comparison. Hence, I would suggest changing question 13 and 15 for more reliable linguistic data.

#### Recommendations ELAS Administration

In a different vein, administering the ELAS posited some minor challenges. When administering the ELAS I needed to clearly define directions and explain what the five point scale signified from levels of strongly disagree to strongly agree. Administering the ELAS to middle school students with oral administration and interpretation of vocabulary and five-point scale is strongly recommended for more reliable results. There was a need to interpret vocabulary words in questions such as “prepared to speak” and “tremble”.

The ELAS was administered using a document camera. I recommend this apparatus or some form of visual projection with oral administration of this test. It is also important to monitor students and explain that this is an individual survey. Two girls were asked to complete another ELAS because their survey indicated identical responses. This survey is also available in Spanish, but this survey was administered orally in English, with the exception of the newcomer student whose survey was not included in this study. The newcomer did report confusion with the understanding of the questions in

Spanish. There were some special education students that may have just guessed on some questions because of their developmental level, but overall the majority of respondents appeared to understand questions when administered orally. Attempts were also made during administration to ask students to be honest in their responses and/or the assurance that they will not be disciplined or punished for their responses, which I recommend for others administering the ELAS.

#### Benefits and Limitations of Interviews

As discussed earlier, it is distressing students who has lived in the United States their entire lives do not have a higher level of comfort in mainstream classes, even to the point of deciding not to speak. This suggests the need for future research to extend or clarify conclusions already made with this data and to discover more ways to increase resiliency among English language learners. Further, students interviewed rated their perceived proficiency level lower than the actual level. Equally, they also rated their comprehension of oral English as low. Perhaps cognitive academic language influences this level of anxiety and is worth further exploration.

Future research can also be directed to peer-humiliation as a primary language anxiety component impacting students WTC, since this was indicated via interviews and ELAS. Exploring ways that fosters resiliency among students and extending the importance of positive attitudes in learning need to be considered. Language anxiety does not inhibit all learners from speaking, even students with shy personalities. Do positive attitudes decrease language anxiety and encourage risk taking in speaking? This was evident with Mateo, but does this apply on ways to increase self-beliefs about

speaking and risk taking? As teachers in our classrooms we talk about taking risks in learning and some children seem to take more risks than others like Mateo who has lived half the amount of time as the majority of students in this study. Gardner (1979) discussed the importance of attitudes and perhaps more instructional practices can be implemented to value and support it's importance in the domain of speaking proficiency.

It would also be germane to revisit the impact the inclusion model, compared to the more traditional pull-out model has on language anxiety among ESL students. Teaching strategies to assist with students struggling with language anxiety should also be considered especially in the mainstream. This research found the majority of respondents reporting more comfort when speaking in ESL classes. Teacher involvement in the impact of language anxiety needs to follow research (Horwitz, et. al, 1986; Young, 1990; Pappamihiel, 1999, 2002; DeAndres, 2003). The ELAS can also be used at a district level to gauge its impact on a macro-level and more research in this area, especially with ESL middle school students is a gap in research. Some research has been done with university students, but it appears minimal research has been done with middle school ESL students.

There is much more to learn in this area of language anxiety and why students choose to speak English. It is evident that peers and location of learning influences students' decisions to speak. Anxiety may not necessarily be a hindrance as it can motivate students to learn, such as the case with Mateo who reported a teacher correcting him as a motivator. Dornyei (2005) discusses facilitating anxiety and how it relates with the desire to overcome. More research could consider this in terms of resiliency to speak

a second language. In a different vein, MacIntyre (1999) discusses state anxiety or how a person feels anxiety. MacIntyre asserts that anxiety can also be considered as situation-specific. Perhaps students experience language anxiety in varying ways and the mainstream classroom causes more situation-specific anxiety for ESL students as evidenced in the ELAS and interviews. Language anxiety is indeed an individual difference variable and an area to look at in terms of performance (Dornyei, 2005). Some students' personalities should also be considered as they may be more timid in nature.

