

HIGH HOPES AND CURRENT REALITIES: CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS AND
MEANING FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AT THE COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

by

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Loretta L. Kissell

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DEDICATION

For those who were there yesterday

my mother and mother –in –law, who recognized and encouraged my intellectual
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my father, the first male feminist in my life, who drove preschool carpools and made
cupcakes while I studied all those years ago

For those who are still here today,

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my *silver and gold* friends, new friends and old, near and far away friends, all
enlighten me and ground me
my students who have reflected the joy of learning and the art of
searching for more than one right answer

And most significantly, I dedicate this accomplishment to my granddaughter,

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whose life is filled with family and friends who love her unconditionally and who will
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ABSTRACT

Community colleges play a particularly valuable role in providing both immigrant students and international visa students the opportunity to participate in higher education at affordable rates and thereby, the means by which to achieve academic success in the university system and economic success in the market. Thus, community colleges bear the profound task of developing language skills and creating positive academic experiences for all students who are learning English.

This phenomenological inquiry examines how English language learners constitute meaning from their experience of learning at a large community college in the southwest United States. The researcher conducted group and individual interviews with English language learners from 13 different countries of origin and 10 different first languages. Participants included international visa students and immigrant students.

Cultural capital theory, including linguistic competence, was used to explain how the perceptions of linguistic competence affect the academic experience of different English language learners. The findings suggest that although some students may possess cultural capital that advantaged them in their home countries, without commensurate linguistic competence, academic literacy, and a new cognitive model for learning that cultural capital may not be rewarded with academic success in the United States. Additionally, the findings suggest that cultural capital theory may need to be adapted to explain how it manifests itself in this student population. A second theory, conceptual theory of metaphor, specifically Lakoff & Johnson's (1999) Event Structure Metaphor,

provided a cognitive linguistic framework to the analysis of the language used by participants as they described their academic experience. Using the event structure metaphor, this analysis provides some support for the universal nature of metaphorical thought.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background and Overview

U.S. institutions of higher education have responded to the sirens of globalization in various ways. Internationalizing the curriculum, providing study abroad experiences for both students and faculty, and infusing diversity throughout the institution are some examples of such responses. Institutions actively recruit international visa students to help accomplish these goals (Blair, 2001) because these students contribute to the financial and intellectual resources of the institution and the community. More importantly, these students provide a real time link to globalization. Although they may bring with them certain types of cultural capital to facilitate the journey, their experience may be difficult, challenging, incomplete, and frightening because they may lack adequate skills in the language of the dominant culture, i.e., English. These difficulties may impede their successful completion of their educational goals.

Universities have been the primary destination for most international visa students in past years; however, community colleges are recruiting and enrolling international visa students with greater determination and intensity (Blair, 2001). Many international visa students find that community colleges offer English language programs and undergraduate general education coursework. Often community college classes have smaller numbers of students enrolled and provide more opportunity for individual help from instructors. International visa students may also find it easier to improve their

English communication skills because there are fewer numbers of students at the community college who share their first language, thus, requiring them to participate in study groups, classes, and campus groups with students who share one common language, i.e., English.

While international visa students are recently discovering the financial, academic, and social advantages of community colleges, they are not the only students seeking out the community college as a resource for learning English. Community colleges are becoming the primary institution for adult English as a Second Language (ESL) study by immigrant students (Gray, 1996; Manzo, 2005; Taylor, 2001) desiring to improve their economic status through better English skills and higher education. Many immigrants are also English language learners, but often they must continue to work as they study English. The community college offers flexible scheduling of English classes to accommodate work schedules; but more importantly, community colleges provide an opportunity for continued higher education after the completion of English language classes.

Statement of the Problem

While these two types of English language learners may share a desire to learn English, they may have very different reasons for doing so and for being in the United States. Students who are studying in the U.S. on student visas are sojourners in the higher education system. They have a stated intention to return to their home countries following the completion of their programs of study. Many have studied English for

many years in their home countries and have extensive educational experiences. Often they are coming to the U.S. for graduate study but find they need to develop additional skills in communicating in English in order to be successful academically at the university. The community college can provide that opportunity. On the other hand, immigrant students intend to stay in the United States as their new home. They may have less education, be less literate in English and may be primarily concerned with developing English fluency as currency in the job market. Transferring to a university or even completing programs of study at the community college is often not an identified goal for many immigrant students.

Community colleges play a particularly valuable role in providing both international visa students and immigrant students not only the opportunity to participate in higher education at affordable rates, but also the means by which to achieve academic success in the university system and economic success in the market. To do so, there is a need for these students to learn English to communicate in the educational and workplace environments. Thus, community colleges bear the profound task of developing language skills and creating positive academic experiences for all students who are learning English. The critical nature of this task requires that community colleges do it well. When it is not done well, or when certain students find the system more, or less, supportive of their efforts, the result can be a perpetuation of social, academic, and economic stratification.

Although researchers have acknowledged that the academic experience for English language learners is different, and perhaps more difficult, than for native

speakers of English, few researchers have explored the factors that make it so (Niehoff, 2001; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002). Moreover, few studies distinguish the differences in academic experiences for different English language learners or have explored the views of these students regarding their experience in the American college classroom. Most of the studies that have looked at this phenomenon have done so using quantitative, often survey, methodology (Gray, 1996; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1984; Moss, 2005; Niehoff, 2001) and most often within the context of the university rather than the community college. These studies have provided a surface level view of the experience; but they have not explored in sufficient depth how English language learners create meaning from their experience, or what the reality of that experience is for them.

The term *cultural capital* often refers to any knowledge, skill, or resource valued by the dominant culture; it advantages those in that culture who have it or know how to access it, and disadvantages those who do not have it or know how to access it (Bourdieu, 1977; see also Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1977; Naidoo, 2004;). Cultural capital theorists have suggested that success in higher education is predicated upon the cultural capital that a student has when entering higher education (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1977; Naidoo, 2004; Sullivan, 2001). Community colleges have been charged (often by default) with building cultural capital for those lacking it when they enter higher education (Kingston, 2001; Naidoo, 2004; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002). However, some scholars have questioned the extent to which community college faculty and administrators are focused on and committed to explicitly teaching cultural capital (Deil-Amen, 2002).

Recently, researchers have challenged the tenets of cultural capital theory suggesting that many other intervening variables weaken the arguments posited by Bourdieu (Kingston, 2001). For English language learners this cultural capital, or lack thereof, may be masked by inadequate English language skills (Gray, 1996), or may not be recognized or valued in the American college classroom. Cultural capital is related to academic success to the extent that institutions respond to those cultural markers and reward those who use them (Bourdieu, 1977; Kingston, 2001); however, English language learners who may possess an abundance of cultural capital in their home country may not be able to cash in on it in the American educational system. Or, it might be that institutions reward other distinctive signals marking something less palatable like racism. Such embedded racism may be a factor in students' perception of marginalization. Other marginalizing factors need to be identified to clarify the role cultural capital plays and the role racism plays in creating and perpetuating academic stratification.

Because community colleges and other institutions of higher education are recruiting and welcoming English language learners to their campuses and these students are contributing to institutional goals responding to globalization, a qualitative study exploring how English language learners make sense of their learning experience; how they use language to describe that experience, and how that language is connected to their perception of academic success provides a deeper understanding of this student population.

This study explored the individual and collective academic experiences of English language learners at the community college. Extensive individual and group interviews allowed for an understanding of this phenomenon to emerge. Analysis within the framework of the conceptual theory of metaphor of the language used by participants provided a cognitive perspective that understanding. As more students enter the community colleges first to learn English, then to study in English, this study may provide new insights for institutions looking for ways support the institutional commitment to providing for English language learners the needed skills and knowledge to participate higher education and in the global marketplace, whether in the U.S. or abroad. A better understanding of how English language learners experience learning at the community college will embolden and shape the development of curricula, student services, and guidance for both immigrants and international students to increase their success in both work and academic environments.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological inquiry is to examine how English language learners constitute meaning from their experience of learning and to understand the academic experience of English language learners at a large community college in the southwest United States. The academic experience is generally defined as campus experiences in and out of the classroom that facilitate or hinder a student's learning and academic goal achievement.

Research Questions

Several research questions guided this endeavor:

1. What does it mean to be an English language learner in a community college?
 - a. How do they describe their feelings as a student?
 - b. How do they describe interactions with other students?
 - c. How do they describe interactions with faculty?
 - d. How does this experience comport with other academic experiences?
2. To what extent and how are cultural capital and habitus reflected in academic success for English language learners?
3. How do metaphors help explain how English language learners understand and constitute meaning from their academic experience at the community college?

English Language Learners Defined

English language learners represent both non-visa and (F1) student visa students. Non-visa students include U.S. residents who may be new immigrants, children of immigrants, or immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for some time without entering higher education. Other students learning English obtain special student (F1) visas to attend institutions of higher education. These students are often referred to in the literature as visa students, international students (Lee & Rice, 2005), documented students (Dozier, 2001) or English language learners (Curry, 2001). Other visa students may be here on other temporary visas (e.g. tourist visa, or spousal visa, or work visa).

Many community colleges, unlike universities, have an open door admissions policy that invites all types of English language learners to enroll. This was true for the community college site of this study. Because of this policy, it is possible to identify students applying for admission under a student visa but it is not possible to determine if they have another type of visa, or what their plans for immigration may be. For these reasons, the term English language learner will refer to all students learning English as nonnative speakers of English.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized to include five chapters, including this introduction. The second chapter provides a review of relevant literature and includes an explanation of the theoretical perspectives. Although there is a paucity of literature that addresses English language learners at the community college, it is appropriate not only to examine that specific research, but also the research at the university or four year colleges. September 11, 2001 marked a dramatic shift in the geopolitical structure of our world affecting, sometimes negatively, the academic environment at institutions of higher education. For this reason, it was important to review the relevant literature published after 2001, and to keep studies prior to this date in perspective of this change. Additionally, literature defining and explaining the two theoretical perspectives used to frame this study is presented.

Chapter three details the research methodology, the data collection, and explains how the data were examined. Chapter four presents the findings in the data and includes

excerpts from the interview transcripts to create a mosaic of understanding of the collective experience of English language learners at the community college. Each research question is answered separately and linked to the literature or to one of the theoretical perspectives to allow for deeper understanding. Chapter five presents conclusions and implications of this study for higher education for English language learners, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

English language learners enroll in community colleges and universities for different reasons and have different goals. Some are more fluent than literate in English, while others may be more literate than fluent. Therefore, some students may communicate in English well orally, but lack reading and writing skills; others may be skilled in reading and writing, but lack oral communication skills. Some English language learners are in the U.S. temporarily; others are here permanently. Regardless of whether a student is a sojourner and planning to return to a country of origin, or an immigrant who is preparing to make a life in the United States, learning to communicate in English is key to academic and economic success in the U.S. (Gray, 1996; Taylor, 2001; Ulinski & O'Callaghan, 2002). Often, students do not have sufficient English language skills for admission to undergraduate or graduate programs in universities. Sometimes, students find the community college to be a more economical solution to the need for additional language instruction. In addition to language instruction, both types of English language learners may want to take advantage of the lower tuition to begin an undergraduate degree program. Nevertheless, the experience of learning at the community college may have an impact on choices students make regarding their continued education.

This chapter reviews literature in areas of research that contribute to understanding the academic experience of English language learners in the community college. The first section describes the students who are studying English in higher education institutions and how the patterns of enrollment are affecting the students who are participating in community college classrooms. The second section reviews research about the social psychological factors affecting the academic experience for English language learners. The last sections identifies work that has examined the unique role of the community college in providing or building cultural capital and academic literacy for English language learners and includes language factors and other marginalizing factors affecting the experience of English language learners.

Enrollment of English Language Learners in Higher Education

A shift in enrollment patterns for international students occurred following the events of September 11, 2001. Prior to that time, both four-year institutions and community colleges were actively recruiting international students and enrollments were increasing (Blair et al., 2001). Open Doors publishes an annual report on international educational exchange by the Institute of International Education reported that total enrollment of undergraduate international students has decreased by nearly 5%; however, enrollment of international students at community colleges has increased by 7.4% from 1999-2003 (Open Doors, 2004). Thus, although all higher education institutions continue to recruit international students (Blair, et al., 2001; Open Doors, 2004) because they provide economic resources (Open Doors, 2004) and intellectual and social diversity (Straw, 2002), community colleges have been particularly successful in doing so.

International F1 visa students have discovered the economic value of community colleges (Colin, 2000) and this may account for some of the increased enrollment at community colleges. Even with uncertain times, it seems likely that this trend for F1 visa students to take the first two years of study abroad for undergraduate degrees at community colleges will continue for economical reasons. There are other reasons these students may enroll in community colleges. F1 visa students who are seeking graduate degrees often look to the community college to provide additional coursework in English to prepare them to meet graduate college admissions requirements, including the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). Specific colleges and disciplines within the university may require higher test scores than university admissions policy requires.

Often students want additional preparation for this exam to ensure high qualifying scores for admittance to desired colleges and programs. The community college offers affordable classes to help them meet this goal. For these and other reasons F1 visa students, undergraduate and graduate students, find their way to the community college.

F1 visa students are not the only English language students seeking entrance into the U.S. higher education system via the community college. Immigrant students need to learn English to continue their education and to make a home in the United States. Community colleges have long been the primary welcoming station for immigrants who need to learn English. These schools have provided traditional English as a Second Language programs for students to learn basic conversation, reading, and writing skills (Dougherty, 1992; Manzo, 2005; Taylor, 2001). Because of open door admission policies and a lack of precise data concerning immigrant students, little statistical data is available for this student population (Gray, 1996; Szelényi & Chang, 2002). Researchers have concluded that there is an important role for community colleges to play in educating immigrants. (Szelényi & Chang, 2002). There is less clarity about the role the community college plays in the education of non-immigrant English language learners.

Along with students who need basic English language skills, a new group of students and a new set of academic needs is emerging. Miele (2003) has dubbed individuals who immigrated to the U.S. as young children, or were born in the U.S. of recent immigrants, whose first language is not English, but who have been schooled in the U.S., as *Generation 1.5* (Miele, 2003). Such students are caught between two languages and may not have developed academic fluency or literacy in either their first

language or English (Blumenthal, 2002). These students enroll at community colleges because they are inadequately prepared to meet the admissions requirements and the academic rigor of universities (Blumenthal, 2002; Hearn, 1991; Miele, 2003; Taylor, 2001,). Many community colleges are attempting to meet the specific needs of these students. For example, Bergen Community College revised assessment, advisement, and placement to serve *Generation 1.5* or, *crossover* students (another name for the same students) (Miele, 2003). This resulted in better identification and placement of crossover students, but did not address the students' perception of the academic experience or the efficacy of such changes. This project also identified the issue and importance of pedagogical approaches to meet the specific needs of *Generation 1.5/crossover students*. Such attention to pedagogical practices is important not only for this student population, but for all English language learners whose classroom experiences and expectations are as diverse as the students.

Community colleges are recruiting and accepting international F1 visa students, documented and undocumented immigrant students, and *Generation 1.5/crossover* English language learners. Many of these students are entering the community college to complete degrees, to develop academic skills in English, and to save money (Curry, 2004). Community colleges are being challenged to find ways to meet the academic, social, and cultural needs of this diverse student population (Blumenthal, 2002; Szelényi & Chang, 2002).

Social Psychological Factors Affecting the Academic Experience

Cultural adaptation or assimilation is a major factor for English language learners (Curry, 2004; Estrada & Dupoux, 2005). The following research has explored the social psychological factors that affect the academic experience for English language learners and how these students have adapted to the American higher education system (Estrada & Dupoux, 2005; Niehoff, et al., 2001; Swagler & Ellis, 2003; Zimmerman, 1995).

According to Zimmerman (1995) social alienation as a result of communication problems and a lower quality of communication, especially in initial encounters, are difficulties for college English language students. In her study of university international (F1) visa students, Zimmerman (1995) identified the frequency with which they interacted with American students and satisfaction with communication skills as the most important factors contributing to their adjustment to American campus environment. These findings represent the student's own perceptions and no significant differences between undergraduate and graduate students were reported.

Locus of control has been found to affect college adjustment for English language learners in the community college, many of whom were immigrants and first generation college students (Estrada & Dupoux, 2005). The characteristics of being immigrant and first generation were identified as additional stress factors that affected the students' locus of control. The findings in this quantitative study indicated that students with an external locus of control showed better psychosocial adjustment to college. First generation college English language learners and immigrants were less likely to have an external locus of control, thus, have more difficulty adjusting to college. Although these

findings may contradict previous research (Bandura, 1993), the authors argue that the specific context of a community college, and the life stage of community college students work to advantage those with an external locus of control allowing such students to dismiss negative experiences as “a passing cloud” (p. 563); while those with an internal locus of control may obsess about righting the negative and fixing errors. The sample in this study included more than 80% Hispanic students, many of whom may have represented the 1.5 generation of English language learners, and thus, may have been indicative of this sample rather than the independent variable.

In another quantitative study wherein variables of social adjustment and academic achievement of Asian Americans were disaggregated, researchers found that the motivation for academic success of this student population was externally driven which in turn compromised personal and social adjustment for these students (Szelényi & Chang, 2002). This is contrary to western cultural beliefs that encourage independence, self-reliance, and individualism and previous research supporting self-efficacy as a predictor of academic success (Bandura, 1986; 1993). Even among English language learners, cultural differences, personal experience, and academic context may support different conclusions about the effect of locus of control and self-efficacy on adjustment to college and academic success.

These two studies seem to contradict one another, one suggests that external locus of control leads to better psychosocial adjustment to college and the other suggests that external motivation leads to reduced social adjustment to college. It may also be that an external motivation for success (i.e., family, society) may not necessarily equate to an

external locus of control. They may represent two very different factors in the equation for academic success. It may be possible that one is externally motivated, but has an internal locus of control, thus greater self-efficacy. The findings may also be limited to the singular population included in each study. The current qualitative study included a heterogeneous group of English language learners and the broader theoretical perspective of cultural capital.

One qualitative study identified confidence in English fluency, social interaction, communication apprehension, and power and respect as sources of concern for Taiwanese graduate students (Swagler & Ellis, 2003). The research question for this study was broad; yet, it was limited to a narrow group of students and researchers admit a negative bias regarding American students' attitudes toward Taiwanese students. Nevertheless, if the link between *confidence* in speaking English, and limited social contact provides insight for graduate students, it may very well be important to the experience of community college and undergraduate students. Confidence in speaking English may be the result of previous academic experience and may represent the form of cultural capital identified by Bourdieu (1977) as linguistic capital although this research does not explicitly identify it as such.

Other researchers have examined how English language learners experience learning differently than American students and found that experience is also affected by confidence in English language skills and perceptions of the learning experience (Niehoff, et al., 2001; Gray, 1996). Niehoff examined perceptions of students regarding both teacher obligations and student obligations in a survey of Taiwanese university

students in Taiwan and American university students in the US. The survey included a seven-point scale on seven teacher obligations and two student obligations. The findings suggest significant differences in eight of the nine items. Other research shows that perceptions of communication competence, role behaviors and expectations, and communication apprehension in Japanese students affect the quality of interaction between students and their instructors and their motivation to work with others in the classroom (Saito, 2000).

Thus far, most of the research examining the factors that affect English language learners has been limited to international (F1 visa) students studying at four-year institutions. As enrollment patterns shift and these students are found in greater numbers at the community college, their experience in that environment must also be explored. Additionally, research has not often targeted non-F1 visa or immigrant students, thus limiting the understanding of the learning experience for English language learners. The present qualitative study was conducted at a community college and included all types of English language learners; thus, it provides a broader and deeper understanding of the learning experience for this student population.

Language Factors Affecting the Academic Experience

In addition to social psychological factors that may have a positive or negative impact on English language learners, the ability to use language to negotiate the academic environment may be significant in understanding their experience. This factor affecting student academic success has been identified as *academic literacy*. Academic literacy is defined as having adequate language skills to communicate in English at a college level within a specialized academic community (Curry, 2004; Newman, et al., 2002). Academic literacy is most often associated with reading and writing skills; however, for English language learners it also includes speaking skills. Moreover, the skills must characterize the language used in college classrooms (Curry, 2004).