Of great concern are the students who have lived in this country for many years and remain essentially quiet in the mainstream classroom, as is the case with Juan and Anna. Mainstream and ESL teachers need to be cognizant of students whose anxiety is at such a high level that they chose not to participate as fully as they can. More immediate attention could be considered for those students who speak in ESL, but minimally in mainstream. Pappamihiel (2002) discusses addressing the language anxiety before it becomes a habit for students that have potentially elevated levels of anxiety as a preventative measure to reduce academic and emotional tension. She believes mainstream teachers can serve as a mediator between ELLs and native English speakers where anxiety can be more interpersonal. This is where collaboration between mainstream and ESL can become increasingly important. Sensitivity to their humiliation should be accepted and heard. Further, supporting students to take risks in their learning can only help them. Interestingly, many middle school students have language anxiety similar to that of university students (Horwitz, 1986, et. al; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). As a former professor of adult/university students learning English, it is interesting to conclude

that language anxiety does indeed include middle school students. What is fascinating about this study is that the majority of the students participating in the ELAS were advanced speakers of English.

#### Insights from the Interviews

Some causes of language anxiety from this study are varied which include; fear of mistakes in pronunciation, correction from teachers, rules within the language, not being able to understand, peer-humiliation, mainstream versus ESL classroom differences in language anxiety, and not fully understanding what the speaker is saying. These and other factors can affect ELL's decisions about when and where to speak English. In light of these students' perspectives, mainstream and ESL teachers can be cognizant of peer influences in learning when devising learner-centered activities, allow students the opportunity to be with other native speakers, encouraging risk-taking, and environment to make mistakes. Showing interest in their learning such as asking students what makes them more apt to speak and using the ELAS questionnaire as a springboard for further questions are indicated.

There is also much to learn about resiliency as found in Mateo. It seems that his positive attitude and willingness to accept instruction and feedback from teachers can facilitate confidence to speak English. Students do rely on teachers for guidance and direction in their learning and do value their methods of teaching. The role of the teacher is important (Pappamihiel, 1999, 2002). Listening to those students who you teach as done by interviewing could possibly be another way to decrease anxiety levels from unnecessary levels.

### Recommendations about Interviewing and Speaking Another Language

This investigation allowed students to share their unique perspectives about speaking via interviews. As an interviewee and teacher of these students the insights gleaned from their experience was invaluable and is recommended for teachers of ESL students or students learning a second language. Interviews can be conducted in the classroom, by ESL teachers by using the ELAS as a talking point for follow-up questions is recommended. The interviewer can also consider using some interview questions used in this study from Appendix B. Yan & Horwitz (2008) emphasized student perspectives from their focus groups as a future area of research. This study added more insight about what students think about speaking English. Interviewing students not only allows for students to be more cognizant of their point of view, but can allow them to see a place where they can face their fears of speaking knowing they have a supportive teacher who not only listens, but encourages risk taking. It is evident that students in this study have significant language anxiety that effects their decisions to speak. As teachers one of our aims is to tailor to the individual learning needs of students. These interviews that are smaller scale in nature could afford students struggling with language anxiety the opportunity to be more cognizant of their perceptions and effects on their WTC. With this information the teacher can provide strategies individually or as a class that students can utilize to become more resilient.

For an ESL teacher, using the ELAS questionnaire can be another instrument to learn about your students. Teachers can also consider follow up questions to allow time for students who score significantly high levels of language anxiety on the ELAS the

opportunity to explain why they chose to report those levels. Teachers can then listen to their perspective when planning future learning activities and could objectively share results in collaboration with mainstream teachers. Completely eliminating anxiety may not be entirely feasible, but practicing strategies to reduce language anxiety is.

Addressing communicative competence can influence not only their confidence to speak, but future job opportunities as well. Increasing their oral language competency can lead to their propensity to believe in their speaking abilities which can open more horizons for their future.