Community colleges frequently provide comprehensive programs in basic English as a Second Language (ESL) curricula (Taylor, 2000). However, the issue of how students acquire more sophisticated academic language skills remains in question. When students complete basic ESL programs and move beyond learning to read, write, and speak using basic English to the more difficult challenge of using English to learn and communicate problems can emerge. This is because many English language learners find themselves in an unfamiliar academic environment and system in which they have yet to learn how to negotiate and succeed (Curry, 2004). Such communication difficulties may lead to social alienation and other social difficulties (Estrada & Dupoux, 2005; Zimmerman, 1995) and may prevent academic success (Curry, 2004; Gray, 1996).

Academic literacy plays a major role in the success of English language learners and appears to be more problematic for immigrant students and other non-F1 visa

students than for F1 international students (Curry, 2004; Gray, 1996). English language learners vary not only in country of origin and purpose for attending higher education but also in previous educational experience and success prior to coming to the U.S. Some have little or no experience in higher education in their home country, often they are first generation college students, and frequently they are immigrant students. In contrast, many F1 visa students, sojourning in the U.S. for higher education, have completed various levels of higher education in their home country and often have family backgrounds that include well-educated parents. From this experience and background these students may have developed academic literacy in their first language and thus are better able to translate that knowledge to a new language and environment. Meeting the need to develop academic literacy along with language skills challenges institutions of higher education and falls mainly within the purview of the community college (Curry, 2004). Language literacy and fluency coupled with academic literacy are necessary complements to academic success.

Dozier (2001) conducted a study at a community college wherein she looked at the academic progress and success of international students. In this study, international students were identified as either documented, i.e., holding an F1 visa, or undocumented, those overstaying visas or entering the U.S. illegally. Two findings were of particular interest. First, it was reported that 76% of the undocumented students earned high school diplomas in the U.S. This supports definition of Generation 1.5 (Miele, 2003). Second, undocumented students were more likely to be on academic probation, have lower mean GPAs and less likely to be on the dean's list. Another finding in this study demonstrated

that documented students academically outperformed undocumented students and that the personal characteristics of the two types of students differ in many ways. This study used demographic information and transcript records to provide descriptive statistical data leading to these conclusions. Although the author recognized the vast differences in socioeconomic status and previous educational experiences of these two different groups of English language learners, differences were attributed to the categories of documented and undocumented. This seems to trivialize the impact SES has on the variables of academic success. Such differences in student populations must be acknowledged in research especially quantitative studies, and in the application of research findings.

Much of the research addressing the needs and differences of international students has focused not only on university students, but often specifically on graduate university students at doctoral granting and research universities. Little attention has been given to other types of English language learners, and other types of institutions. Therefore, the present research extends beyond the university to the community college classroom and includes a heterogeneous group of English language learners to gain a deeper understanding of what English language learners experience as they enter higher education in the U.S through the community college.

Marginalizing Factors Affecting the Academic Experience

A less obvious and more disturbing aspect of the academic experience for English language learners has been associated with institutional and individual racism. The following research has examined racism expressed in language and experienced in behavior of students in institutions of higher education.

Racism may be an unwanted and disguised, yet real and important cause of the stratification identified by economic status, family background, and education. The community college has an open admission policy and often it represents an entry point of access to higher education for those without economic resources, family support, and/ or adequate academic preparation (Hearn, 1991). Latino students, especially those included in Miele's (2003) 1.5 generation, are more likely to enter higher education at the community college and often take classes to remediate in academic areas in which they are deficient, including English. Such students may be perceived as students who want to learn a skill or a trade to improve employment status and thus, may be thwarted by their efforts to transfer to university by institutional policies that direct them to vocational or occupational programs and certificates and less rigorous courses. Believing that these limited opportunities in higher education represent their only opportunities demonstrates the hegemonic effect of embedded institutional and societal racism perpetuating social and economic stratification. Thus, a belief that the learning experience of immigrant students may be different from the experience of white nonimmigrant students assumes that racism is embedded not only in society, but also in its institutions (Brown, et al. 2003). Moreover, racism is inescapable for those participating in such institutions and

societies (Goldberg, 1993). Little research has isolated the experience of English language learners in higher education institutions to demonstrate or identify possible effects of embedded or veiled institutional racism.

A belief in socially constructed reality suggests that "...we construct, interpret, and imbue it [reality] with meaning through the ways we sort, categorize, experience, reflect on and, describe it" (Delgado & Stephanic, 2004 p. 25). From this epistemological assumption, it follows that race may not be objectively real but one's experience of it is real (Delgado & Stephanic, 2004). If so, it is important to explore the different learning experiences of English language learners to understand how the reality of racism is experienced and constructed. According to Delgado & Stephanic (2004), social construction of reality is "largely carried out in words" (p.25). So, it is appropriate to examine the words used by English language learners to construct and give meaning to their academic experience even if that experience includes the experience of racism.

Research has documented the racism expressed in language and felt by immigrants outside the institutions of higher education (Santa Ana, 1999; Hill, 1993, 1994). To accept that the boundary between the outside and inside of educational institutions is distinct and insular seems to minimize the issue, and worse, may prevent the issue of racism from being acknowledged. There is no reason to exempt institutions of higher education from racism, or even to believe they are any less racist than any other institution in our society. In a recent qualitative study, neo-racism is described as focusing on "cultural differences as a basis of discrimination" (Lee & Rice, 2005, pg.1). This particular type of racism moves beyond color and has particular significance for

international students enrolled in universities. Most disturbing in this study are the reported incidences of neo-racism by undergraduate and graduate students in a variety of campus contexts. It might be argued such experiences emerged in the interviews because the researchers asked specifically about incidents of discrimination or where the students may have felt unwelcome. Nevertheless, these findings are congruent with Hill (1993; 1994) and Santa Ana, (1999), and support the view that racism may be reflected in prejudice against different languages and cultures and is expressed in language. Such hostile environments giving host to neo-racism is not likely to be limited to university campuses, but likely exist on community college campuses also.

Incidences of racism may be a part of the classroom and educational experience at educational institutions and may partially explain why some English language learners succeed academically and others do not (Dozier, 2001). This is a particularly troubling concern for community colleges because Latino students are more likely to enroll at the community college than universities (Hearn, 1991) and less likely to graduate or transfer to universities (Curry, 2004; Dozier, 2001, Gray, 1996). Among the many factors that may explain this pattern, one may be how the institution treats these students, or how the students experience their time at the institution. Differences in academic experiences between F1 visa students and other English language learners may reveal embedded differences in the way institutions are treating them, or how they experience that treatment differently.

Summary

Given the changing enrollment patterns, the additional curricula needs of both immigrant and F1 visa students, and given the need for higher education in a knowledge society and global economy, it seems almost imperative that we understand the academic experience of English language learners. Most of the research thus far has examined the experience of international (F1 visa) students, most often Asian, who are studying at four-year institutions (Niehoff, et al., 2001; Saito, 2000; Swagler & Ellis, 2003; Zimmerman, 1995). Currently, community colleges are providing initial academic experiences for many F1 visa students and these experiences may provide a pathway to the universities. Additionally, community colleges are providing the initial academic foray into higher education for many immigrant students. Understanding the experiences of both types of English language learners, the immigrant and the sojourner, is critical to providing services, curricula, and support to sustain them in their endeavor to develop language skills, academic literacy, and academic success. Moreover, more must be done to uncover embedded and unattended racism in our classrooms and institutions.

Theoretical Framework

In an effort to understand how English language learners perceive their academic learning experiences on a community college campus, two theoretical perspectives guided this inquiry. The first, cultural capital theory, including linguistic competence, is a sociological approach and is used to explore how the perceptions of linguistic competence affect the academic experience of different English language learners. The second, conceptual theory of metaphor, is a cognitive science approach providing the framework for understanding how English language learners construct meaning of the educational experience. In this section, cultural capital, including, linguistic competence, is defined and placed within the context of this research. Next, conceptual theory of metaphor will be defined, and its application for the interpretation of this data set will be explained. Finally, assumptions of the researcher and these theoretical perspectives are addressed.

Cultural Capital Theory

The concept of culture capital is used to explain how culture and education interact to perpetuate social and economic status, i.e., social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977). Researchers have acknowledged that the definition of cultural capital is not precise nor is it consistent (Kingston, 2001; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Naidoo, 2004; Sullivan, 2001) and it has been defined to include many sociological phenomena (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Similarly, the concept has been operationalized in as many ways including: knowledge of high culture, educational attainment, or the ability to communicate in a competent manner (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997; Bourdieu, 1977; Curry, 2004).

Cultural capital theory offers an explanation for patterns of stratification and academic success, specifically in higher education:

“At the heart of Bourdieu’s work on higher education has been his desire to expose higher education a powerful contributor to the maintenance and reproduction of social inequality” (Naidoo, 2004, p. 457).

Therefore, it presents an appropriate lens through which to view potential differences in experiences of English language learners and may aid in explaining the differences that may emerge. Another dimension of cultural capital has been defined as a familiarity with the language of the dominant culture and the ability to use educated language in a system that expects it (Bourdieu, 1977; Sullivan, 2001); this type of cultural capital is called

linguistic competence (Bourdieu, 1977). Linguistic competence is similar to the concept Curry (2004) identifies as academic literacy.

Cultural capital theory holds that cultural capital, including linguistic competence, is learned from one's parents; thus, it provides an advantage to those who inherit it, and disadvantages those who do not (Bourdieu, 1977). Students in institutions of higher education are presumed to have a certain degree of linguistic competence. As agents of the institutions, teachers expect linguistic competence from students and reward those students who use it. An institution that systematically rewards students who are well spoken intentionally, or unintentionally, hinders those who are not thus, facilitating the success of the former and thwarting the efforts of the latter. If economic success is predicated upon academic success as posited by Bourdieu (1977) such institutions become a potent determinant of social reproduction and stratification. Therefore, institutions that reward those who possess forms of cultural capital, including linguistic competence, become a mechanism for social reproduction through academic stratification. It is not clear how this affects individuals who are learning the language of the dominant culture, i.e., English, not as their first language, or the role the community college plays in perpetuating or minimizing social reproduction (Moss, 2005; Kingston, 2001).

Cultural Capital, English Language Learners, and the Community College

Community colleges serve various roles in higher education in the United States, and they fulfill those roles in many different ways. Some community colleges may focus

on the vocational and occupational role; for others, providing undergraduate liberal studies for university transfer may be a primary role. For many community colleges, a default role may be to provide remedial or refresher courses in basic education, and to provide courses that will fulfill requirements for university admissions for students who were academically unprepared following secondary school. Many resources are available at the community college to facilitate and encourage student learning and academic success.

Some community colleges offer many resources specifically for English language learners. These institutions not only have multicultural centers to serve students of all ethnic groups, both native and nonnative speakers of English, but also writing centers, computer labs for computer assisted developmental reading, writing, and pronunciation of American speech, and extracurricular clubs for different cultural groups. Additionally, special academic advisors in international education may be available to help facilitate visa issues, academic program advising, etc. Student orientations provide specific information about these services and introduce students to ESL faculty, and other faculty who offer courses specifically for English language learners. To the extent that students develop adequate mastery of the language and know how to access and use these resources, these students possess cultural capital. If, as this theory holds, cultural capital, including linguistic competence, is the currency with which students negotiate the educational system, then cultural capital or lack thereof, may help explain why some students do not complete degrees or certificates, or transfer to universities and others do so more easily (Dougherty, 1992; Curry, 2004). This is precisely the paradox that

Bourdieu (1997) identifies. The community college as an institution of higher education, should not reward those students who already possess what the institution requires for success, i.e., linguistic competence or literacy, and fail to provide it for those who are in need of it. To do so, perpetuates social stratification, including economic stratification.

Little research has been done to explore how cultural capital in the form of linguistic competence affects English language learners, whether they are sojourners or immigrants. If English language learners can access and use available resources, it is presumed by cultural capital theory that they will be more successful in developing needed cultural capital to complete academic programs of study within higher education, and specifically at the community college (Sullivan, 2001). Inadequate language skills have been shown to be a significant barrier to academic success for immigrant students (Dozier, 2001; Gray, 1996) and may prevent the access of available resources.

Additionally, academic literacy, or the ability to use academic language within the institution, has been shown to be key to successful retention and program completion in community colleges (Curry, 2004). Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that cultural capital in the form of linguistic competence will manifest itself in the form of academic literacy and greater academic success for English language learners.

For the purposes of this study, cultural capital and linguistic competence are identified and operationalized by confidence in speaking English, confidence in using English to learn, and a positive attitude toward degree or program completion for English language learners. Such confidence may be cultivated by previous academic experiences, especially in higher education and intensive study of English. Many students who come

to the United States to study may have achieved a high level of education in their home countries. Often the study of English is an integral part of many higher education curricula throughout the world. In many countries admittance to higher education is predicated upon high entrance exam scores, including English exam scores. To obtain competitive scores, often students compete to attend prestigious elementary and secondary schools, hire tutors, attend summer schools, and take additional training in certain subjects, including English. Cultural capital may advantage these individuals in navigating and negotiating through the academic system in their home country while providing experience and knowledge to advantage them in their study abroad in foreign universities. However, more recently, some students from countries with intensely competitive systems have been seeking study abroad, often beginning in high school and community college as a way of bypassing this grueling and often disappointing path to higher education (moss, 2004).

The reasons for doing so may not be so easily explained by cultural capital theory. In fact, seeking a degree from a western university may be an indication that the students or their parents may have knowledge of the global marketplace and understand that to compete favorably in that market requires more than a domestic education, but requires knowledge and experience gained from a global education. Moss (2004) suggests that the students are seeking study abroad programs as a result of a lack of cultural capital or the ability to succeed in the national system. However, moving beyond national borders is an indication that one may be parlaying a deficit of capital in the domestic market into an advantage by developing a knowledge base of a larger more powerful global market.

Building Cultural Capital

The community college offers programs of study intended for students who hope to transfer to a four year institution. This might include courses that will not transfer, but will provide remediation in disciplines like English, Math, and Science in addition to the traditional first two years of general liberal arts studies required for most baccalaureate degrees. Not all students require remediation, and might begin studying at the university were it not for the costly tuition and other expenses associated with university enrollment. Community colleges have much lower tuition rates, are often located near students' homes, thus, providing higher education for lower SES students and middle income SES students who may not qualify for sufficient financial aid packages or scholarships. In this way, community colleges provide the opportunity for individuals to develop the knowledge and experience not provided to them by SES and educational and family background. Community college may supply a type of cultural capital that may be invested in a four year college and perhaps advanced degree.

Native English speaking American students attending the community college often represent lower SES, minorities, and those who are for any number of reasons not prepared for university. For these students, the community college may provide access to higher education and more lucrative job potential. International students who are studying abroad and for many immigrant students it may be very different.

These students often bring with them professional credentials and advanced degrees from their home countries, and studying English at the community college may

provide an additional advantage to them when they return to their home countries, or when for them to seek employment in the U.S. using their professional credentials.

Another significant phenomenon may be how international sojourners perceive cultural capital. For many international visa students, studying abroad is one way of building cultural capital that will become economic capital when they return to their home countries:

“The value of overseas qualifications as institutionalised (sic) cultural capital can still be seen today in the relentless efforts of all levels of Chinese government to entice overseas graduates back to China.” (Stafford, 2004, p. 2)

As globalization promotes transnational trade and industry, it would seem that the economic benefits of an overseas education would include the cultural capital benefits of familiarity with Western culture, and a degree, particularly, a graduate degree from a U.S. university and English fluency.

The case for studying English to build cultural capital may be different for immigrant students than for F1 visa students. Adult immigrant students who are learning English expect that they will need to do so as a condition of their immigration to the U.S. Their collective identity is different than but not oppositional to standard English (Ogbu, 1999) and therefore, their collective identity through language is preserved while they learn English. Moreover, their expectations lead them to believe that it is necessary to learn English to, in Ogbu’s (1999) words, *become somebody*. Bourdieu might see this as building cultural capital for a new country.

Cultural capital brought with an immigrant to the U.S. college classroom may provide an initial advantage and may provide greater initial linguistic competence; however, translating that capital into English may be difficult. Linguistic competence, i.e., competence in the language of the dominant culture, is critical to cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Sullivan, 2001). Ogbu (1999) refers to linguistic competence as “language frame of reference” which defines what is the correct way of speaking in given situations (Ogbu, 1999). Students who have learned the rules of language in their native language, through education or social class, may be advantaged by the ability to understand and use *educated language* (Sullivan, 2001). Similar to F1 visa students, immigrant students who have attained a level of higher education or professional status in their native countries have demonstrated linguistic competence in one language or have learned the language frame of reference; therefore, they have academic capital. It may be their understanding of how the education system works that gives them an edge, rather than a fluency in the dominant language. That advantage may be minimized by underdeveloped English language, specifically oral fluency. According to Bourdieu’s construct, these students would likely have greater linguistic competence even in another language. It would also be expected that this cultural capital would then lead to greater economic capital.

Another aspect of cultural capital theory suggests that class, SES, and race matter when it comes to higher education. One would expect that this would be true for students regardless of their country of origin or visa status. It is uncertain the extent to which these factors may be disguised, ameliorated, or exacerbated by the shared lack of English

proficiency among students learning English in the community college. It is also unclear at what point a lack of cultural capital is overcome by academic success, particularly attainment of advanced degrees (Moss, 2005).

Cultural capital theory and linguistic competence suggest that students who possess cultural capital and linguistic competence in their home countries may be initially advantaged in a system of higher education that rewards this type of knowledge. However, the experience of English language learners may indicate that certain languages and cultures are valued more, accepted more easily, and accommodated more completely, thus, mitigating the effects of linguistic competence and cultural capital; thus, the strength of cultural capital theory to explain differences among English language learners may be weakened by language barriers (Kingston, 2001) and issues of racism and other marginalizing factors will need to be considered (Moss, 2005). The theory may not explain how globalization affects how cultural capital is defined and how it is obtained, i.e., inherited or deliberately developed.

To more fully understand the academic experience of English language learners, it was necessary to examine how they used language to explain their experience. Any linguistic analysis is culture bound (Lakoff, 1980; Gee, 1999; Quinn, 1991); however, conceptual metaphor theory may provide a theoretical framework that asserts a more universal perspective of language use beneficial in understanding the language of non native speakers, and thus, a deeper understanding of their experience (Grady, 1997; Lakoff, 1992). The conceptual theory of metaphor provides a method of discourse analysis grounded in the cognitive linguistic paradigm (Santa Ana, 1999). In an effort

not only to understand the academic experience of English language learners in the community college classroom, but also to identify similar indicators of embedded racism, this second theory was used to frame the third research question.

Conceptual Theory of Metaphor

Traditional metaphor analysis identifies language as the locus of metaphor; however, contemporary theory of metaphor or conceptual theory of metaphor places the locus of metaphor in thought and thus, assumes a cognitive linguistic perspective.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) metaphor precedes language. This is a radical and controversial diversion from traditional metaphorical analysis and understanding. It was not the intent of this study to enter into the theoretical or philosophical debate regarding the nature of language or the exegesis of thought among the many disciplines of cognitive science and linguistics. The study does, however, accept the philosophical and cognitive assumptions this theoretical perspective holds. Among these assumptions identified by Lakoff (1993; 1980) include but are not limited to:

- metaphor is more than language; it is a matter of thought and reason
- metaphor precedes and motivates language
- basic conceptual metaphors are embodied human experiences
- basic metaphors are mapped from experiential source domains onto target abstract domains
- complex and rich abstract target domains may be a function of an inherited image schema and mappings from primary or basic metaphors

According to this perspective, we think in metaphor; therefore, we reason and constitute meaning from our experiences through the mapping of embodied, concrete experiences onto unknown or abstract experiences. Thus, this theoretical perspective is appropriate for use in discourse analysis of individuals not speaking in their first

language because the unit of analysis is more dependent upon one's experience than on one's ability to use language. If the experiences are similar, even limited language skills will allow individuals to express such similarities (Grady, 1997).

Although the extent to which the theory transcends different cultural contexts and different languages is not yet determined (Quinn, 1991), Lakoff (1993) has identified the *event structure metaphor* as a possible metaphorical universal. The source domains of this particular metaphor are grounded in basic and primary human experiences from which many more detailed and complex metaphors extend (Grady, 1997; Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). For this reason, this study confined its use of contemporary metaphor theory to the event structure metaphor and its entailments to answer the second research question.

The following section provides a general explanation of conceptual metaphor theory. More exhaustive explanations can be found in Lakoff's seminal explanation of the theory, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), and his essay *The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor* (1993).

How Metaphors Work

Recently, cognitive science has presented a theoretical perspective in which metaphor is more than a literary device. George Lakoff's theory of cognitive models embraces a new epistemological perspective and argues that cognitive processes that categorize knowledge are intimately connected with physical experiences that become embodied thoughts. Meaning is constructed from embodied thoughts,

categorized internally, and structured into cognitive models. Metaphorical thinking is the means for reasoning about abstract concepts not grounded in physical experience; thus, metaphorical language is the key to understanding how one thinks and creates meaning in the world. A brief explanation of the cognitive process that defines this perspective and sets it apart from other epistemological views follows.

Lakoff (1987) agrees that categorization is basic to organizing knowledge. Categorizing creates groups of things that are related and provides a mechanism for organizing data so that it can be managed and understood. So, categorization is essential to attaching meaning to words, experiences, people, sounds, etc. Classical set theory has long provided the explanation for categorization. This theory holds that sets are discreet; things are either in the set, or they are not in the set. Coupled with an objectivist view, those sets or categories would exist in the external world. In this view, meaning depends on correct mapping of things in the external world onto a representation of that reality in the brain with corresponding symbols. Lakoff rejects this limited view because it does not represent the complexity of truth, the role of human perception, or the nature of abstract thought (Lakoff, 1980; 1987). If categorization is the main way that humans make sense of their world, then a theory that does not account for understanding of abstract concepts is incomplete.

Lakoff (1980) embraces a new paradigm, *experiential realism*, in which truth is in the thoughts and reasoning of the individual as it interacts with the world. Experiential realism holds that basic physical experiences become embodied thoughts. Reality and/or truth is internally constructed by organizing data into categories from which cognitive

models are structured. Thus, categories are not predetermined, nor are they the same for all. From this perspective, meaningful thought and reason cannot be separated from the bodily experiences. Cognitive models explain how categories are organized, structured, and used to reason and think.

In cognitive model theory, cognitive models provide a structure to organize what we know about a category, its properties, its characteristics, how we relate to it and what it means. Lakoff's (1980, 1987) construct, *idealized cognitive model or ICM*, is a concept or a group of interrelated concepts that define a category. ICM is based not on classical set theory, but on prototype theory (Lakoff, 1987). At the heart of the ICM is the element that most fits the definition of what it means to belong to that category, the ideal version of that category. For example, the ideal version of a student would include certain characteristics for one type of student, but not another. An elementary student has some of the same characteristics of a high school student, or a college student, but not all. This ICM may vary from culture to culture, but will certainly be defined by one's first experiences. Some members of this category may only resemble the prototypical member or perhaps be like it *in a sense*. Moreover, elements are not limited to one category (Lakoff, 1987). These cognitive models provide the frame from which meaning is attached to new experiences or new abstract concepts are understood. The meaning corresponds and maps directly from the cognitive model frame to the unknown concept and becomes metaphorical thought. The culture or context in which the experience occurs can alter the cognitive model structure and therefore, affect its meaning. An

experience is understood not in individual, isolated parts, rather in all its complexity and interdependent parts that Lakoff calls the experiential gestalt.

Lakoff (1980) extends cognitive schema theory to explain the *experiential gestalt* as the basic domain of experience. Cognitive schema theory holds that learning and memory occur in patterns of neural connections, rather than individual neurons (Driscoll, 2000). Knowledge about an experience is not held in a specific place in the brain, but in the pattern (schema) created by neural connections. An analogy that explains this is a neon sign in which a pattern of lights create letters which in turn spell out the intended message of the sign. The message is in the whole sign not in individual lights. The message can be understood if a light is missing, but if too many are missing or if one very strategic light is missing the message will be distorted or misunderstood. A complete schema is similar to an ICM and provides the meaning for an experience, or concept. An incomplete schema can lead to incorrect expectations about what something is or what it means. Another primary domain is used to reason and make sense of the incomplete schema or to fill in the gap.

Lakoff (1980) argues that it is our basic physical experiences and the interactions with those experiences that provide a conceptual foundation of knowledge. A basic source domain ICM makes neural connections with target domains to create meaning and understanding of the target domain. Acknowledging recent research in cognitive science, Lakoff (1980) has used *neural theory of metaphor* to explain how one domain maps onto another domain: “the maps or mappings are physical links: neural circuitry linking

neuronal clusters called nodes. The domains are highly structured neural ensembles in different regions of the brain” (p.256).

A cognitive model of learning may be structured to include different types of learning, different learning environments, different learning outcomes, different roles. Included in the *gestalt* might be the experience of test taking, reading textbooks, classroom etiquette, and more. The frame from which we understand and reason about new learning experiences is grounded in our earliest learning or the primary source domain ICM. This early learning experience may be a physical interaction with our environment. For example, when an infant cries and someone appears with food, comfort, and warmth, the experiential gestalt about speaking out includes a variety of good things; on the other hand, if nothing happens, or worse, the response is one of violence, the experiential gestalt includes a variety of bad things. This primary source domain suggests that speaking out provides either good or bad results and will affect whether we choose to speak out in new or unknown situations. While this is a dramatic example of how a source domain ICM is mapped onto a target domain, it illustrates that meaning is framed in the experience or understanding of an original embodied experience. We construct meaning and create expectations about the world from those embodied experiences. Truth emerges from that meaning and behavior from the expectations.

From this perspective, metaphor occurs as a mostly unconscious cognitive act of neural mapping from a semantic source domain to a semantic target domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1987) for use in everyday language. The cognitive definition of

metaphor is *a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system*. An important and essential thesis of contemporary or conceptual metaphor theory states that metaphor is not the nature of language but the nature of cognition (Lakoff, 1980; 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). We think in metaphor; therefore, we speak in metaphor. Understanding one concept in terms of another through the mapping of one domain onto another domain, i.e., neurons connecting a source domain to a target domain, produces metaphorical thought. Lakoff (1980) argues that metaphorical maps are a part of the brain and as such, thinking in metaphor is not a conscious choice of language, but an unconscious result of this mapping of neurons. Language is simply the “surface realization” of those thoughts and speaking metaphorically is embedded in knowledge and expressed in language (Lakoff, 1987). Metaphor begins with experience and manifests itself or is expressed in language; thus, language is dependent upon metaphorical experience.

Moreover, Lakoff argues that “metaphor is a major and indispensable part of our ordinary, conventional way of conceptualizing the world and that our everyday behavior reflects our metaphorical understanding of experience” (Lakoff, 1992). This definition of metaphor holds that our everyday language uses metaphor to express meaning derived from our embodied experiences. Metaphors are more than language, more than talk; metaphors are linguistically represented experiences. New experiences or concepts are *framed* by our understanding of embodied, concrete experiences. Next is a brief look at how this cognitive framing takes place.

Cognitive Frames

Psychologists use the term cognitive schema to describe the neural structure in the brain that provides information regarding a particular event or scenario (Driscoll, 2000). In conceptual metaphor theory cognitive frame is a similar construct. The many aspects of any experience are connected by neural connections that create a frame of understanding for that experience. The more we know and understand about an experience, the more complete the frame. A complete frame (a source domain frame) will be used to help complete the new or abstract frame (target domain), thus, providing an understanding of the new experience based on the source domain frame. This comparison of one experience or idea to another idea is similar to literary metaphor except that it occurs as a cognitive process rather than a linguistic process.

For example, Lakoff identifies the path metaphor as a basic or primary metaphor and source domain metaphor. Primary metaphors are grounded experiences encountered early in life. As infants we begin developing our basic source domain metaphors as we learn about the world through bodily experiences. Early in life we learn to walk a path in its most literal sense and later life experiences become our life paths on our life journey. Those early, literal experiences are embodied as representations in our brains. These embodied experiences create the basic cognitive frames. Our understanding of our life paths is framed in our earlier experiences that might include barriers, bumps, detours, etc., and as similar encounters occur in our life journey we understand, we reason, and we think about them metaphorically relating the new experience (target domain) to the earlier embodied experience (source domain).

As we begin to interact with the world our basic cognitive frames begin interacting with one another, making connections or mapping onto other cognitive frames in other domains. These connections have structure and create meaning. We can recognize these structures and infer meanings from everyday language. We map source domain metaphors onto a target domain, or a new experience, which we do not understand or have language. We use the language of the source domain to talk metaphorically about the source domain experience. This allows us to express the new experience using the language of metaphor from the source domain.

The integrity of the source domain image schema remains intact as this metaphorical mapping from the source domain to the target domain takes place. This means that the metaphorical image, i.e., what it looks like, of the source domain is reflected without distortion onto the target domain. The Invariance Principle (Lakoff, 1993; 1999) holds that like features of the source domain will be mapped onto like features of the target domain. Thus, barriers in the source domain will be mapped onto barriers in the target domain, goals onto goals, etc. Lakoff (1993) asserts that this integrity of the image schema of the source domain is always preserved and is consistent with the structure of the target domain.

Lakoff (1980) argues that metaphors are conceptual understandings of experiences. This provides the basis for understanding metaphors as more than a linguistic expression comprised of mere words. Metaphors are the means by which we think and reason, and thus, make sense about our experiences in the world. If we understand what a journey is (even a very short one), then, when we try to make meaning

of our abstract human life, we will make sense of it by seeing it as a type of journey. If the primary journey experience was arduous and perilous, then we will reason that life is arduous and perilous. We will use that understanding to attach meaning to the events in our life and may reason that life is hard and dangerous. This understanding of life will determine our behavior. Because we use metaphors to reason and understand abstract concepts, according to this theory, metaphors predict our behavior:

Metaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus be a guide for future action. Such actions will, of course, fit the metaphor. This will, in turn, reinforce the power of the metaphor to make experience coherent. In this sense metaphors can be self-fulfilling (Lakoff, 1980, p.156).

Event Structure Metaphor

One's understanding of an abstract event is grounded in a system of concrete experiences that allow one to understand, create meaning from and reason about the new abstract experiences. Lakoff and Johnson explain the event structure metaphor in several of their publications (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; 1999; Lakoff, 1993). In the event structure metaphor the source domain is location and movement in space and the target domain is events; its dual source domain is object and movement in space. Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Lakoff, 1993) identifies the mappings for these dual metaphors (fig. 2.1)

This study sought to illuminate an understanding of how English language learners create meaning from their academic experience to define and achieve academic success. Conceptual theory of metaphor provides a means for linguistic analysis that invites a deeper and richer understanding of that experience. This study of individuals

using the English language as a foreign language to describe their experience will provide an opportunity to explore the universality of the event structure metaphor (Lakoff, 1993).

Location Event-Structure Metaphor	Object Event-Structure Metaphor
States are Locations	Attributes are Possessions
Changes are Movements (to or from locations)	Changes are Movements of Possessions (acquisitions or losses)
Causation is Forced Movement (to or from locations)	Causation is Transfer of Possessions (giving or taking)
Purposes are Desired Locations (destinations)	Purposes are Desired Objects

Table 2.1 Event Structure Metaphor Duality
Information for this chart taken from Lakoff and Johnson (1999)

Summary

Coupling cultural capital theory with conceptual metaphor theory created a balanced framework from which to explore how English language learners perceive and understand their learning experience at a community college and the extent to which cultural capital and linguistic competence play a role in their success. The two theories were used explain how English language learners perceive their learning experience; what it means to them to be *a learner*; *to learn*; what it means to be *a student*; and what the expectations of *the learning experience* are.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

A qualitative study provides a comprehensive inquiry of understanding in which “the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants and conducts the study in a naturalistic setting” (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). The purpose of this study was to build a greater understanding about how English language learners create meaning from their experience at a community college campus through extensive group and individual interviews and linguistic analysis. Much of the research in this area has used quantitative methodology, often through the use of surveys. Thus, it seemed a necessary addition to the literature to explore this topic qualitatively using an interview format. In addition to a natural setting, Creswell (2003) identifies other characteristics of qualitative research employed in this research design that were used in this study, including semi-structured interviews with participants engaged in this experience. This provided an interactive and iterative process that allowed the research questions to frame the study without compromising the natural value of the emergent data.

Context

This study was conducted at a large community college in the southwest U.S. where more than 27,000 full and part time students are currently enrolled. All students are commuter students and the mean SES is above the 50th percentile. Most (62%) of these students are preparing for transfer to instate universities and 26% are preparing to enter the job market and 12% are undecided or not known. This college is one of ten individual colleges within one county district of community colleges.

It is the largest community college in the district but it does not represent the most ethnically diverse. Still, it is a diverse campus, with a student population useful to this study. Two thirds of the students (65%) are Anglo; 16% are Hispanic, and 15% include Asian, American Indian, and African American, and 4% are not identified. There are approximately 200 international F1 visa students enrolled as full time students for the 2005 fall semester. An undetermined but significant number of non-F1 visa English language learners are enrolled. This number is inferred from the number of sections of English as a Second Language classes offered each semester and may represent other visa students, immigrant students and 1.5 generation English language learners.

The college is located in a large suburban city and is the largest community college in a district that includes ten other community colleges serving inner city, urban, and suburban communities within a large and sprawling metropolitan area. A significant Hispanic community in this geographic area accounts for the large ESL program. Additionally, its close proximity to a large research one public university accounts for the large number of students, both American and international, who plan to transfer to

complete baccalaureate and/or graduate degrees. Moreover, many international graduate students, visiting professors, and spouses may find their way to the community college to study English, or take a variety of classes available in pronunciation and oral fluency in American speech. In addition to a commitment to offering ESL classes, this community college has a commitment to serving F1 visa international students, providing study abroad programs for American students, and providing faculty cultural exchange programs.

The college was chosen for the setting of this study in part for convenience of student access for the researcher, but also for the researcher's knowledge of the issues of the phenomenon under study and her association with the students experiencing it. Moreover, it makes sense because of its large enrollment of international F1 visa students, thus ensuring a balance between non-F1 and F1 visa English language learners.

Participants

Criterion Sampling

A phenomenological study must have participants who have experienced or are experiencing the specific phenomenon under examination. One sampling strategy for this context is through criterion selection (Creswell, 1998; 2003) which was employed for this study. English language students enrolled at the community college and who met the following criteria were recruited and selected:

1. have taken the CELSA (Combined English Language Skills Assessment) placement test
2. have completed or tested beyond the traditional ESL language course work
3. are enrolled in 6 or more credits of 100 and above coursework

The first criterion ensured that the participant is an English language learner; the second, ensured the participants have adequate English literacy skills to interact with the interviewer; and the third criterion allows for both immigrant and student visa English language learners who are continuing their study beyond basic English as a Second Language courses to be included in the study. For the purposes of this study, it was not necessary for the researcher to distinguish among the types of English language learners, student visa, other visa, immigrant, 1.5 generation, documented or undocumented students were included if they met the criteria listed.

It must be noted that students who are studying at the community college may be very different and more globally sophisticated than local native English speakers attending the community college. Many students entering community college as English language learners may be well educated and may have earned advanced degrees in their home countries, or in some cases from American universities. Others may be entering higher

education for the very first time. Many of the students in this study represent a population of students who are well traveled, often speak more than one language, and are far more culturally experienced than many of the traditional American community college students.

Participant Recruitment

The researcher visited two sections of English 107 and two sections of English 108 to begin the recruitment of participants. This represented half the total number of sections for these courses that were offered, yet more than half the total number of students taking these classes were enrolled in these sections. English 107 and 108 English classes are specifically for English language learners and are equivalent to traditional English 101 and 102 classes for college freshman. They were chosen because students in these classes would have tested or passed into this level (criterion one and two) and would very likely be enrolled in one or more other classes at the community college (criterion three). In choosing these particular ESL classes, it provided a sufficient number of students who met the criteria and who were less likely to be enrolled in any of my communication classes.

As the researcher, I provided an oral introduction to the study and explained its purpose to each of the sections. I placed special emphasis on the voluntary nature of their participation and that neither grades nor student status at the college could be affected in any way. I handed out a written statement about the study (see Appendix A) and a demographic questionnaire to students (see Appendix B). I invited students to consider

participating in the study and asked interested participants to complete the questionnaire and return it to me or contact me with any additional questions. When students contacted me and indicated their interest in the study, I asked the potential participant which interview format was preferred. Every effort was made to meet these preferences. Several students had no preference; therefore, I had some flexibility in arranging group interviews to include a heterogeneous group of gender, age, and first language.

Thirty-four out of a total of 76 students contacted the researcher indicating an interest and willingness to participate in one of the interview formats. Seven of these students withdrew either by not setting an appointment for an individual interview, or by not showing up for the scheduled group interview. The total number of students participating in interviews was 25. N=13 individual interviews and N=8 in the first focus group and N=6 in second focus group. Two students participated in both interview formats.

The total N was a heterogeneous group representing 10 different first languages, 13 countries of origin, 16 female and 9 male participants (see Appendix C). The first focus group had an N=8; the second focus group had an N=6. These numbers provided groups small enough to create comfortable small group discussion wherein each member felt accepted and willing to contribute to the discussion.

Role of the Researcher

The phenomenological approach to qualitative research requires that a researcher recognize and acknowledge how her experience may interact and, or intersect with those of the participants (Creswell, 1998). My research interest in this particular student population emerged from my role as a faculty member in the Communication department of the community college used in this study. In addition to teaching core communication classes for native speakers of English, I have been instrumental in developing and teaching communication classes for English language learners. While this may have provided a more immediate connection to the participants and thus, may make me susceptible to the biases of an insider, students in this study were more likely to consider me an outsider because English is my first language, I am neither a student at the community college, nor an immigrant or visiting on a visa (Mehra, 2001). I did not have any connection to their legal status as an immigrant or a visa student, nor was I a current instructor with evaluation responsibility for the participants. Being an outsider in terms of power or authority may have helped to assuage any concerns participants may have had about my motives and about how the information would be used. Moreover, my teaching responsibilities and experience working with English language learners may have facilitated the data collection because I have an established reputation and trust among this student population and who, therefore, may have been more forthcoming in the interviews. For these reasons I may have been seen as trustworthy and safe as a data collector.

Both my experience working on this community college campus and with this student population has afforded me additional insight and sensitivity for this study. For ten years, I have worked on this campus with other faculty from other academic disciplines including ESL to provide interdisciplinary learning communities for students. From this grew a desire to have greater understanding of the experience of students studying on our campus for whom English was not a first language. I developed and taught communication courses specifically designed for this student population. This valuable participant observation knowledge of this phenomenon and this student population motivated and informed this study.

A criterion sampling of students coupled by recruiting participants from courses outside the department in which I teach yielded many more students who had not been in one of my classes than those who had. None were simultaneously enrolled in my class and participating in the study interviews. This minimized the concerns of doing research in “my own backyard” (Mehra, 2001) without sacrificing the rapport I have with English language learners who may have been in one or more of my classes.

Data Collection

Interviews

In depth interviews are a hallmark of qualitative research and in particular, phenomenological studies (Creswell, 1998). I used two types of interviews, group and individual interviews. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was audio recorded. Audio recordings were reproduced digitally and stored on the researcher's computer (and a flash drive) so the audio recording of each interview might be accessed as necessary during the analysis process. Each interview was also transcribed verbatim and printed for data analysis purposes.

Interviews were scheduled with sufficient intervals to allow for the shaping and reshaping of interview protocols to nurture the contours of the developing themes. Two individual unstructured open interviews were conducted before the group interviews. I scheduled the remainder of the individual interviews to follow the group interviews and used the information gathered in the focus group interviews to further shape and focus the interview protocol for subsequent individual interviews.