#### Lessons Learned

As an ESL instructor and teacher, I have learned that there are many factors that affect the learning needs of students, ranging from readiness to learn, to factors affecting students' decisions to speak English. Language anxiety is a salient affective learning variable to consider not only for beginning and intermediate students, but advanced language learners as well. The goal of teaching students to learn without any anxiety can be counter productive as alluded to above and there are different forms of anxiety to consider. Language anxiety can however become a negative influence when students decide not to communicate. This can be detrimental not only in ESL, but in the mainstream class where students receive the majority of their instruction. Students' perceptions about their speaking may not be accurate, but guiding them to understanding that they can speak and supporting that quest is a start for some students with acute anxiety. Horwitz, 1986, et al. discusses the significance of a supportive teacher. Being

cognizant of the importance of peer evaluation and how to teach within this dynamic may be a gateway to decreasing counter productive anxiety.

In an era of high stakes standardized tests and rushes to meet the demands of packed curriculum, there has been less of an emphasis on oral language. Yet, oral language is an essential communication tool that carries social significance that students will utilize the rest of their lives. Amongst the ever increasing curriculum and testing responsibilities, could we possibly begin to rethink the importance of oral language not only for ESL students, but for all students? Social interaction is a relationship that can bind or separate others, especially with learners with higher levels of language anxiety.

Students are able to orally articulate their needs in their first language. We should consider how to aim towards mirroring the comfort level students speak in their first language to the second language. Pappamihiel (2002) discussed the importance of working to address those ESL students with language anxiety. She believes teachers can act as mediators in the classroom. We need to address students who are being laughed at because of pronunciation or errors in speaking. Student criticism of speaking should be addressed and not ignored. Curriculum developers and those charged with directing ESL instruction can be reminded of the importance of the effects language anxiety has on oral language development and second language acquisition, especially with the less obvious students of advanced language proficiency. At the same time, awareness of the effects of language anxiety such as nervousness and confusion when speaking, trembling, panic, fear of humiliation, and forgetfulness, among other indicators should be considered.

Apart from students who are more introverted in nature, students with acute levels of language anxiety should not be ignored and let pass on through the system or language programs, but encouraged, supported, listened to and taught how to become resilient active learners. In the area of foreign language learning Horwitz, 1986, et al. discusses two options educators have when working with students who are anxious which are: helping students to learn to deal with the situation triggering current anxiety and creating a less stressful learning context. Future exploration on current and possible instructional practices to reduce anxiety should also be considered (Young, 1999). Additionally, future research about what students are thinking at the moment they decide to speak should be considered (MacIntyre, 2007). Students in the interviews suggested smaller groups to learn, native peer language support, art projects, teacher acceptance of mistakes, smaller group size, and the ESL classroom as avenues to increase comfort levels. Although some of these variables can not be eliminated we can teach students how to utilize tools to increase communicative competence.

As an ESL teacher, I have discovered allowing students to act out meaning of vocabulary words with peers in front of class, using interactive language production games, working in cooperative/small groups, projects that used manipulatives or topics that interest students to increase class dialogue, and allowing students the opportunity to stand with another student when presenting allowed for different avenues to speak. Additionally, reassuring students they will be in an environment where they will not be “laughed at” is also effective since humiliation was an overarching language anxiety concern among ESL students in this study. Increasing the priority of speaking in the

classroom like reading and writing English, may foster more risk taking and oral language development. Teachers can also decrease this anxiety by a calm and positive temperament among other things which was found in foreign language teaching (Young, 1990). The teacher role in decreasing anxiety should not be underestimated (Pappamihiel, 1999, 2002).

### Conclusions

This study has found that middle school ESL learners have many similar emotive reactions that university students have when speaking. Fears of pronunciation, speaking 'on the spot', peer/teacher laughter, and location of learning effect both middle school students and adults. Forums for sharing the results of this research could include: professional development and language learning programs, educators, researchers and those who support language learners in school districts, and/or at conferences. A possible avenue for further research might include investigating if middle school is the time at which most start to begin experiencing acute language anxiety levels compared to primary/elementary school. It would also be interesting for future research to help better identify the origins of higher levels of acute language anxiety.