All interviews, with the exception of one individual interview, were held in a small study room of the main library on campus. This location was chosen because it represented a neutral, yet comfortable and convenient location for the participants. The excepted interview was held in an unused office near where the participant worked on campus. This was arranged at the request and for the convenience of the student.

As the facilitator of the focus group interviews, I began each using an adaptation of a discussion format known as the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) (Delbeque, 1986).

I posed a general question to the group and asked that each participant think about the question, then formulate an answer individually and write it down. For the purposes of these interviews, these initial answers could be composed in the participants' first language if they chose to do so. No one else would see these written responses; we would only hear what the participant chose to share with the group. Once everyone had an opportunity to do so, the question was opened up for discussion. This allowed individuals to think about their own response to the question before allowing other answers to bias or influence an individual response. No one was required to speak and individual answers remained private.

This procedure did two things for this group of English language learners. First, it allowed time for them to compose thoughts and ideas in English, thus, allowing even reticent speakers an opportunity to think before discussion ensued. Second, it minimized the influence that more fluent, eager, and less shy individuals might have over the discussion. The resulting discussions proved to be lively, interactive, and inclusive of all participants.

Both group interviews were completed and transcribed verbatim. These transcripts revealed that individual interview protocols needed to be more narrowly focused on several issues. To provide continuity and a connection to the focus groups, I invited two students, one from each group, to continue the discussion in an individual interview. Both students consented.

All individual interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format following brief and non-ordered interview protocols (Appendix D). This allowed for a

more natural conversation to emerge between the interviewer and the participant while still ensuring that the same basic information was addressed sometime during each interview. At times during the interview, I repeated or paraphrased certain comments to be sure of understanding and to clarify for transcription purposes. This technique functioned as an immediate member check for accuracy and understanding.

Questionnaire

In addition to interviews, the participants completed a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B). The questionnaire included questions regarding previous education, parental education and other demographic information. Completed questionnaires sufficed for participant consent forms for the University of Arizona Human Subjects Review Board (see Appendix A). This provided another source of data to help validate and confirm the objectivity of the interpretation of data to provide validity to the study (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

I compiled data from the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) for information about all participants and the composition of focus groups, including first language, country of origin, age and gender. In addition, information responding to a question and seven sub-questions regarding participants' perception of their ability to speak English provided additional reflective insight for this group of students.

Preliminary Findings

Extensive interviews with participants produced a substantial amount of data, including more than 15 hours of interview transcripts, 25 demographic questionnaires, and researcher notes. Creswell (1998) provides a summary of the generally accepted procedures for qualitative work but acknowledges that such work does not lend itself to templates or even rigid guidelines. The inductive nature of qualitative research allows the researcher to follow the leads and message of the data to determine the exact manner in which the data will be examined and interpreted. The researcher followed the recommended steps with some variation to accommodate the twists and turns of this study.

Initial Interviews

Two preliminary individual interviews were conducted to confirm the use of the theoretical lens and to provide direction for additional interviews. Cultural capital theory framed the second research question and conceptual theory of metaphor framed the third research question. The review of literature yielded several studies using cultural capital as a theoretical lens to study English language learners (Blumenthal, 2002; Kingston, 2001; Moss, 2005; Stafford, 2004). The use of conceptual theory of metaphor as a theoretical perspective to research this population was a bit more elusive. The initial interview provided data supporting the use of this theory; the second individual interview provided data to direct and guide the interview protocol for the group interviews. Each interview is discussed separately in the following section.

First Individual Interview

The first interview explored the possibility of using the conceptual theory of metaphor to analyze data from individuals whose first language is not English. Some researchers have criticized the scant evidence to support cross-cultural applications of this theory (Quinn, 1991; Searle, 2002). Yet, Grady (1997) demonstrates “metaphorical usage in languages around the world” (p.1) that comport with the patterns and schema identified by Lakoff and Johnson (1987) and argues that basic human experiences create similar cognitive connections between those basic experiences and new experiences or abstract ideas. Thus, he argues not only for cross-cultural applications of the conceptual theory of metaphor, but also for the existence of universal metaphorical patterns. Lakoff (1993) suggests that the event structure metaphor and its entailments offers the strongest evidence of metaphor universals and for this reason, I limited my analysis to this primary metaphorical schema.

I conducted the first interview with BR13 to determine if interviews would elicit sufficient data to use this theoretical perspective as an analytical tool for this study. The results of the interview provided a transcript rich in metaphorical data. The discourse data from this interview demonstrated use of traditional image metaphor which is transparent and is indicative of her facility with the English language:

I had the grammar—English grammar in my head becausewe are required to have English in our curriculum. But I couldn't verbalize the grammar, so it was very difficult.....

And then I started to, you know, speak and verbalize whatever grammar. I remember specifically in – I even – you know I called it the fishing phase. The fishing phase because I had all of these words in my head that I was translating in my head but then I was trying to search exactly what word it was inside my head.

At the same time, it was consistent with theory of metaphor illustrating the conceptual image or metaphor *the brain is a container; language is an object*. Our understanding of containers and objects is grounded in physical experience and is concrete, thus, they become source domains from which is projected an understanding of the conceptual target domains, in this case, the brain and language. In this way, our understanding of the properties of the source domain (container; object) is mapped onto the target domain (brain; language). This is referred to as the Invariance Principle and explains the relational dimension of the neural mapping between source and target domains.

The Invariance Principle (Lakoff, 1993) holds that structural properties of the source domain will be consistent with the inherent properties of the target domain. This is important to the consistency of meaning and understanding for metaphors. This principle is illustrated here. Containers have interiors and exteriors, what one puts into a container should be able to come out. The participant indicates that she had successfully contained the English grammar, but that she was having trouble retrieving it from the container. Similarly, language, identified as grammar, is an object that can be place in or out of a container.

The existence of metaphorical language in the interview with BR13 supported the use of the contemporary theory of metaphor as a theoretical lens and conceptual metaphor as an analytical tool for this study. The data seemed to support the argument in cognitive linguistics that conceptual metaphor occurs in everyday use of language, that conceptual metaphor is a necessary, yet ordinary part of reasoning and creating meaning in our world (Grady, 1997; Gibbs, 2004; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; DesCamps & Sweetser, 2005). As DesCamps & Sweetser (2005) conclude:

Because of the makeup of the human body, with its physical and cognitive structures and the way in which the body interacts with the world, metaphor is an essential part of cognition, a way to conceptualize everyday experiences.....that at the most basic level, human use of metaphor is unconscious, unsophisticated, and regular (p. 223).

Second Individual Interview

The second individual interview was conducted with the purpose of designing appropriate interview protocols for the focus groups and the remaining individual interviews. I conducted an unstructured interview with open-ended questions to allow the participant more control over the direction of the information offered. This yielded information more conducive to a case study of one individual's experience. Because the purpose of the study was to explore the collective experience of English language learners at the community college, this prompted the change to a more structured interview protocol tailored to answer the specific research questions.

Serendipitously, the data from this interview confirmed the limited operational definition for cultural capital and linguistic competence for this population. It was necessary to modify the concept to accommodate the circumstance of students who had considerable cultural capital in their native country although they lacked linguistic capital here:

Well, they [native speakers] are more understanding. Sometimes. For example, I have seen in my job. There are some nurses who are native speakers and they are very understanding and they understand that it is my second language.

And when asked about the secret of success in school:

I don't know, confidence. Because I knew very well about that research about the data I knew it really well because I was prepared with the film with my team.....

And why she preferred a face to face job interview:

Confidence. I am so nervous. They can see my confidence I am sure of what I am telling them about myself in the sentence.If I look into his eyes..... These quotes suggest a level of confidence in two things.

In the first quote, RG13 indicates a willingness to interact with and ask questions of native speakers without fear that she will be judged for nursing incompetence, and that those native speakers will understand that she is learning English. In the second quote, she acknowledges that confidence is critical to a successful interview, and that confidence can be seen as well as heard in face-to-face communication.

This participant was a 28 year old female who had been trained as a nurse at a university in Mexico, and who is in the process of obtaining her nursing license in the United States. She is attending community college to learn English and brush up on her clinical nursing skills in a special program for foreign trained nurses. Although her

parents do not have university degrees, many in her family do and her parents encouraged her to pursue higher education:

Because my parents since [I was a] kid they were always pushing me to study, whatever I want they just want me to study because they just couldn't do it..... I have cousins who are lawyers, accountants. On my mother's side. Well, on my father's side there is a doctor and an accountantThey still in Mexico, all of them. Working in their fields.

This indicates that the family not only values education, but also that there are role models for her and family support of her educational goals. This represents Bourdieu's conceptual construct of *habitus* which enables an individual to assess levels of social, economical, and cultural capital and the prospects using such in the pursuit of success in various professions (Moss, 2005). Habitus gives rise to behavior that is accepted and comfortable because it is familiar to one who has been the product of that particular social or economic class. Thus, acknowledging the achievements of family members gives her confidence in her own ability to be successful.

Focus Group Data

Each of the two focus groups produced data that suggested that more guidance from the interviewer was needed. To do so, I limited the number and scope of interview questions for the individual interviews that were to follow. Several of the students spoke of the comparison between their university experience, in their home country and in the United States, and their current experience at the community college. Initially, this comparison was not a focus of the study; however, the data from the focus groups

indicated it might be an important aspect to the student dialogue. I decided to use probing questions should this topic emerge in individual interviews.

The second discovery in the analysis of the focus group data was that most students were expressing positive experiences at the community college, especially when they spoke about their past academic experiences. While this is certainly a finding, it may have represented an unwillingness to talk about negative experiences at the community college without prompting. I decided to be more direct in my questioning about possible negative experiences. I included subtle invitations to talk about those experiences by asking additional probes like:have you ever felt unwelcome or discouraged in a class; felt left out or ignored by teachers or classmates?..." I believed it was important to invite participants to talk about both positive and negative experiences because of the research identifying both, but particularly negative, in the university setting (Estrada & Dupoux, 2005; Lee & Rice, 2005; Niehoff, et al., 2001; Swagler & Ellis, 2003; Zimmerman, 1995). I was sure that positive responses would be forthcoming, but that individuals may need gentle encouragement to share a negative experience.

Individual Interviews

Armed with a more focused interview design using additional probing questions, a semi-structured ten question protocol (see Appendix D) was created and used for each of the individual interviews. The questions were limited in scope to ensure consistency in the data and to ensure that interviews could be conducted within the one hour time commitment for the participants, yet the probes allowed for a deeper exploration of topics important to the study and relevant to each participant.

Emergent Themes

Each interview transcript was perused several times and relevant or significant statements were identified and categorized. Although two of the research questions in this qualitative study were framed within the context of a theoretical lens, the categories emerged inductively before grouping the statements into fewer, but more abstract, themes relating to the research questions Creswell (1998). Statements were identified as relating to one of the research questions, or its sub questions.

Research question one included several sub questions that guided the coding of statements. These categories included:

RQ 1: What does it mean to be an English language learner in a community college?

- a. How do they describe their feelings as a student?
- b. How do they describe interactions with other students?
- c. How do they describe interactions with faculty?
- d. How does this experience comport with other academic experiences?

Significant statements that individuals made relevant to their academic experience were grouped together and examined for meaning. Samples of these statements are listed in the following tables (See Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4).

Table 3.1 Research Question 1
Sample statements about feelings

<p>I was so nervous</p> <p>And then in front of the whole class you have to make like research or something and say it loud in front of, and I'm so shy so I don't like, I don't like</p> <p>The first time I got fever I can't sleep I can't and I think that was my worst part but finally it was the best for me because I lose like some scare</p> <p>That I'll never feel the same for fear about speaking at the front class.</p> <p>she made it hardest, but I think that now that that thing was the best for me because I lose my panic or my fear for English.</p> <p>the only thing that scares me is the English</p> <p>That's my fear because I think I'm intelligent, kind of, but English</p> <p>the first time I was so embarrassed</p> <p>I felt that I was a college student even though I was taking English and I was learning English but it felt like I was a college student</p>	<p>I don't feel scared or afraid to write papers anymore.</p> <p>Pressure. Lot of pressure</p> <p>this is maybe I need something hard for feel good and I feel I learn, you know.</p> <p>I think cause sometime I feel like how say embarrassed when I speak sometimes. Yeah but I try.</p> <p>I did not feel comfortable many times</p> <p>the first part of the first a semester I was a little bit shocked because back home it's like that you go to lectures you're not required to go to lectures even...</p> <p>Oh, I was so scared when I came it was so I was so upset</p> <p>No. first semester when I came to the CC I wasn't comfortable at all,</p> <p>maybe my fear is about my English</p> <p>maybe my fear is about my English</p> <p>Also I feel very uncomfortable, because I really was scared I have never talking about native speaker, except the professor</p>
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Table 3.2

Research Question 1

Sample statements about instructors

He made me do things that I never think that I can do it.

Very very comfortable and instructor's pronunciation is very clear a

she made it hardest, but I think that now that that thing was the best for me because I lose my panic or my fear for English.

the first time I was so embarrassed, I couldn't understand what the instructor was saying

If I knew the answer but I couldn't I'm too shy and if I speak wrong but they are like how do I say?

At first I was really .. and I was silent all the time in class

the teacher said do you know what it was very good and I don't expect that from you and it was it was the first one and for you it was good, and I was happy.

Table 3.3

Research Question 1

Sample statements about students

if I have a long answer the ESL students understood me because they are also ESL students they can make a mistake.

Also I feel very uncomfortable, because I really was scared I have never talking about native speaker, except the professor

it's not a big deal with international students but when an international student say in .. class if we make a mistake we really feel ashamed because of that because maybe they should think that we are not smart or you know that you are different and ah you speak bad.

but some people don't like another languages. Some people say they don't like to spend a little bit more time you're speaking or trying to catch the words.

I see here some people likes to be people from another country and some people don't and I respect both so if I found people who doesn't like to speak with me I can speak with another people.

Table 3.4 Research Question 1

Sample statements about speaking in class and asking questions

And then in front of the whole class you have to make like research or something and say it loud in front of, and I'm so shy so I don't like, I don't like

That I'll never feel the same for fear about speaking at the front class.

The first time I got fever I can't sleep I can't and I think that was my worst part but finally it was the best for me because I lose like some scare

I couldn't speak up so I changed my all classesTo ESL.....

I need to speak up in class. Even though my English is not perfect they maybe they understand because they know where I'm from or how much the difficult to learn the second language

Well, now I usually speak up in English in the class. Mmhm so in Korea if I speak up in the class it's more the students like oh, they thought me like she wants to get attention to attention from the professor, she's a professor's pet.

This is my concern always when I speak because I don't have problem when I read or write. It's when I speak it's my problem. (What's the problem?) My pronunciation

at first maybe we don't understand some words but we can ask

At first I was really .. and I was silent all the time in class

Yeah, only way I can learn, if I don't ask the questions, I can't learn it

usually the instructor's asking questions like I'm never gonna open my mouth in this class no way,... but then since you start working with the other students and you see that you're a little bit smarter than them and you get like more positive attitudes and you decide to talk and speak up, it's yeah but takes time

,...the major classes was so hard for me.....It was hard, I try to don't ask any question

I really wanted to ask question, but I couldn't..... I want to speak up in class in the class so I need to more work on class.

Table 3.5 Research Question 1
Sample statements about academic success and studying

Academic success	Studying
<p>know if I take a regular class it's kind of like challenge</p> <p>I have 4.0 GPA, I studied hard</p> <p>That's why you're in school, to study and do your homework.</p> <p>I have to survive in the class' and I have to give good impression to the professor, so.</p> <p>after three absences she said 'do you know what, you can take the rest of the semester off because you're not gonna have grades here.</p>	<p>I worked for like three weeks and nights and my daughter helped me so everything is going to be okay</p> <p>When you study social work [with] American student, is harder if you need to try to understand everything and is not like a English [class] If you study ESL, you or I feel more comfortable</p> <p>a lot of people think that it's not important to study for example. American people say oh no it's like just work but not study and .that's mistake, you need to study,</p> <p>I need to pre read the book and the review.</p> <p>Yes, I have advice to everybody about that. Study. Just study</p> <p>homeworks or something so I have to do it twice to review the classes</p>

Table 3.6 Research Question 1
Sample statements about other educational experiences

<p>[at CC] you're three or more absences you're in big trouble you have to do homework every day, over there you did just lectures you didn't have homeworks</p> <p>But back home the emphasis is more on memorizing. And here it's learning, they teach you skills, not only knowledge.</p> <p>you always heard that college or universities are harder than community schools</p> <p>that university had bigger class, and the instructors use a microphone in class and don't even call you by name, they call you by social security number or the number you've been assigned for and I thought about CC I thought were less bigger than university</p> <p>you have to work yourself and you have work for you know get the tuition</p>
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Research question two specifically addressed Bourdieu's cultural capital proposition that asserts that students who enter higher education having inherited more understanding of high culture and who are from higher socioeconomic backgrounds will have greater academic success (degree attainment).

RQ 2: To what extent and how are cultural capital and habitus reflected in academic success for English language learners?

Of particular interest in this study was the concept of academic literacy defined as having adequate language skills to communicate in English at a college level within a specialized academic community (Curry, 2004). Additionally, evidence of confidence in using English was considered as evidence of cultural capital (see Table 3.7).

Table 3.7 Research Question 2
Sample statements about confidence and self-reliance

<p>I started saying everything is going to be okay, everything</p> <p>I prepare the talk, but it's hard, but it's good because it's like a challenge, it's hard, for my language, no because my English is not 100 %</p> <p>I think if you want to do you do the things it's like you need to study more and but you can do it.</p> <p>I'm nervous about that because my English is not really good but I think I can do it, I will try. I want to work hard.</p> <p>I like to work hard and I think I'm like really serious when I'm working, so everything's gonna be okay after I speak English.</p> <p>I have to survive in the class' and I have to give good impression to the professor, so. so I'm very responsible too..... if somebody tell me you need to do that okay I do it I try if it's not and then I try to be powerful and do all my things but for me it's important</p> <p>Because to be a college student you need to choose class that you want, not somebody choose a class for you. And then you need to be meet different people in different class</p>	<p>and that day I said oh I can do it better and everyday better.</p> <p>you know this I don't understand and I'm sure that they will try to let you know what they are saying.</p> <p>I always myself, say myself, I can do everything</p> <p>if I'm coming to this college in US is to learn English, not to learn Spanish because I already know,</p> <p>I always say when I started speaking, talking on phone I said 'you know, I'm learning English if you don't understand with me I'll be glad to repeat it' and I feel comfortable and they take like time to ask me questions.</p> <p>I see here some people like to meet people from another country and some people don't. and I respect both so if I found people who doesn't like to speak with me I can speak with another people.</p> <p>I think I think we have a lot of resources, so the idea is to find these people, you know to talk.</p> <p>Oh, my English is very very bad,but I try.</p> <p>I couldn't speak English but I worked and I tried</p>
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The third research question about the use of metaphors to describe their academic experience required an additional review of the significant statements to identify the metaphorical language used by the participants in general, but specifically regarding the first two research questions.

RQ 3: How do metaphors help explain how English language learners understand and constitute meaning from their academic experience at the community college?

As mentioned earlier, this analysis was limited to the event structure metaphor (see Table 2.1; Table 3.8).

Another theme that emerged and was related to the concern about other marginalizing factors affecting the experience of this student population raised in the literature review. The following table (Table 3.9) provides sample statements that were identified as relating to a perception of otherness and separateness.

Table 3.8 Research Question 3
Sample metaphorical statements

<p>trying to catch the words</p> <p>And then in front of the whole class you have to make like research</p> <p>after three absences she said ‘do you know what, you can take the rest of the semester off because you’re not gonna have grades here.</p> <p>We always choose the last places to do the presentation</p> <p>I don’t find like a lot of mistakes</p> <p>... and I found my mistakes</p> <p>because I lose like some scare so everything’s gonna be okay after I speak English.</p> <p>the only thing that scares me is the English</p> <p>I have to survive in the class</p> <p>I need to finish my career at university</p> <p>And I know I need to go to university to finish my major [MSW]</p> <p>when you study you try to get an A or B because I know in the future this is the you got an A or B is better if you go to the university, so it’s important.</p> <p>And we think you don’t know the place you’re language is not good so it’s like when you speak I think the first barrier is the language for me</p> <p>just everyone just push you to study from teacher to home</p>	<p>I’m coming to this college in US is to learn English, and sometimes I miss [the] explanations</p> <p>be more deep in the context so in English when I try to be more deep</p> <p>I think the problem is again word choices</p> <p>everything again, but maybe something in the field I think radiology program.</p> <p>but when I’m talking to some English speaker I’m not thinking in Spanish and all the time I’m trying to communicate in English and it make it easier because I’m not thinking in Spanish.</p> <p>the word is coming in the part in Spanish but the other part in English and it’s really weird</p> <p>Yeah, it’s easier but my goal is different, I want to improve my English and to speak in English.</p> <p>it’s hard for people to accept who you are and you need to get out of circle and go reach someone else, it’s doesn’t belong to the group.</p> <p>sometimes I just kind of like held myself out and stuff</p> <p>I actually took 101 class twice before 107, was unfinished because first time it was too difficult because of papers level I never meet I never been close to the level that he want me to write. The second time well cause the first time I found it hard myself, I gave up myself. Second time 101 class I took he the teacher flat out told me that this is not the class for you</p>
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Table 3.9 Additional emergent themes
Sample statements about social alienation and identity

but some people don't like another languages

know I was afraid I couldn't communicate with the people

so everything's gonna be okay after I speak English.

I see here some people like to meet people from another country and some people don't. and I respect both so if I found people who doesn't like to speak with me I can speak with another people.

Yeah so he asked what did you say like that for three times so every student looked at me like that so I'm so embarrassed

usually if I don't have chance to speak and to talk with American in campus, so I usually read a book or writing a paragraph as in assignment, so I think I speak written English.

just some Korean students like they like the classroom they like that (They had their arms folded?) Folded and they just I know but I'm just.. I didn't want to say anything but I don't know all of the his class but he said it's not good way to study because the professor don't know about what if you know about the lecture or have a good idea about the issue but they don't know and but the Korean student is usually said just I need to get A's so I'm gonna just take a test perfectly but I don't need to speak up in the class

But most Asian people and they just look at my our skin color, they just probably, she can't speak English.

sometimes it's at the bus stop and I usually read a book because many homeless people try to speak with me so I don't want to do that so I just usually read a book and also one American store is .. bus time to come here to come bus stop so I know about I know the time but she never asked me and I she is sitting at the bench for a while she never asked me and after that an American guy is walked to the bus stop and then she asked to him.

It's just my opinion. Educated American don't do that to me.

If you study ESL, you or I feel more comfortable.

But if you study social work, everybody speaks perfect English and yes it's American, so sometimes I don't understand

I know that I need to because I need to study a lot for my major This is the first thing that I need to I know, it's not because I'm foreign student.

I think that if you take English classes it's good but you need to take classes with American people so because your English will be improved and it's better for you it's like because you need to talk you need to express your ideas in English so my advice is not just taking English classes try to take any other classes like the career, but with American people, it's well better

in the ESL department all students are from different countries and international students so we all know that we are learning and if we make some mistake yeah we don't have to make mistake but we know that we are learning and it's not a big deal with international students but when an international student say in .. class if we make a mistake we really feel ashamed because of that because maybe they should think that we are not smart or you know that you are different and ah you speak bad.

my classmate their English is native and for me I noticed that they used to speak so fast and I wasn't able to catch everything and I was like oh my God.

Yeah it's a little different so then I start a conversation, I arrive I say Hey, yeah and to start the conversation I'm more confident I'm able to understand them yeah I don't have more problem with understanding when I'm in that class.

it's better to start I think taking English in the ESL department in the college program because I think my experience here in MCC when I started taking classes in the ESL department I didn't feel as I was in the lower level, I felt that I was a college student even though I was taking English and I was learning English but it felt like I was a college student.

sometime I go to some place and when they know that I'm a Spanish speaker they start to talk to me in Spanish and I like hello talk to me in English

his friends always make fun of me they just think it's funny but it really sometimes like overboard, he went overboard and I just get mad and stuff

it's hard for people to accept who you are and you need to get out of circle and go reach someone else, it's doesn't belong to the group.

when I first went there so I could turn around and see the Asian faces, before there I don't really see Asians.

Cause you know what I do is represent my race, so....

Data Coding

Phenomenological qualitative research requires an iterative process of analysis to produce the essence of phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2003; 1998; Rossman and Rallis, 1998). I initiated the analysis process by perusing each transcript to see what themes or general categories emerged in the interviews. A more focused reading followed in which significant statements were identified and coded to identify themes. Then I compared the emergent themes with the first two research questions and categorized the themes with appropriate research questions and compared them to existing literature. Further culling of significant statements pared down the data to the very essence of the experience as expressed by the participants and provided the material for the description of the phenomenon in the findings section.

The third research question assumed a cognitive theoretical perspective and a conceptual metaphor analysis was used to explicate the experience as described by the participants. As categories and themes were identified and appropriate metaphorical data extracted the event structure metaphor (Lakoff, 1993) provided the metaphorical structure for the analysis.

To ensure the anonymity of participants, each was assigned a coded pseudonym.

Significant statements extracted from interviews were identified with the coded pseudonym of the speaker. In doing this, the context of the statement and the speaker's first language and country could be retrieved if necessary for later interpretation of the findings. Using the coded pseudonym, one could identify some demographic information from the appendices if desired.

Delimitation and Limitations of the Study

The nature of the phenomenological approach to research creates some inherent limitations pertaining to the number of participants and specific context of the study. It is appropriate to use in depth interviews and a small sample to begin an exploration of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). This study was confined to interviews with community college students who are English language learners. However common the experiences may seem, it is important to remember that they may not represent the experiences of all students whose first language is not English, or of the experience of students in other types of institutions, or even other community colleges. This study included a heterogeneous group of students casting a broader perspective, while at the same time limiting the depth of understanding within specific cultures.

An additional concern should be voiced with regard to the interview strategy and the use of metaphor as a method of interpretation. Language and the use of language will be at the heart of the collection and interpretation of data and nonnative English speaking participants may find it difficult to express themselves clearly and meaningfully in English. Conceptual metaphor theory has raised questions regarding its universality and its cross-cultural aspects have yet to be determined (Grady, 1997; Quinn, 1991). The presence of metaphor in everyday, albeit limited, English provides support for the universality of this theory.

Many factors, including culture, socioeconomic background, purpose in attending, and individual needs may affect the experience of different English language learners. This study was designed to explore the heterogeneous group of English language learners

rather than to distinguish among these many differences. Beginning with a heterogeneous group and an understanding of a collective experience provides the impetus for future studies in which cultures and languages are differentiated.

Summary

The findings in this study are the result of a recursive and iterative process. First, two individual interviews provided a sense of the phenomenon and a guide for developing the focus for the interview protocol for the group interviews. The first interview provided insight to the type and amount of metaphorical language that might be forthcoming, thus, providing a gauge regarding the use of the contemporary theory of metaphor as a theoretical lens. The second interview provided insight into the amount of structure needed in the interview protocols to elicit information relating to the research questions. Group interviews of a heterogeneous group of participants provided a broader perspective of this phenomenon and provided data allowing the researcher to design the individual interview protocol to probe deeper for greater detail about the salient concerns of this student population during individual interviews. This process validated the emerging themes and sought any new or contradictory information (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the pieces of the data as revealed in the individual interviews to create the mosaic that answers the research questions posited for this study. Each research question provides a different perspective of how English language learners may constitute meaning from their academic experiences. In the following sections, research questions are addressed individually using excerpts from the data to illustrate the findings. Serendipitous findings related to the participants' other educational experiences provided valuable insight to the unique context of the community college setting, and thus, helped complete the mosaic of understanding and meaning for English language learners at the community college.

What Does It All Mean?

The Paradox of Fear and Determination

The first research question was subdivided into several parts to allow the data to reveal the nature of the phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it (Creswell, 1998). Participants were asked about their experience and these comments helped answer the sub questions. As this data was examined each part provided insight to one or more aspects of the phenomenon. The first sub question asked how participants described their feelings about being a student. They shared feelings about many aspects, but most participants revealed an overall sense of nervousness and apprehension coupled with a positive attitude and courage about entering a new culture, a new environment, and a new language. The following comment reflected a common sentiment several students expressed as they commented on how they felt at the beginning of their experience.

I'm nervous about that because my English is not really good but I think I can do it, I will try. I want to work hard.

The emotion that was identified most clearly was fear: fear of speaking English, fear of being misunderstood, fear of speaking up in class and asking questions, fear of speaking with other students. Each participant expressed some form of this fear; yet, the complement emotion expressed was that of determination and self-reliance in overcoming this fear. For example, a female student from Mexico expressed it this way:

HA2: And then in front of the whole class you have to make like research or something and say it loud [aloud] in front of [the class], and I'm so shy so I don't like,The first time I got fever I can't sleep I can't and I think that was my worst part but finally it was the best for me because I lose like some scare....that I will never feel the same for fear about speaking at the front class.

Courage to overcome this fear was acknowledged by several participants:

FC5: I was afraid because everything was new for me and my English
Okay I'm going to study and I try to do the best way the best, but okay I
was afraid

JL9: I couldn't speak English but I worked and I tried

HA2: I'm nervous about that because my English is not really good but I think I
can do it, I will try, I want to work hard.

Moving Beyond the ESL Classroom

Although participants acknowledged nervousness and fear of speaking English generally, it was more specifically addressed when participants spoke about the differences between English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and regular college classes. One Korean student who had a degree from a Korean university and who had tested beyond ESL coursework signed up for regular classes. She quickly changed her schedule to ESL classes after her initial experience in the classroom with native English speakers:

YC3: the first time I was so embarrassed, I couldn't understand what the instructor was saying and also the students is so quickly and so not clear and so I'm embarrassed and I couldn't say anything else. If I knew the answer but I couldn't I'm too shy and if I speak wrong they are like how do I say?

R: When you say speak wrong what do you mean, mispronounced?

YC3: Mispronounced or wrong answer.

R: What do you think they would think?

YC3: They I thought it's like that I ..why she can't English, like that, so what did she say? I'm shy and and I couldn't speak up so I changed my all classes

R: You changed all of your classes? To what?

YC3: To ESL.

R: And how is that different?

YC3: Very, very comfortable and instructor's pronunciation is very clear and if I have a long answer the ESL students understood me because they are also ESL students they can make a mistake.

It is interesting to note that later on in the interview, YC3 provided additional insight from her own analysis to the response "excuse me" she frequently received when speaking to native English speakers. Initially, she assumed it must be that she was wrong in one of three ways: grammar, pronunciation, or content. She came to realize that it was none of those concerns, simply that her naturally soft voice was not audible.

YC3: When I go to a supermarket or a grocery store or some I first I said something but usually native speaker ask one more oh excuse me, so I thought I was wrong, pronunciation is wrong or my grammar is wrong, but I thought it's my its not pronunciation or grammar problem my confidence problem, so I thought they thought my voice is very soft or soft so they couldn't hear that it's not that it's wrong ..

English language learners may have difficulty discerning the intended meaning of such commonly used and ambiguous statements like "excuse me". In this case, the fear of speaking English incorrectly trumped the simpler and reasonable explanation of a too soft voice. Individuals with less confidence may not come to this conclusion at all.

Another participant described taking regular classes as a challenge despite the difficulties encountered with English:

TK8: if I take regular class it very press me because I cannot understand many times because native speakers speak very fast or they using a lot of idiomatic expression but if I just, I know, I always know if I take a regular class it's kind of like challenge, but first time first difference is like the speech the speed, the ESL oh so professor speech different

Other participants concurred with the relative comfort experienced in ESL classes speaking with other English language learners. When asked about this difference these

explanations were offered:

FE5: in the ESL department all students are from different countries and international students so we all know that we are learning and if we make some mistake yeah we don't have to make mistake but we know that we are learning and it's not a big deal with international students but when an international student say in [regular] class if we make a mistake we really feel ashamed because of that because maybe they should think that we are not smart or you know that you are different and ah you speak bad.

The following comment from a Mexican female student reflects an understanding of the importance of nonverbal communication cues when listening to others in conversation.:

HA2: Better.

R: Better, in what way?

HA2: Because we practice with different people, different languages, and then you find like another way to speak, yeah, and I feel comfortable.

R: What makes you feel more comfortable with other languages? What is it about them?

HA2: Because they put attention on my face and my movements and I do the same to them. And we can get like a big conversation.

Two very different cultures echoed similar needs to attend to nonverbal cues, including this response from a Korean male participant:

LW13: many time I have a hard time too, if I we have a face to face to talk about I can say that or if they didn't understand I can say it another way or something like that I can using my .. but if I just using phone call I have to say the right English. It's very hard for me. But now, it's a really big gain, I think it's more improved than first I came here.

Again, the Korean female student identified above is a bit more analytical about whether or not this comfortable feeling with mistakes of other students is a positive thing:

YC3: I think its listening is very good because instructor speak very slowly and clearly but the speaking is not that good because everyone is make mistake, but we don't we can't recognize what we make mistakes so we just all don't understand but I don't know.

One participant offered this description of what it was like to be the only English language learner in an acting class:

FE5: [I was the] only English language learner. At first I was really [nervous] .. and I was silent all the time in class and Yeah because the first week I was not able to understand my classmates, I was able to understand my professor because he used to articulate better the words and the English that he speaks is easier to understand but my classmate their English is native and for me I noticed that they used to speak so fast and I wasn't able to catch everything and I was like oh my God.

Students are expressing a discernible tension between the fear of speaking English and their determination to continue. The gap between the traditional ESL courses and regular colleges courses is troublesome for students who lack academic literacy, but also for those who must overcome cultural differences in communication and the academic structure and system.

Challenges of Speaking English

As students spoke about their experiences in universities, either in their home countries, or in the U.S., a need to speak up in class, to ask questions, and to interact with faculty and other students required that they overcome their nervousness about speaking. For many students, the U.S. higher education system requires a very different set of academic rules and protocol. Students need to recognize and consciously choose to adopt a new cultural model of education and learning even if they might be able to get an A in the course without speaking as suggested by this participant:

YC3: But after they [other ESL students] didn't volunteer in class because they thought the history it was for get A's for I can get A's without speaking.

R: And is that true?)

YC3: I think so. Yeah. So they didn't volunteer at all so I just speak up.

R: And does that make you feel good to speak up?

YC3: Yeah

This same participant told the story earlier in the interview about a friend who earned an A in a university business class later went to the professor for a letter of recommendation to apply to a graduate program of study. The professor acknowledged in the letter that the student earned an A in the course, but that the professor didn't know who he was. The friend was not granted a graduate study position at that university.

When queried about a willingness to ask questions in class or of the instructor, it seemed that initial fear was overcome by the desire to learn:

KT9: Yeah, only way I can learn, if I don't ask the questions, I can't learn it.

FC4:at first maybe we don't understand some words but we can ask...

This same participant, a social work major, revealed that this confidence in asking might be dramatically diminished when taking courses outside the ESL department:

FC4: ...the major classes was so hard for me...It was hard, I try to don't ask any question..... I know that it's better if I ask, but sometimes I don't know, it's like, I don't know how to say this, or it's like okay I prefer don't ask but I know it's not good for me because if I'm here and I trying to learn I need to ask, but sometimes..

Several students revealed an inclination to save questions for after class, or in the instructor's office, including this same social work major:

FC4: Yes sometimes I prefer that for example the social work when I didn't understand, I went to the office and I yes. For example too she say me everything more I feel more comfortable then okay

VN11: but I was a little uncomfortable, but I try to don't ask any questions, and especially for my biology class all the time I went to my teacher office to ask question and if I had any problem I tried to be don't ask any question in the class, I wasn't comfortable at all.

And yet another generalizes about international students:

YC3: usually international student go to the instructor's office after the class so they ask me I couldn't understand what to say like that, could you explain one more time like that so.

Participants noted that this opportunity to meet with the instructor was new and unexpected for them:

FE5: in Cuba because over there maybe because of the difference between Cuba and US and they those communist people used to say that in here the program the communication program is different and the student doesn't have enough communication with the professor like the professor is like a higher level and the student is at a lower level and it's like the communication they say that it's always I'm the teacher, you're the student, it's not like they say because when I came here we have a good communication with our teacher and if we have some questions we are able to ask and they answer every question that we have. That surprised me at first because when I start taking classes in college I was like oh I have to understand everything at first I have to be eyes open ears open because if I don't understand everything the teacher won't explain me so I was like when I read the syllabus and the teacher said that there is a office hour like if we have some question we are allowed to come and ask I was like Wow! It's not like they used to say.

A female student from Bulgaria noted a major difference in the relationship between students and instructors:

PM10: I was impressed here that the teachers are really helping out all the time, you have problems you're not understanding you can go talk to them. Back home you cannot just walk up to the instructor and talk. No no no, that's a big no-no. In here they even encourage you to talk and communicate more it's that what's the difference

She indicates that one must be willing to change one's perception of what is acceptable and appropriate behavior for college students. For many this may represent a new educational model. The community college offers an environment that allows for the transition between ESL courses and other college courses. But this may still represent a gap too wide to cross without specific programs, classes, and other help to address

differences, allow students to actually practice the new skills and make the change successfully. For many cultures, education does not require active involvement from students. They expect that the professor will provide them the required factual information needed to pass exams. Thus, developing the necessary skills in critical thinking and class discussion are a part of the new education model.

Although ESL classes might be instrumental in developing the confidence to speak English, participants also recognized the importance of cultivating American friends, talking to instructors and speaking English at every opportunity. This finding reflects findings in earlier research that identified the importance of interaction with American students and satisfaction with communication skills to adjustment to campus life for international students at a university (Swagler & Ellis, 2003; Zimmerman, 1995). The community college may provide an environment more conducive, less threatening and less competitive to this than the university setting. For example, several students indicated that attending the community college provided greater freedom in choosing classes apart from ESL classes.

TK8: Sometimes you can focus on English but I don't think it's a good way to be a college student. (Why?) Because to be a college student you need to choose class that you want, not somebody choose a class for you. And then you need to be meet different people in different class and then meet the same teacher it will more independent and more you know choice but you learn more.

R: You'll learn more by being in a program where you get to choose your own classes. TK8: Yeah,

R: So, the first semester you were at the university is that correct? Yeah

Smaller class size is another reason students may find the community college environment more forgiving and offering more opportunity to develop conversation skills and academic speaking skills:

FC5: I know that when you study in the college is different when you study in the university because it's every class here is like 20 people in every class. At the university I know that it's like 100 likeLike more it's not the contact ...you are like a number or because there are a lot of people in each class ... so I prefer here and it's a small group and it's more I feel more comfortable, I don't know.

This especially true for students who are beginning undergraduate study, although some graduate students may also find the community college a less stressful place to practice new communication skills and new academic practices. The smaller numbers of students who speak similar first languages and who might congregate or take classes together may also maximize the opportunity to interact with native English speakers. This interaction may expose English language learners to a variety of American English patterns used in different social settings.

Social Languages

At the same time English language learners had to face their fear of speaking up in class and asking questions of the instructor, it seemed that communicating with other students posed a different set of problems. The context of the community college permitted a variety of *social languages* spoken by instructors, fellow English language learners, and particularly American students to confound the problem inherent in understanding the spoken language. Largely unaware that they are doing so, native speakers change from one social language to another and this may represent an almost

unconscious code switching (Gee, 1999). According to Gee, social languages can be either informal or formal. For informal social languages, context is the essence of the meaning; whereas, formal social languages, like academic English, are decontextualized. Different social languages such as slang among students, idioms among native speakers, and technical language in specific courses do not go unnoticed by English language learners trying to fit in and understand what is going on around them.