This research has raised further questions that need investigation. Does language anxiety increase at a more acute level with advanced English speakers at the middle school compared to the elementary level? Are there similar language anxieties that adult and middle school language learners share as evidenced in this study? Does age influence higher levels of acute language anxiety (MacIntyre, et al., 2003)? Does gender indicate higher levels of language anxiety as found in this study and Pappamihiel (1999,

2002) Should we re-visit the importance of the pull-out ESL model to increase students propensity to speak and decrease anxiety levels as found in this study amidst the current inclusion model movement? Are there current characteristics of mainstream learning environments that are conducive to ESL students' decisions to speak? Can using the ELAS and interview questions as a talking point to conduct interviews in the classroom be used as a tool for teachers and students to increase students' propensity to speak English? What are the similarities and differences for students experiencing foreign language anxiety and ESL language anxiety? These and other issues should be considered in order to promote more oral communication in the school environment.

Learning about ways for students to believe that “they can” despite their trials in speaking in a supportive learning environment was found to be strongly impacted by both peers and adults when students decide to speak. The ELAS when used with interview questions in interviewing allowed for students to share their perspectives about factors influencing their decisions to speak. Interviewing more students about language anxiety should be considered for some students. This can facilitate talking points with mainstream, ESL teachers, and stakeholders involved in the instruction of second language learners to increase oral language proficiency. Oral language development for ESL students requires time and support with peers and adults. Maybe more ESL students will be more willing to speak, even the more silent students when given an opportunity and purpose to do so. Perhaps we should again consider taking the time to honor the importance of speaking in the presence of meaningful relationships.

APPENDIX A

English Language Anxiety Scale

## English Language Anxiety Scale

Please circle answers below.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

1. In ESL classes, I forget how to say things I know.

1      2      3      4      5

2. In regular classes, I forget how to say things I know.

1      2      3      4      5

3. In ESL classes, I tremble when I know I'm going to have to speak in English.

1      2      3      4      5

4.. In regular classes, I tremble when I know I'm going to have to speak in English.

1      2      3      4      5

5. In ESL classes, I start to panic when I have to speak English without preparation.

1      2      3      4      5

6. In regular classes, I start to panic when I have to speak English without preparation.

1      2      3      4      5

7. In ESL classes, when I speak English, I feel like a different person.

1      2      3      4      5

8. In regular classes, when I speak English, I feel like a different person.

1      2      3      4      5

9. In ESL classes, even when I'm prepared to speak English I get nervous.

1      2      3      4      5

10. In regular classes, even when I'm prepared to speak English, I get nervous.

1      2      3      4      5

11. In ESL classes, I'm afraid that my teachers are ready to correct every mistake I make.

1      2      3      4      5

12. In regular classes, I'm afraid that my teachers are ready to correct every mistake I make.

1      2      3      4      5

13. In ESL classes, sometimes I can't express my true feelings in English and this makes me uncomfortable.

1      2      3      4      5

14. In regular classes, I can't express my true feelings in English and this makes me uncomfortable.

1      2      3      4      5

15. In regular classes, I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of native speaking students.

1      2      3      4      5

16. In ESL classes, I get nervous and confused when I'm speaking English.

1      2      3      4      5

17. In regular classes, I get nervous and confused when I'm speaking English.

1      2      3      4      5

18. In regular classes, there are so many rules in English, I feel like I can't learn them all.

1      2      3      4      5

19. In ESL classes, there are so many rules in English, I feel like I can't learn them all.

1      2      3      4      5

20. In ESL classes, I'm afraid that native English speakers will laugh at me when I speak English.

1      2      3      4      5

*Questions in English taken from: Pappamihiel, 2002 and scale from Pappamihiel, 1999.*

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

## Interview Questions

Interview Questions
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1.) On a scale of 1 to 5, one being very uncomfortable and five being very comfortable, how comfortable are you speaking English in school.

How did you get from \_\_\_\_\_(number on the scale) to \_\_\_\_\_? (resiliency/ confidence).

2.) Where do you feel most comfortable speaking English? Why is that?(Also I can reference their survey)

3.) How often do you speak in your regular classes? How often do you speak in ESL class? It looks like you speak\_\_\_\_\_Why?

4.) How well do you speak English?(Pappamihel)

5.) How well do you understand people speaking English?(Pappamihel)

6.) What makes you nervous about speaking English?

7.) What helps you be more comfortable speaking English in the classroom?