LW13: Actually I want both [academic and slang English] because I want using English for my job so in that time I cannot understand because I had to use academic English but if my at my friend's actually, almost my friend younger than me because of my regular class they have almost 19 or 20, something like that because they using all the time slang, I can't understand something like 'What's cooking' something like that now I understand 'what's cooking' means but about 2 and 3 months ago I didn't understand 'what's cooking' I knew that it's kind of cooking, the idiomatic expression is very hard for me, actually all of the other country people have a hard time of the idiomatic expression.

YC3: so they just all speak quickly or clearly, not clearly, using the slang or but mostly I can't understand,
It's getting better but sometimes I can't understand what the students say.

A 17 year old male participant from Mexico shares the following insight about the need to use small talk as a social language to develop relationships with other students:

MA1: Sometimes it is, they kind of see me with different eyes, like what is that kid doing here or something. And I don't know it feels different but I've been kind of trying to adjust.

R: What do you do to adjust?

MA1 I usually have tried to talk about like silly things like oh what did you do last weekend? oh I went to the movies. Oh, really what did you see and blah blah blah. Then they say that's really funny ...

Another recognizes this use of appropriate social language as the purview of native speakers, or at least fluent English speakers:

TK9: So they [American students] treat me like native speaker.

R: How do you know they're treating you like a native speaker, what does that mean?

TK9: I mean, I also have another native speaker friend, we talk about that, he tried to more [explain] .. but first time I came by regular class they just talk about like if I was in drama or watching movie, talking about something like that. Also I feel very uncomfortable, because I really was scared I have never talking about native speaker, except the professor or something like that...

Another male student, a former medical student from Cuba, distinguishes the social language needed for conversation from specific nomenclature needed in a science course:

FE5: Yeah it's a little different so then I start a conversation, I arrive I say Hey, yeah and to start the conversation I'm more confident I'm able to understand them yeah I don't have more problem with understanding when I'm in that class.

FE5: Because when I don't when I'm starting learning some class or some terminology first I have to translate it but after I learn it it's natural I can speak in English without thinking in Spanish but if I'm in another level that I have to learn different words that I've never used in English now I'll have to go back to the translation process hear it in English again and then make it natural.

Some classes, like acting, communication, or business classes may provide an environment in which group activities facilitate the interaction between English language learners while other classes inhibit such interaction as illustrated by this comment:

MA1: I took also my math class with all American students and I really didn't talk with them a lot, actually with none of them, because I don't know because the interest weren't the same and I couldn't like mingle with them like I couldn't talk with them about I don't know about like what I thought it was interesting and I think they were thinking about something else, or I don't know.

Students at a community college represent a wide range of diversity within their ranks, including age, career or professional experience, social background, and SES status. This is true for local native English speaking students, but may be more so for

immigrant and international students studying at the community college. The students quoted above are students between the ages 20-24. This is slightly younger than the 26 years as the mean age for students at this college as reported by the Office of Research and Planning. Local native English speaking students and international students of the same age may differ in the amount of cultural capital they possess. Local students may be attending community college because they lack the academic skills, financial resources, or the cultural capital required to be successful at a university. However, the converse may be true for international students who may be demonstrating and using their cultural capital and knowledge of the system to extend their financial resources and enhance their experience. Their discovery of the community college as a less expensive way to meet their needs may be indicative of cultural capital because it demonstrates knowledge of how our higher educational system works. They have found a cost effective way to meet the requirements of a baccalaureate degree, or to prepare for admission to graduate school. Attending community college in the U.S. may provide additional capital for a student not only in higher education, but also in the global market wherein their English language skill will provide considerable advantage.

This may not be true for local students, including many immigrant and generation 1.5 students of the same age. Such students may be using the community college to gain access to higher education. But it is not clear whether that access to higher education actually promotes participation in college level coursework and degree attainment, or whether it simply provides access to continued English language learning and other remedial or development courses for local high school students, many of whom may be

1.5 generation immigrant students (Deil-Amen, 2002). There is a difference between taking ESL classes and taking remedial or developmental classes in one's native language. The first implies that you speak more than one language; the latter implies that you are lacking academic skills in your native language. It is reasonable to believe that students who enter the community college to take English language courses, but not remedial courses in other subjects possess greater cultural capital and linguistic capital than those who need both. As indicated in the quote above, the young (17 year old) student from Mexico found sharing a social language with native speakers in his math class was not easy, although he admitted later that the math itself was easy because he had learned it in high school in his home country. Thus, students of roughly the same age, and presumably same amount of educational experience (high school equivalent), may not possess comparable amounts of cultural capital, making sharing social languages more difficult. Both of these participants recognized the power of engaging socially with other students, and recognized the difference in the English required to do so, however, FE5 was more willing to code switch than was MA1.

There is another difference that exists between international students, including some recent adult immigrants to this country and local native English speaking students. Most international students seek study in the U.S. as a complement to their university study in their home countries. While many may be of comparable age as the typical community college student, they have vastly different educational, social, even professional experiences than the typical community college experience. Many of these English language learners have undergraduate, even advanced degrees, earned in their

home countries. Their abundance of cultural capital has provided them with the knowledge and the financial resources to seek additional education abroad. Some, like the Korean student, TK8, knows the value of having studied abroad and of speaking fluent English to a career with a foreign based American company like NIKE. Such students are using the community college to learn English as a means of entering the global market.

There may be many reasons beyond simply learning English for an English language learner to begin their college studies by taking one or two ESL classes, even if their knowledge of English as determined by pen and paper assessment may not require it. These classes may be instrumental in giving students the confidence needed to achieve academic success in other courses or programs of study and provide for them an experience with various social languages. But, for some English language learners, confidence may not be enough to propel them down the path of higher education. They lack more than English language skills; they lack necessary cultural capital, linguistic capital, and the habitus to be academically successful.

The Challenge to Study

The participants in this study acknowledged their academic success was the result of hard work and study. This seemed true for those who were accessing higher education for the first time, learning English for a new opportunity in higher education or for an opportunity to access the global market. Most students accepted the challenge of using their time for study:

TK8: I don't know I think I need to .. time to study. I need to pre read the book and the review.

PM10: That's why you are in school, to study and do your homework.

VN11: Because I studied. Because I really studied.

A participant from Iran offered this advice to anyone coming from another country to study in the U.S. at community college:

VN11: Yes, I have advice to everybody about that. Study. Just study.

This piece of sage advice is not limited to students learning English, its value to all students aspiring for academic success is noted by this participant:

FC4: ...a lot of people think that it's not important to study, for example. American people say oh, no, it's like just work but not study and that's mistake, you need to study.

This demonstrates the habitus of those students who have an abundance of cultural capital and who have had some degree of academic success in the past or whose families supported and expected one to participate in higher education. Although VN11 did not have any college background in her home country of Iran because she could not pass the entrance exams, her husband earned a Ph.D. in Iran and was now working at a local research one institution. A commitment to study may have been ingrained in students from countries where the competitive nature of the higher education system rewards those who study, memorize, and excel in taking exams and excludes others. For them, an open admission policy provides a second chance to gain entrance into higher education. In contrast, local community college students may not share a similar work ethic as is evidenced the observation by FC4 that American people treat school like working on a time clock and they do not recognize the out of school study time that is

required to be successful. Local students may be under prepared academically even though they have the intellectual ability and may lack the requisite academic behavior and language to be successful. A participant who had earned two degrees at this community college and has been admitted to a university business college in accounting for the upcoming fall semester succinctly summed up the relationship between academic success and studying:

PM10: I have a 4.0 grade average; I studied hard.

Summary

Although these participants admit being nervous and fearful about speaking English, they also recognize the need for extra study and preparation time. On some level they understand they know this academic experience means mustering the courage to conquer their fear of speaking in a new language; it means being encouraged, even pushed by caring instructors to do more than they ever thought possible; it means interacting with classmates, asking questions both in class and in private with the instructor. This experience means overcoming communication apprehension identified as problematic in earlier research (Saito, 2000; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1984); it means cultivating American friends, and speaking English with other international friends, thus, reducing perceptions of social alienation and increasing a sense of well being related to successful communication with others (Zimmerman, 1995). The community college may provide the learning environment of smaller classes, readily accessible instructors, and a diverse student population, including other English language learners, which facilitates the move from the ESL curriculum to the traditional college curriculum. This

transition from learning English to using English to learn may prove as valuable to those who have earned college degrees, including extensive English study, or have lived in the U.S. and spoken English for many years, as it is to those experiencing higher education for the first time, or have never studied English.

Cultural Capital and Habitus Revealed

The purpose of the second research question was to examine any discernible role of cultural capital in the academic achievements of English language learners, its impact on a student's ability to use English to learn in higher education, and to gain a more complete understanding of the academic experience of English language learners at the community college. In addition to the commonly expressed fear of speaking English, an attitude of self-determination similar to the concept of *habitus* emerged in the interviews. Although there was little direct evidence to evaluate the impact of cultural capital on this experience, new aspects of cultural capital were illuminated. The interviews also revealed insight about the recognition by Asian governments of the value of an educational experience that increases an individual's knowledge of the global market and improves English speaking skills necessary in a global marketplace as suggested in earlier research (Stafford, 2004).

The Habitus of the English Language Learner

The selection criteria used in this study identified students who would have adequate English speaking skills to participate in the focus groups and interviews, but may have simultaneously narrowed the scope of participants to individuals who possess the prerequisite cultural capital needed for academic success in higher education (Bourdieu, 1977). What emerged to support this supposition was a common attitude of self-determination, coupled by common expectations of students among students who have achieved various levels of academic success either in the educational system of their

home countries or the U.S, or both. This represents a certain *habitus* associated with cultural capital. Habitus is a complex construct that represents the embodiment of cultural capital. Habitus is the inclination of an individual to use the resources available and to be able to determine the potential for success and behave accordingly in a given field, in this case, academia. It suggests knowing one's place in society resulting from an internal dialogue that interprets messages heard about class and society: "I belong in college; I don't belong in college." "I can be successful if I study; and conversely, "Even if I study hard, I won't be successful" (Moss, 2005).

LW13: I mean you have to, I want learn, I want study, so that's why I came here. I had to do that

VN11: I really like to study

MA1: Yeah I just need to study, do the homework

YC3: I want to speak up in class in the class so I need to more work on [that].

JL9: I need more relation with people who speak English with me I think cause sometime I feel like how say embarrassed when I speak sometimes. Yeah but I try.

Others recognize, value, and engage in intense study as part of the academic experience:

FC4: okay, I prepare the talk, but it's hard, but it's good because it's like a challenge, like, okay I try to speak in front of the American people, it's hard, for my language, no because my English is not 100%.

I know that I need to because I need to study a lot for my major This is the first thing that I need to I know, it's not because I'm foreign student.

These comments suggest an internal confidence about learning, even in a foreign language. Embedded within the comments is a sense that the person speaking does not

doubt an ability to learn the subject matter or to learn English. Recognizing and accepting an academic challenge requires precedent of academic success instilling the confidence and behavior needed for continued success. This represents the embodied habitus that accompanies cultural capital.

Cultural Capital and a New Educational Model

The data in this study revealed the characteristic habitus of English language learners includes a strong inclination to accept the challenges of preparation and additional study required to be successful. The students who expressed fear of speaking in English rather than a fear of attending college may be demonstrating a cultural model of education that suggests that a student cannot make mistakes and succeed academically. As one adapts to a new cultural environment, the ability to recognize alternate models may be important to transferring cultural capital from one culture to another.

In addition, evidence of cultural capital may also be illustrated by having knowledge of how the system works and by using available resources. This may be present for some students even when habitus is weak or non-existent. And, it may be distributed in new and unusual ways. For example, this comment was from a single mother from Mexico:

HA2: I started saying everything is going to be okay, everything, I worked for like three weeks and nights and my daughter helped me so everything is going to be okay

In this case, the elementary school age daughter is providing the linguistic resources and is building confidence in the parent who is learning English and learning how to be successful academically. It is likely that many such children began speaking

English upon entering school and thus, developed bilingual fluency that the parents have not. If children of adult English language learners are proficient and fluent in English and comfortable in the academic environment, they may be the purveyors of cultural capital creating an alternative means of gaining cultural capital. Such children may provide their parents or other adult family members with the necessary knowledge of the English language and the educational system, thus advantaging parents in a way that is similar to children who are advantaged by cultural capital inherited from their parents. Children may be providing immigrant parents with confidence to use English, to pursue higher education; thus, the children crack the mold of social reproduction and provide the means (cultural capital) for upward mobility socially and economically.

On the other hand, a lack of cultural capital may be present in students who express a fear of attending college, a lack of determination to succeed, and a lack of knowledge about how the system works. These students may indeed be in the first levels of the community college English language programs and they may be choosing vocational programs of study that require less literacy, less knowledge of the system. The motivation to learn English may come from a need to find a job rather than to succeed academically. These students may not have been included in this study because of the criteria used to select participants in this study.

In addition to learning a new model for academic success in college classes by asking questions, participating in class discussions and group interactions, students must learn how the system works and how to access available resources. The following

comment acknowledges that a positive attitude toward academic success is supported and encouraged by the people within the institution:

R: Do you think it's easier to succeed here?

PM10: Yes

R: Okay, why?

PM10: Because you have the support of everybody.

Understanding that the support is available and knowing that it is available for you to take advantage of is another indication of cultural capital:

FC4: I think I think we have a lot of resources, so the idea is to find these people, you know to talk.

Combining that knowledge with the characteristic of self-reliance becomes a powerful force:

TK8: Yeah you have to do things by yourself, yeah nobody will help you, yeah but it a little bit the best way to learn English, yeah and they have many resource to use it free to students so if you don't use it you waste it, yeah.

Another part of the unwritten code to success is understanding how higher education is structured in different countries and how it compares to what is expected in the United States. In some countries attendance at lectures is not required, participation in class unrewarded, homework is rarely given, and students are held accountable only to the extent that they pass final exams. Community colleges, unlike some university models of undergraduate education, favor small classes, active learning, and individual and collective accountability on a regular basis. That accountability may include required attendance. A student's idealized cognitive frame of the academic experience may be constructed from a very different pattern of behavior and expectations from systems that are structured differently than the U.S. community college model.

Ironically, this can devalue cultural capital that provided advantage for students in their

home country. Those who learn how the system works or who can recognize how systems work differently and act accordingly are advantaged in any system:

PM10: And then for the first part the first maybe a semester I was a little bit shocked because back home it's like that you go to lectures you're not required to go to lectures even, but I mean for you have a session like the final exams week you cannot you can show up in the class maybe once the whole semester but you study for exam and you go. So that's the system I was accustomed to. And here you come and you took you're three or more absences you're in big trouble you have to do homework every day, over there you did just lectures you didn't have homeworks. And it's totally different system so for me it was kind of shocking but then on the other hand I think it's much better cause they keep you up to speed all the time, you're studying, you're prepared and then it's not like the whole semester you do nothing and you stress out for the last like couple weeks

For others, it may be an embodied characteristic linked to habitus:

VN11: Usually I don't like absent, and I really don't like because I came to college just learn so many stuff.

LW13: I feel I have to go to school because I paid also I pay a lot [more] than the regular people [resident tuition] so that tuition fee is a very big price so I have to, I cannot absence school.

Some students have a sense of the behavior and expectations required of academically successful students, or they have been taught to value the cost basis of the experience.

This student from Korea illustrated how this characteristic or belief might be reinforced within his culture:

LW13: my friend he live for a year, but he cannot speak English well.... many times he was absent from school, because I already talked to him about that 'why you many time miss your class' he said it's too hard. If this class hard you can take more class but he said I mean using English is hard so but that's why you want to learn English that's why you came here and you spend all our money

..one credit you live here they spend \$65 but we I spend \$285. that's one credit. Very big money, so like who would like spend waste money. Also, this is not group money, it's your own parent's money. They gave your

money because they think that you study more well or study English, but you didn't you don't....

He went on to say that the Korean culture, unlike the American culture, allows, even expects, an older individual to admonish a younger friend or family member to encourage correct attitude and behavior. In this way cultural capital may be passed along to members of the family. This may more closely represent social capital related to this specific culture as argued by Newman, et al. (2003). As Kingston (2001) pointed out, it may be difficult to attribute academic success of this student population to cultural capital alone. It may be a more complicated confluence of factors including the pre existing education model, individual factors of hard work, or conversely, a lack of commitment. It may reflect an individual's financial resources, or social connections or any combination of many different factors.

Several students spoke about the importance of speaking English even when it might not be required of you. This seemed to be a tacit understanding of the need to use the language of the dominant culture to succeed in that culture socially, economically, and academically:

FE2: though I come to work for a period I think it is important to learn English and to communicate in English and to achieve those things where one is living in the US and something that sometimes really bother me is like I'm learning English and I'm supposed to learn English and sometime I go to some place and when they know that I'm a Spanish speaker they start to talk to me in Spanish and I like hello talk to me in English

but sometimes it's because of the government issue that they used to translate everything and I think it's not good for me.

I would prefer in English because I'm learning English and when I'm in the freeway or the aisle in English not in Spanish so I think there is something important to learn.

Concurring with the need to learn and speak English in order to reap the benefits of living in the United States, these comments by female civil engineer from Mexico, now providing accounting and tax services to Spanish speaking individuals in her community, hint at a difference in attitude and cultural capital of those in her community who do not wish to learn English:

- JL9: You know what, I wish all my people, Latin people learn English!
 R: Why?
 JL9: Because here in America, it's United States!
 You know what I feel bad when I saw the women, the wife is in home they don't make anything for her life, only... ..sorry,
 ...Because they have the opportunity stay here in the US and the education is free if they look information about that education is free because if they go to the Friendly House or the [.....]Public School or other schools they can take English class

Just knowing the value of education and learning English (the dominant language) and having the knowledge about what is available and where to find community resources and opportunities to learn English demonstrates how cultural capital advantages those who have it. It also hints at the perceptual differences that perpetuate class and economic stratification and distinguishes those with cultural capital from the working class by reiterating the negative stereotype that one class may have of another even in the same culture:

- R: And why do they tell you that they don't?
 JL9: Lazy.
 R: Oh, you think? You don't think it's fear?
 JL9: No. no because they don't feel when go to the dancing, okay. [Spanish word] and the swap meet, why feel afraid go to the school.

I go to the school and talk speak with the parents and I push go to the school please study English enroll [in] the community school because you are, you are neighbors, your neighbors, everybody. I don't know because Latin people

sometimes they selfish they feel selfish only me after me and that help me it's not good. They need to share.....

It is unclear whether these comments are indicative of individuals reaping benefits of cultural capital, including the perpetuation of such negative class stereotypes or, of individual personality and behavioral characteristics of self reliance, determination, and perseverance as suggested by Kingston (2001).

The data reveal limited evidence to support Stafford's (2004) claim that the value of "overseas qualifications as institutionalised (sic) cultural capital can still be seen today in the relentless efforts of all levels of Chinese government to entice overseas graduates back to China" (p.2). This may be true for other countries, particularly one in which the presence of the global market requires a knowledge of English:

LW13 Yeah, in Korea, in English teaching's very different. But I in middle school and high school we just study about the grammar so, study about listening but we can't we use just.. something like that so we don't have conversations or something like that so even though many people in Korea if they take a test they got a very good point, but even if they got a good point they cannot speak English well. But now there is many company Korea, they have job interview like they told native speaker we talk about using English so many people want the job... is very good but it's more important is conversation that 's why I came here, because I want to become more higher level people.

Well because I work my job I'm already 28 years old... I already work but now I just keep my work I just go back to school. So it's kinda funny story if I came here I talk about that maybe my professor or somebody with my friend my parent I want to study opera in the USA but many people told me are you crazy because you already have a bachelors degree and then in Korea it's more competition that American to get a job. But fortunately I have a job but if you want to study opera, you have to keep your job and then after you finish your school and your study and you go back you got nothing you don't have nothing you have to study first, but they said this crazy, they said for me this crazy but [he]. told me the English is more .. so, you want your job in sport management- I want obtain Addidas, or Nike management director, so if you want to get a big kind of job, you have to learn English. In Korea you can also study

English, but if you go to USA you'll speak English more better improved than Korea. Also I can learn about Americans, culture or life so my parents encouraged me so they try and came here and study.

This suggests the habitus of the participant includes an understanding and assessment of the different types of social languages and necessary fluency to be successful in an increasingly competitive global market. It also provides an indirect expression of the type of pressure he is receiving to return to Korea to bring his additional cultural capital to his good job and ensure the future potential of professional achievement. This poses a dilemma that might only present itself to those with sufficient cultural, social, and economic capital: The freedom to choose between fulfilling a dream or fulfilling current expectations placed upon by society, peers, and family.

Cultural capital may provide a better explanation of social adjustment and academic success than locus of control. Estrada and Dupoux, (2005) reported that an external locus of control was associated with better psychosocial adjustment to college and that immigrant and first generation college English language learners had more difficulty adjusting to college because they were less likely to have an external locus of control. This difficulty in adjusting may have more to do with a lack of cultural capital than with an internal locus of control. Participants in the present study acknowledge that success requires study, preparation, and the willingness to engage in conversation both in the classroom and socially, characteristics more indicative of an internal locus of control.

Another explanation may be that these characteristics are more descriptive of the habitus of academically successful individuals who possess significant cultural capital, including linguistic competence, and knowledge of the academic system than either

internal or external locus of control. Estrada and Dupoux (2005) suggest that an external locus of control enable students to dismiss negative experiences easily. Perhaps it is habitus and cultural capital that allow students to have confidence in their own ability and self worth that facilitate that dismissal of negative experiences that Estrada and Dupoux (2005) associate with external locus of control:

MA1: I'm thinking something went wrong, probably sometimes when I'm talking with somebody, I want to say something but they say like 'what did you say? That doesn't make any sense.' And then we're like arguing and stuff and then I say no I meant to say this, and then they correct me they say 'no that's not the way you say it'.

R: Are you okay if they correct you?

MA1: Yeah. I mean it's not my language, so.

A female student captures both habitus and internal locus of control relating to interactions with instructors

PM10: Just tell them to study. Otherwise it's gonna be hard. Yeah, cause when sometimes students complain oh, this instructor is so bad, he's so mean. You do your homework and you study and you'll be fine. There is no mean instructor. I have heard complained for specific instructor, I loved her, but you have to do your homework.

She seems to be suggesting that negative experiences with specific instructors is solely dependent upon an individual's perception of the situation and one's behavior. This may indeed be true for a student with cultural capital and the habitus that is rewarded by the instructor and the institution, but one who is lacking in both may perceive the situation differently, may be treated differently by the instructor and/or the institution resulting in less success or even failure. This may also be reflected in this student's perceptions of other students:

PM10: but then since you start working with the other students and you see that you're a little bit smarter than them and you get like more positive attitudes and you decide to talk and speak up,

This comment suggests a confidence that transcends confidence about English fluency to a confidence in one's intelligence. PM10 expresses an understanding that some local students may be intellectually less capable than she is and she can use that to her advantage in this particular educational system. Moreover, it suggests that the dialectic internal conversation this student engages in reflects the habitus of those who belong in higher education. Cultural capital may advantage some English language learners with knowledge about how the educational system works and the ability to recognize and adapt to a new cultural model of education, while the habitus may provide the attitude necessary to believe in one's ability to complete a program of study within higher education.

Perceptions of Prejudice and Linguistic Stereotyping

Earlier research has revealed that international students at the university may experience both direct and indirect effects of racism (Lee & Rice, 2005). It is important to note that these interviews focused on the academic experience on campus and in the classroom and may be a more restrictive perspective than reported by Lee & Rice (2005). While this data did not reveal similar experiences for international students in this community college, most participants acknowledged some fear of speaking English. For individuals who have traveled the world, separated from family and friends, to enter a new culture, the need to speak a foreign language might be presumed difficult and

challenging but not fearful unless they have been treated in such a manner as to engender a sense rejection or discrimination by the way they speak English. If they have been treated with disrespect or have been ignored, discounted, underestimated by individuals within social institutions, then the fear is not of speaking English as the participants expressed, rather a fear of a negative response from other students, instructors, or staff. If so, then it seems reasonable that English language learners would choose to remain quiet in the classroom and elsewhere as a strategy of survival in an environment perceived and experienced as hostile or at least unfriendly.

Class distinction, linguistic stereotyping, and discrimination are not the sole purview of American student and institutions. Similar attitudes were expressed by two participants. Both instances revealed that some English language learners may enter higher education with their own perceptions of who belongs and who doesn't belong in higher education, or what the behavior of educated people is compared to the behavior of uneducated people:

PM10: Well, as a newcomer and I don't sounds to, I don't know how to say it, back home we don't have different races, right. And the first time I went over there [another community college]. I was shocked by a specific population of students, and I felt a little bit threatened I wasn't secure and it wasn't very friendly environment, so I decided okay I need to look for another school.

R: Can you give me an instance that made you think it wasn't a friendly environment?

PM10: Well, yeah. With I don't want to offend a specific group ...there was a lot of, okay because back home we heard, we watched a lot of American TV, right and we have this perspective of American gangs which mainly is like black people, with the gold stuff and the cars and so this is what I saw over there [another urban community college], so that's not the place for me. And it's very stereotypical and now that I've been here for 8 years it's totally different picture, but at the time I was scared.

R: Okay, and did you have any interactions that would have confirmed or disconfirmed that?

PM10 No, it was all stereotypes.

This participant demonstrates the concept of habitus in terms of who belongs and who doesn't belong in college. It is clear that she belongs, but is fearful of attending with and associating with others who are not only racially different from her, but who represent a radical difference in habitus, and who do not possess the cultural capital she may have shared with others she attended school with in her home country. She is quick to acknowledge the stereotypical nature of such preconceptions and she notes that she has abandoned them in favor of a different cultural model. This presents an interesting twist to the issue of racism among students toward international students. In this instance, the source of the racism is the international student and is directed at different groups of U.S. students. It is interesting to note that her fears were instilled by the negative stereotypes of certain groups of people by American media indicating yet another effect of globalization. In her interview, she stated that she could see a kind of discrimination hierarchy experienced by international students depending upon the country or culture of origin:

PM10: you don't belong to the Americans they're afraid that you have accent, your English is not perfect, they can judge you... I did not feel comfortable many times, maybe because I'm coming from Bulgaria
like for example those middle eastern countries, I bet they're stereotyped many times

This next excerpt conveys a view of behavior that separates educated from uneducated classes of people. She says that Americans often treat her indifferently. She protects herself from this discrimination by insulating herself from conversation by

reading a book. The speaker infers that educated people would recognize other educated people. She seems to imply that xenophobia results from a lack of education rather than racism; yet, she also implies that others assume she is uneducated (doesn't speak English) because she is a foreigner:

- YC3: ...sometimes it's at the bus stop and I usually read a book because many homeless people try to speak with me so I don't want to do that so I just usually read a book and also one American store is .. bus time to come here to come bus stop so I know about the time but she never asked me and she is sitting at the bench for a while she never asked me and after that an American guy is walked to the bus stop and then she asked to him. I had many experience about like that.
- It's just my opinion. Educated American don't do that to me.
- R: So you think that if a person is better educated they are more comfortable speaking to you?
- YC3: Uhm . and they understand my frustration and they have separate experience with international people but it's mostly uneducated people don't have chance to meet international or foreigners so that's why it happens.

In this case, not speaking English is equated with a lack of education implying a lack of social class and economic status.

Later on in the interview, she commented that she believes American students think most Asians are “geeks” and even though she has a four year degree from her home country, and strong literacy skills in English, she is painfully aware that she may be judged not by what she says, or even how she says it, but by the color of her skin:

...they just look at my - our skin color, they just probably, she can't speak English.

Although it might be argued that these individuals may be projecting personal prejudices and perceptions of class distinction onto others, it provides some evidence that the issues of race, class distinction, and cultural bias exist within the community of international students and between that student population and other students on campus.

Another indication of cultural stereotyping associated with American social languages, presented itself in the interviews. Personally, I have encountered students who recognize that different cultures may have a specific version of English. For example, Chinese students have referred to their specific dialect of English as “Chinglish” conflating Chinese with English. Evidence of a prejudice associated with culturally different spoken English is evidenced in the following comment by a student was studying at a university, but considering transferring to the community college to save money:

- TK8: Because everybody talked about it. [community college] They say, I think when I was in [university cultural program] they always give me like negative opinion about [community college]....English, it means like ...Mexican. Not really, no. I think most of them are Mexican this is true but depends on like professor, yeah the teacher is not Mexican, either they are Mexican or English, so it's not a problem
- R: So, it was different than you expected?
- TK8: Yeah. Totally different.

Cultural capital that may have advantaged students in their home countries may be less potent in a new culture and a new educational system. Similarly, a lack of cultural capital may be compensated for in the community college by students who are linguistically competent, socially savvy, and hard working. Racism, prejudice, and linguistic stereotyping have surprising sources, and may represent class differences and hierarchy defined by different ethnic groups and languages. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to conclude that these mechanisms of separation and social reproduction exist for English language learners at the community college whether they are immigrant, international, or local students.

Conceptual Metaphors

Event Structure Metaphor

The event structure metaphor provided the primary or basic metaphor for analysis in this data set. Because of its rich entailments, its duality of metaphor and deep inherited hierarchy of metaphors, it has been identified by Lakoff as the most likely candidate to provide evidence for universality of conceptual metaphor theory (1993). Metaphor duality consists of two parallel metaphors with similar entailments and hierarchies. The dual metaphors in the event structure metaphor are known as Location or Object Event Structure metaphor. They contain a rich assortment of metaphors that arise from our understanding and experience of bodily movement related to either movement in/out of bounded space or the movement of an object. Our understanding of how events are structured emanate from an understanding about how we structure the movements of our body (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). This metaphor is realized in dual patterns of speech in which events are conceptualized by mapping from the source domain for motion in space for locations or objects onto the target domain of events.

Both concepts were evidenced in the language of the participants in this study and two events emerged. The first event is learning English; the second event is attending college. Both events were embedded in the research question about what it means to be an English language learner at the community college. It is striking to note the abundance of conceptual metaphors woven into the conversation of those with a limited ability to use English. The presence of metaphor is the everyday language of limited

English speakers provides support for the premise of the theory: We think in metaphors; therefore, we speak in metaphor (Lakoff, 1987; 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; 1999)

Goals or Purposes are Destinations

In the event structure metaphor goals or purposes are destinations. To be a proficient English speaker is certainly a literal goal for English language learners in this conceptual metaphor:

HA1: I like to work hard and I think I'm like really serious when I'm working, so everything's gonna be okay after I speak English.

"...after I speak English" suggests a location on a linear timeline. Now this individual is working to learn to speak English, but proficiency will come later. This implies that now the participant does not speak English. Although that is certainly not true, it reflects a qualitative analysis of what it means to speak English well enough to go to college or get a job (purpose or destination). While learning English presents as a formidable task, a broader purpose is implied. As the saying goes, every journey begins with the first step:

FC4: I think I need to improve the language so this is the first thing that I need to [do].

In this statement, a first thing suggests a linear progression toward a goal or destination. If improving English is the first thing, it implies that it is not the last thing, or the greater goal. This suggests hope for the future and a realization of the current reality. Speaking English will provide a means or a pathway to a larger goal. For many of these participants that goal may be to attend university and or graduate school:

FC4: Well for me like challenger to go to any university. For me it's, so I don't know when I would like to go to the university but really, I don't think

about that. Not right now. I know that I need to because I need to study a lot for my English....

One of the entailments of this metaphor is that only something that has begun can continue into the future:

when you study you try to get an A or B because I know in the future if you got an A or B is better if you go to the university, so it's important.

Here we see the destination is the university and learning English and study as the means or the path. Some individuals expressed the idea of having a traveling companion on this journey to learn English:

HA1: I always need someone to speak for me to make payments by phone, to make appointments with the doctor, to make appointments with my daughter from school. And after that class I started doing my own... And I don't need anybody now, yeah I feel comfortable,....I have two semesters and I can speak by my own.

Although traveling companions and help along the initial stages of the journey are important, it is essential to go it alone as evidenced by "not needing anybody now" and "I can speak on my own." This indicates a sense of independence that must be achieved in this process before one can claim to be an English speaker.

Others expressed the concept of traveling to a new culture (literally) and metaphorically as finding people in that location, some who are similar and some who are not:

I see here some people like to meet people from another country and some people don't. And I respect both so if I found people who doesn't like to speak with me I can speak with another people.

Location Event Structure

We can see evidence of States are Locations as participants spoke about being located in two different locations. One location is in the ESL classes in which all the students were English language learners; another location is in regular college classes consisting of mostly native English speakers. Being in one place or the other represents a place on the path to the destination. The comments often reflected either a state of being comfortable or uncomfortable in that place:

YC3: Very very comfortable and instructor's pronunciation is very clear and if I have a long answer the ESL students understood me because they are also ESL students they can make a mistake.

FC4: When you study social work with American student is harder if you need to try to understand everything and is not like in English. If you study ESL, you or I feel more comfortable.

In the location of ESL classes, one feels comfortable and the learning is pleasant and familiar. Mistakes in English are allowed and accepted by the instructors and by other students. It is in this location that English language learners overcome initial but overwhelming fears about speaking English and develop the confidence to move to the next stage of the journey, the path inhabited by native English speakers. Several participants acknowledged the importance of speaking English outside the classroom as a way of developing the skill of thinking in English before speaking in English:

LW13: if they using Korean they feel more comfortable but if they using English is very uncomfortable and also press them so that's why many people just meet Korean people...

FE5: I think the practice is important to take like I think to feel comfortable with the language and try to quit thinking in Spanish and start thinking in English and try to think that I have to communicate in English not in

Spanish and the same thing happens not only in speaking but also in writing.

This transition from learning English to speaking in English to thinking in English and finally to learning in English is real and is difficult for students. Indeed, it may be in this transformation process (location) that students get lost, get stuck, and may give up. It may be in this precarious transition that students are most vulnerable:

LW13: my friend he live [here] for a year, but he cannot speak English well.... many times he was absent from school, because I already talked to him about that 'why you many time miss your class' he said it's too hard. If this class hard you can take more class but he said I mean using English is hard so but that's why you want to learn English that's why you came here and you spend all our money

Even those students advantaged by cultural capital and previous educational experience may temporarily be taken aback, not by the challenges of learning English, but by the challenges of using English to learn and to communicate with other students and instructors. This is the former medical student from Cuba:

FE5: you are thinking what is the word what is the word and sometimes you get frustrated in that way and sometimes you get nervous and that's why make more difficult the communication.....

Recall the student who confidently registered for non ESL classes based on her past educational experience (BA in Laboratory Science from Taiwan) and confidence in her English proficiency, and then changed all of her classes to ESL after attending for only a couple of classes. Such students recognize the effort required to make this transition from ESL classes to regular college classes and acknowledge that speaking English is more than studying the language. One participant identified another place one must be to learn to speak English:

LW13: If someone asked me about English in America, first I'd say you have to be in your real mind..... I have to keep my real mind on English.

He expressed the moment of realization in this way:

LW13: but first time if I want speak or answer or ask something like that I have to first time I think about Korean and then after that I translate to English but now sometimes I did my past way or sometimes I just came out my mouth in that time I'm very surprised, wow I can speak English.

Object Event Structure

In the object event structure metaphor wherein an understanding of the movement of an object is mapped onto the target domain of the event, the dual metaphor to States are Locations is Attributes are Possessions. The difference can be illustrated in a simple comparison:

He is out of school. Or, She is in graduate school. (States are Locations)
 She has 4.0 grade point average. Or, He has an advanced degree. (Attributes are Possessions)

Being an English speaker is different than being an English language learner. Being an English speaker means possessing the English language demonstrated by English *speaking* skills. The object, the English language, is something to be feared, speaking is “a concern”, and the language is a barrier on the path to the desired destination:

...the only thing that scares me is the English....
 Speaking is my concern...
 ...it's like when you speak I think the first barrier is the language for me.

These participants equate English with an object (thing) that is frightening; yet something that is desired; yet, something to be possessed or overcome. English is recognized as the basic building block (object) of an education:

KT8: if you will take many time to use English to write an essay and it will help you to build you a base

It is interesting to note that the conceptual metaphor More is Up is evidenced in this language. For a strong edifice one must begin with a strong base and build which implies an upward movement. Another basic building block is study:

LW13: I want her to know the study habit is very important

VN11: Yes, I have advice to everybody about that. Study. Just study

Even the concepts of academic success and the purpose or destination can be conceptualized as something one gets or possesses:

ZI7: I'm trying to get A's and B's. C is to me is already bad because it's C is average, so you want to be better than average and you can get in a better school and better degrees and a better [career]

Other attributes that one must possess on the journey to becoming an English speaker and a college student include confidence, fearlessness, self-determination, hard work, and self-reliance. Cultural capital may advantage some students, but in this new experience, that advantage may be less potent, enabling others with less cultural capital to overcome their initial fears and lack of confidence provided they possess sufficient self determination, self reliance, and are willing to work hard (study).

The participants in this study have demonstrated a level of academic success (cf. criteria for selection), and the demographic questionnaire shows that almost all participants beyond college age (18-23) have some level of higher education either here or from their home countries. It is not unreasonable to associate at least minimal amounts of cultural capital to this particular group of English language learners because they are seeking higher education either as study abroad, or as potential citizens of a new country. It is unclear to what extent cultural capital is working to advantage some students over

others, and to what extent characteristics associated with the habitus of cultural capital may be working in these individuals. Language as an object is compatible with language is a tool to be used in securing, developing, or maintaining cultural, social, and economic capital in a world whose national borders are less distinct and whose economy is dependent upon global knowledge and understanding.

What is interesting and significant is that almost every participant identified fear and nervousness as part and parcel of their experience. Many used the object concept in expressing that fear and overcoming fear by losing it (object):

HA1: she made it hardest, but I think that now that that thing was the best for me because I lose my panic or my fear for English.

Although the students lost fear, they expressed the slippery grip they had on new language skills and the elusive nature of the desired object:

LJ9: Yeah because they say yes I understand you but I feel and this is why my nervous has come with me and this is I lost all the information of my presentation

The object form of this metaphor was evident in the many lost and found expressions, words were lost, ideas were lost, but mistakes were found:

I found my mistakes

I think that when I read or when I speak by myself I don't find like a lot of mistakes

trying to catch the words (as in flying objects)

Students are painfully aware of their mistakes, and seem to be in constant search for the right words, the right grammar, or the right sound:

JL9: Because I'm saying something and then my brain say no uh uh uh it was like it has to be the same and after that I said I prefer say example I do bad

pronunciation and then my brain say no, it's not right you have to do that correctly

Students had not only an external awareness that they are making mistakes, but also a profound internal awareness interpreting those mistakes as judgments about their intelligence:

FE5: in the ESL department all students are from different countries and international students so we all know that we are learning and if we make some mistake yeah we don't have to make mistake but we know that we are learning and it's not a big deal with international students but when an international student say in .. class if we make a mistake we really feel ashamed because of that because maybe they should think that we are not smart or you know that you are different and ah you speak bad.

Although speaking English is a desired goal, it is only a means to the greater goal or destination. This might be academic success (good grades) or employment, or it might mean more significant possession such as degree attainment. This greater destination may be access to a global economy, one in which the dominant language is English and one in which offers economical rewards. Confidence may be the habitus of academically successful college students and may provide the belief system that sustains them through periods of difficulty and challenge in a pursuit of higher education. I think it is interesting to note that often habitus and cultural capital are conceptualized as attributes one inherits, possesses, or uses. Those who 'have' cultural capital are advantaged if they 'use it'; while those who do not 'have it' are disadvantaged in higher education (location). Cultural capital without language skills, specifically English language skills render individuals less advantaged in a global economy and conversely, English language skills may be the tool that trumps cultural capital.

Identity and Belonging Metaphor

How we constitute meaning from the world and our experiences is intimately connected to our feeling of identity and belonging. Perhaps the community college context allows students, regardless of initial advantage in their home countries, to gain the confidence speaking English:

PM10: First you communicate only with international because if you like you're part of that group, otherwise you don't belong to the Americans they're afraid that you have accent, your English is not perfect, they can judge you, they don't know where Bulgaria is.