*Some questions taken from Pappamihel, 2002*

APPENDIX C

Rubric for Anecdotal Observations

## Rubric for Anecdotal Observations of ESL students

<u>Observations: ESL students</u>	Tendency: Yes/No	Observations to support
Speaking 'on the spot' in front of class		
Forgetfulness, nervousness in speech, difficulty in concentration on tasks, limited or avoiding responses in class		
Willingness to volunteer responses in class by raising hand or calling out responses		
Reluctance to speak English with teacher/ non-native speakers.		

\*Compilation of speaker/anxiety responses from varying researchers developed in paper.

APPENDIX D

Individual Responses to the ELAS

## Individual Responses to the ELAS

	<b>Ques.</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Ques.</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Ques.</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Ques.</b> <b>4</b>	<b>Ques.</b> <b>5</b>	<b>Ques.</b> <b>6</b>	<b>Ques.</b> <b>7</b>
Student 1	1	4	5	5	5	5	4
Student 2	4	4	3	5	3	4	5
Student 3	4	3	3	4	3	4	1
Student 4	3	3	1	3	1	4	1
Student 5	3	3	1	1	2	2	1
Student 6	3	3	1	1	1	5	1
Student 7	1	2	2	1	5	4	1
Student 8	3	3	1	1	1	2	1
Student 9	4	4	3	3	2	2	4
Student 10	4	3	4	5	4	3	4
Student 11	2	2	1	4	1	3	1
Student 12	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Student 13	3	3	4	5	5	5	3
Student 14	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
Student 15	5	5	5	5	5	4	4
Student 16	4	5	3	4	5	5	4
Student 17	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Student 18	3	1	5	1	1	1	4
Student 19*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Student 20	2	5	5	5	3	5	4
Student 21	2	2	1	1	3	3	5
Student 22	3	2	2	2	2	2	1
Student 23	1	1	3	2	1	1	2
Student 24	2	2	1	1	2	2	1
Student 25	2	3	2	4	1	3	3
Student 26	3	2	3	2	4	3	3
Student 27	3	3	2	3	1	1	2
Student 28	3	3	1	1	2	2	4
Student 29	2	4	2	2	4	4	4

## Appendix D (con'd)

<i>Ques.</i> 8	<i>Ques.</i> 9	<i>Ques.</i> 10	<i>Ques.</i> 11	<i>Ques.</i> 12	<i>Ques.</i> 13	<i>Ques.</i> 14	<i>Ques.</i> 15	<i>Ques.</i> 16
4	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	4
5	5	5	1	5	1	5	5	1
4	3	4	1	5	1	1	5	1
1	2	3	1	1	4	4	1	1
1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1
1	1	4	1	1	2	2	3	3
1	2	5	1	5	2	4	5	1
1	1	1	1	3	1	2	1	1
4	2	4	4	2	4	4	2	4
5	4	3	4	5	4	1	1	1
1	3	3	3	2	4	5	3	2
1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
4	5	4	2	3	4	5	3	4
1	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	1
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
1	5	5	1	5	5	4	5	4
1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
1	4	2	3	2	1	5	4	2
1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1
3	1	5	3	5	3	5	5	2
5	3	3	1	1	3	3	4	3
1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2
1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
4	1	2	2	3	2	3	3	2
3	2	3	4	3	5	5	5	5
2	5	3	2	1	1	1	4	1
4	1	1	3	3	1	1	3	2
3	4	4	2	2	4	4	2	2

## Appendix D (con'd)

<i>Ques.</i> <i>17</i>	<i>Ques.</i> <i>18</i>	<i>Ques.</i> <i>19</i>	<i>Ques.</i> <i>20</i>
4	2	2	1
5	5	1	5
4	4	2	5
1	2	2	2
1	1	1	1
3	1	1	1
4	1	2	1
1	1	1	1
4	2	2	4
1	1	1	1
2	3	1	2
2	1	1	1
5	1	1	4
1	3	3	1
5	5	5	5
4	5	1	1
1	1	1	1
1	2	1	1
1	1	1	1
5	5	1	5
3	4	3	4
1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1
3	2	2	2
3	4	5	1
1	3	3	1
2	3	3	3
2	4	4	4

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