Serendipitously, learning to speak English on a college campus rather than a high school or community program may simultaneously develop habitus necessary for academic success. This experience may help develop the identification of college student and instill a sense of belonging in higher education:

FE5: it's better to start I think taking English in the ESL department in the college program because I think my experience here [at the community college] when I started taking classes in the ESL department I didn't feel as I was in the lower level, I felt that I was a college student even though I was taking English and I was learning English but it felt like I was a college student..... Yeah, that it is very important to take English at college level.

The following participant recognized the value of ESL classes beyond learning English. She credited these classes with igniting the spark of curiosity inherent in academically successful students:

VN11: If you don't do that [study] later you are going to be so sad why you didn't just study because it's not just about the field your field in the future, it's about the knowledge, your knowledge is gonna go up yes, about learning more more stuff because so many of my ESL classes because of my teachers it wasn't just class for study. It was the life class. We learned so many things about the news, we talked about some news about so many stuff and the more information I learned so many thing I

never you know had any I don't know how to say I never had any idea about, I learned it in the class

Having (possessing) the attribute of confidence allows a student to don the persona of college student and that identity becomes an important part of assimilation and academic success. This confidence may allow individuals to reject situations that are uncomfortable and move to a different location:

ZI7: it's hard for people to accept who you are and you need to get out of circle and go reach someone else, it's doesn't belong to the group.

The following participant expressed the need to belong or identify with the school itself. The lost object is the school and the lost possession is habitus, or belonging in higher education. Students who have had previous experience at universities in their home countries may feel alienated not only from their culture, family, and friends, but also from the school that provided them with the identity of university student:

LW13: Sometimes because I'm not a native speaker so I'm not American so I feel it's kind of a little different if I went to my university [in Seoul] or this is my school I feel I'm lost with my school.... But first I came here about two and three months, about two, this school belongs to me after that might be more comfortable but before I think about that ah this school is not mine or something like that....

Another participant commented on the need to find an identity even among the diverse student population of international students:

ZI7: ...when I first went there so I could turn around and see the Asian faces, before there I don't really see Asians.

This next excerpt reflects both a literal and conceptual understanding of a location metaphor to explain why she identifies with a particular student:

PM10: I think we have a different type of set of thinking, since for example here my good friend from Romania, and since we are

coming from the same region we think absolutely the same way it's much more easy to communicate with her than trying to put your values and try to explain yourself, you see what I'm saying it's your coming from the same spot, I don't know.

Change and Movement

In both forms of the event structure metaphor, changes are movements, either in or out of bounded space, or the acquisition or loss of the attribute. Change can be conceptualized as self propelled or forced movement. Change from one location to another may mean changing from always being the last one to sign up to give a presentation to being the first one (self propelled). Change may be represented in movement from the ESL classes to regular college classes (forced movement), or from community programs to college programs, or from college to university settings. Students commented frequently about different forced changes that instilled a new level of confidence or proficiency:

WL13: So he said [the teacher] I know it like just your challenge but if that's why you take this class you have to participate with my [your] classmate,

Change may represent loss of negative attributes such as fear, nervousness, and aloneness, and the acquisition of confidence and thinking or speaking skills. These changes represent forward movement along the path toward the goal or purpose.

Learning English is one of the initial common paths (means to the goal) leading to additional paths including academic, social, and career paths. Movement along this path is predicated upon the change for English language learner to English speaker, to college student. Forward movement along that path is necessary and desired and was expressed in the More is Up basic conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980):

LW13: I think my English getting higher like an elevator is been improved... But now, it's a really big gain, I think it's more improved than first I came here.

VN11: I don't know how to explain when age goes up I think the ability and for doing the job I think is a little bit goes down

VN11: I said that teacher make me down you know he put me down, and right now my feeling I don't want to study any more.....

These are movements in space denoting success (up) or failure (down). Success in higher education or participation in the global economy is dependent upon successfully completing this path of learning English. ESL programs offered in community colleges may provide a more secure (comfortable) space for students to acquire the English speaking skills needed to embark on the longer and uncertain path of higher education, professional vocation, or social acceptance. The identity as English language learner may be appropriate in the context of the community college ESL classes, but may be limiting in regular college classes. The cognitive frames that may accompany this model may include perceptions of inadequacy, inability, not belonging, or isolated. Students must perceive themselves as proficient English speakers before they can engage in the process of acquiring academic success in a particular discipline. It is the hard work and determination of the student coupled with the praise and encouragement from external sources that allow the progress to continue even as the goal from learning English changes into a broader goal of academic success.

TK8: ...the teacher said do you know what it was very good and I don't expect that from you and it was it was the first one and for you it was good, and I was happy.

As students begin to gain confidence in speaking English their identity as an English language learner is altered or changed, or even created becoming that of a college student. So, movement must go from ESL classes to college classes; but, movement must also go from being an English language learner to be a college student. The external locus of control identified by Estrada and Dupoux (2005) may serve English language learners by allowing respond positively forced movement, i.e., pushing and encouragement by external forces. But continued forward movement along the path of higher education requires self propulsion generated by internal sources of control in the form of self-reliance, determination, and hard work:

FC4: I don't know how to say this, if I was to do something, I do it how do you say that people is persistent? persistent.... Yeah, sometimes it's hard but I try and okay maybe I can't but I try so I'm very responsible too..... if somebody tell me you need to do that okay I do it I try if it's not and then I try to be powerful and do all my things but for me it's important

The Challenge of Reframing a New Experience

In both constructions of the event structure metaphor difficulties impede the movement to a location or prevent the acquisition of the desired possession. Learning English was clearly identified as a barrier to the longer term goal of degree attainment, university attendance, or employment. For many of the participants in this study, another major impediment encountered early in the journey was fear, in particular, fear of speaking English:

HA1: That's my fear because I think I'm intelligent, kind of, but English...the only thing that scares me is the English

Specifically, participants noted a fear of making mistakes in grammar, pronunciation, or usage. For these participants, who for the most part, came to the community college with some successful academic experience, linguistic stereotyping may have been at the root of this fear. When pressed about whether the fears of exclusion, failure, or even ostracism ever became a reality, most said it had not. Others said they engaged in such defensive tactics as studying so as not to have to socialize, or not speaking up in class to prevent any sort of perceived rejection from instructors or other students. In this comment, the participant seems to understand the consequences of such isolating behavior:

YC3: usually I don't have chance to speak and to talk with American in campus, so I usually read a book or writing a paragraph as in assignment, so I think I speak written English.

Nevertheless, framing the experience under the cognitive rubric of things to be afraid of altered the behavior of many participants. They expressed a reluctance to speak to the instructor, ask questions in class, or, seek the help of tutors, advisors. Making

mistakes, another common fear, may be the result of previous cognitive models in which academic success is perceived as intensely competitive wherein mistakes may eliminate a student from the competition. This cognitive model may include a right wrong dichotomy that precludes creative and critical thinking encouraged in American college classrooms. Thus, fear of asking questions may result from a fear of being perceived as not knowing, not only English, but the correct answer.

Asking questions may be indicative of a cognitive frame under another cultural model of education in which calling attention to one's self is inappropriate, thus, a reluctance to readily engage in this behavior. Even approaching instructors for additional help may not be a part of the student's idealized cognitive model (ICM) for academic experience. When an adult engages in a new learning experience in a foreign culture and new environment, the primary cognitive model, ICM, is used to create meaning about the new experience. The original source domain ICM wherein speaking out is good, may result in a student asking for help, asking questions, interacting with other students, i.e., speaking out includes a variety of good things. However, a different source domain ICM, one that includes a variety of negative things resulting from speaking out, may keep a student from asking for help:

MP10: So that's how I was impressed here that the teachers are really helping out all the time, you have problems you're not understanding you can go talk to them. Back home you cannot just walk up to the instructor and talk. No no no, that's a big no-no. first it seems like you are going to I don't know what's the expression for this. To create good impression is not viewed well by the others instructors and students if you go talk to instructor. In here they even encourage you to talk and communicate more it's that what's the difference.

As a student engages in different behavior, a new and redesigned cognitive model defines what it means to be a student. Forced movement to encourage this transformation may be beneficial initially, but for a student to transform from learning English to speaking English as a college student, a new idealized model must be generated and the forced movement needs to become more self propelled. As students begin to gain confidence in speaking English, their identity as a student is altered or changed by the new idealized cognitive model defining what it means to be a successful student.

Summary

The interviews with the participants in this study provided evidence of the ubiquitous nature of metaphor in everyday language. The participants spoke of two events using the event structure metaphor. The first event is learning English which is the necessary predecessor to the second, that of being a college student on an American community college campus. The first represents the path or the means to reach the second path or means leading to degree attainment, academic success, or employment. Change is represented by forward movement along that path, beginning in English as a Second Language classes and moving in location to regular college classes, and then perhaps onto university classes. English is conceptualized as an object that of which one is fearful, yet desirous.

English language learners may view this experience as a journey with learning English as only an interim goal; the longer term goals include academic success, degree completion, and/or job attainment. Students may require time to process new cognitive frames to create a new and often very different idealized cognitive model (ICM) for learning in higher education. Students may enter college with a conceptual understanding of what it means to be a student. That understanding may be limited to a specific context, if not completely culture bound. It may be necessary to develop a new framework of understanding in which speaking in class with instructors, with other students, seeking sources of help, and study are viewed differently, permitting different behaviors more appropriate to learning in a new context and culture. New idealized cognitive models may require adjusting to an understanding of what learning means.

Earning top grades may not provide the entire skill set to be academically successful, to integrate socially, and to find employment in the global marketplace. The old ICM needs to be replaced with one that includes interaction with instructors, classmates, resources as well as the course content.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR PRACTICE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

As the mosaic of understanding of the academic experience for the participants in this phenomenological study began to emerge, a common and reoccurring theme was that of fear. Not one participant spoke of a fear of attending college, rather they expressed a fear of speaking English. This study included both F1 international students and immigrant students. Immigrant students included generation 1.5 immigrant students as well as other immigrant students. Although expressed by most of the students, the expressed fear may represent something very different for immigrant students and for international F1 visa students. It may represent a fear of academic failure, for others it may simply represent a fear of learning English well enough to succeed academically in the U.S. This fear may also be a reflection of their experience. The label identifying student status does not overtly represent the cultural capital they bring with them from their home countries and this may be a factor that shapes the nature of the fear expressed.

The second significant commonality was a deep-set determination to guard against and overcome this fear and to succeed. Again, it is not their student status that sets that determination in motion but the habitus socially produced before coming to the U.S. to study. The participants in this study, both international and immigrant, had reached a level of academic success at the community college that positioned them to

move beyond learning English as a Second Language. They had made the choice to pursue an academic goal in higher education within the community college. Both types of English language learners found a way to overcome their fears even though there may be a major difference in how the expressed fear might be interpreted or the source of the fear. An individual having less cultural capital and the habitus of a lower economic class may be afraid that [s]he doesn't belong in college and may be intellectually less capable. Speaking English is a threat to that success, but the fear is more directly related to academic failure, even in their native language. Another student possessing greater cultural capital and the habitus of a more elite status, having achieved academic success, or having demonstrated intellectual superiority in their home country, may have a fear that their use of spoken English may not be commensurate with their other academic credentials. The antidote to these fears was extra study and preparation. Both may have experienced overt and covert discrimination or linguistic stereotyping from individuals or from the higher education system.

While these and the other findings in this study are not surprising to those of us who work with this student population, they do pose some new challenges to community colleges and they present opportunities for further research.

Study Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore what it means to be an English language learner at a community college in the United States. I developed this study partly in response to the changing demographics of the students who find themselves on a community college campus and who are learning English. Many of these students would enroll in my classes without adequate oral communication skills hoping that their literacy skills and determination would ensure success. Conceptual metaphor theory was used to analyze the data to provide a cognitive understanding of that experience; whereas cultural capital theory was used to illuminate the sociological aspects of socioeconomic, class, and education of that experience.

The nature of a qualitative study limits the breadth of its findings in favor of depth. Although the participants in this study do not constitute a “representative sample” of international and immigrant students, they are a heterogeneous group of students representing a multitude of first languages, home countries, ages, and educational backgrounds. Some of the participants had been in the U.S. for many years, while others arrived only months prior to the study. Some of the participants had completed high school, even earned degrees or professional certificates from universities in their home countries, some had not. Others completed secondary education in the U.S.; or earned a GED before beginning in higher education; some began their U.S. study abroad at the university only to transfer to the community college to develop language proficiency skills and to save tuition dollars; others were entering U.S. higher education through the community college system. As a whole, the participants in the study provide insight into

the English language learners at this community college and at other community colleges around the United States. The students in this study are hardworking, determined, self-reliant, and optimistic about their hopes for continued education. At the same time, they provide us with an understanding of such students' reality when it comes to how speaking English to learn, to work, and to interact with others constitutes a daunting challenge.

Cultural Capital Theory

Although Kingston (2001) questioned the ability of cultural capital theory to adequately explain “the connection between social privilege and academic success” (p. 88), this study's findings suggest the value of considering and in some ways modifying the theory. In Kingston's view although academic success may be correlated with inherited cultural capital, it is not predicated upon it and that other intervening personal characteristics may override, disguise, or create its effects. While the data in this study do not isolate the variables of social privilege and academic success, it does provide insight to a broader understanding of academic success and its relationship to the language and system of the dominant class. The findings suggest that linguistic capital and academic literacy are important factors in academic success and that with hard work and determination as intervening factors, lack of cultural capital may not be an insurmountable barrier to higher education.

Community colleges are often the institution of choice for those with less social privilege, fewer financial resources and minimal academic success. By contrast, some students who are learning English may have enjoyed social privilege and academic

success in their home countries and still find their way to the community college. At its very basic level, learning English represents learning the language of the dominant class. There is a clear advantage to those who can use English to communicate with other students (social languages), with instructors (academic literacy), and participate in class discussions and debate (linguistic competence). Ironically, this advantage limited the opportunities of some students who had cultural capital in their home countries, but find that they now lack fluency in English. It also provided opportunities for those who lacked cultural capital but who were nevertheless willing to study hard, seek out resources, talk with Americans, and persevere to determine their own academic success. It may be that there is a small window of opportunity for those who possess certain attributes to overcome a lack of cultural capital and succeed academically; however, that window may be small, and it may close quickly. Community colleges have an important role in developing language and academic skills that extend beyond the ESL curricula, and that includes social capital.

The students in the present study represent a population of students that may be very different from local, particularly native English speaking, students. Both types of students may choose the community college for similar reasons of lower tuition, less competition for acceptance, and remedial or ESL classes; however, many international and immigrant students possess a greater level of knowledge and sophistication about the world, diversity, intercultural interaction and even the global economy than local students. They have negotiated the difficulties of traveling to a foreign country, learning a new language, and adapting to a new educational paradigm. This is in stark contrast to

local students, especially generation 1.5 immigrant students, who attend the community college close to home, may need remediation in basic skills, including English, and expect an environment similar to secondary school. For the second group of students learning English at the community college may represent access to higher education, while for the first group of students learning English may provide access to the global marketplace.

Within the context of the global marketplace, English may also be seen as the language of the dominant class. Several participants in this study indicated that learning the language and the ways of the western world would advantage them when returning to professions, organizations, and political entities in their home countries with this knowledge. The community college provides the opportunity to learn the language and experience the culture at a fraction of the cost of university study or private study. In general, those who are truly advantaged by cultural capital, economical capital and academic success at home tend to go to universities, and to seek graduate degrees, whereas, those who have fewer such advantages tend to go to community colleges to achieve success. The cases of international and immigrant students adds complexity to this general portrait of the higher education landscape, because, although all of them are seeking to gain an economic advantage by learning English and studying abroad at community colleges, some of them may come to these institutions having enjoyed some advantages in their home countries and others come who have not enjoyed such advantages.

Cultural capital theory provides only a myopic view of the world, bounded by national borders and culture. While this may provide an adequate explanation for the economic stratification and social reproduction when applied in a narrow domestic environment, the theory needs to be adapted to a world in which national borders are giving way to global connections in an increasingly competitive global market. Cultural capital may be used and exchanged very differently in this new knowledge economy. In this new economy cultural capital needs to be redefined to capture the knowledge that comes from experiencing multiple cultures and multiple languages, not just the culture of one nation state. Cultural knowledge will need to be broader not deeper, experienced not imitated, and the language of the dominant culture will be the language of the global market. Currently, that language is English; it could conceivably be Chinese in another time.

Moreover, the source of cultural and social capital may include those who possess the knowledge of the dominant culture. Cultural capital endowed by parental trust funds and legacy may no longer provide the only advantage in education. Children of immigrants who have learned the language and know the culture can pass it up to their parents who can then use it to their advantage when attending school themselves. Children who are linguistically and culturally competent in more than one language may find that competence provides useful capital in a predominately monolingual culture competing in a multilingual global economy.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

An important and essential thesis of conceptual metaphor theory states that metaphor is not the nature of language but the nature of cognition. Lakoff (1980; 1987) asserts that we think in metaphor; therefore, we speak in metaphor. Language is simply the “surface realization” of those thoughts and speaking metaphorically is embedded in knowledge and expressed in language (Lakoff, 1987). The evidence of the structure event metaphor in both its dualities provides support for the universality of this premise and these statements. The questions remains: Do English language learners learn the language of metaphor because that is what they hear in daily English conversation? Or, do English language learners create a metaphorical mapping of an embodied experience to a new target domain without benefit of language, then find the expressions or words to express that understanding in English. If so, what effect do cultural models have on this mapping? Although this study offers a glimpse into this issue, these may be questions for the research domain of cognitive linguistics.

This study provides evidence for metaphor in everyday language for individuals using a language other than their first language. Participants struggled to find words to describe a new experience that they could only explain in relationship to a past or embodied experience. The language of most participants, save the very fluent English speakers, lacked traditional metaphors of adornment and embellishment, but was replete with metaphors of everyday language.

In the current study, participants revealed images of the metaphorical journey, of barriers, difficulties, and successes. The participants in this study might be imagined as

already on the “road less taken” as described by Robert Frost. That road has brought them to the community college at a different starting point and with more ground to cover than other community college students who already know English, but who may be advantaged by other knowledge. Although this road is familiar territory to the English as a Second Language discipline and to teachers in this field, I believe that the participants in this study shed light on a new section of the road leading from learning English to being an academically successful student. It is a section of road that may be the sole purview of the community college. On this section of road students must learn a new model for learning, risk leaving the comfort of ESL classes to develop oral communication skills, learn various social languages and integrate not only with native speakers of English, but also with college students in professional and academic disciplines of study. This transition portion of the road, taking students from learning English to the fulfillment of higher education hopes of degree attainment or university transfer, is the time when students are most frightened, less certain, most vulnerable, and yet paradoxically, when they need to be most determined and persistent and, most hopeful.

As a tool of analysis, this theory may be limited for the students in this study. It might be argued that the metaphors expressed in English in the interviews may be indicative of their abstract understanding of what they were experiencing. This theory asserts that experience begets language. Nevertheless, it is also likely that a limitation in language may represent a limitation in the expression of the total experience. My inability to talk with the students in their native language limited my ability to capture a

sense of their metaphors and thus minimized my ability to capture the nuances of their experience.

Conceptual metaphor theory may be a more practical tool of analysis for the language of instructors, native English speaking students, and others who affect the experience of English language learners. Its use has brought into question the meaning attached to the language institutions use to label students, and the programs serving them. As the characteristics of a group changes, often a common, one size fits all term like English as a Second Language (ESL) may need to be reworked and changed to express a more accurate description, and to minimize the social stigmas that may have become a part of the extant term.

One concrete example of this reshaping of language may be found in the very language used to describe this student population. For the purposes of this study, I have used the term English language learner to identify students who are not only learning English, but also students who are learning to use English to learn. Any label helps to define and frame the reality of the group labeled. The trick is to find language that most accurately frames the labeled group and creates a frame of possibility rather than a frame of limitations. It may be that the term, English language learner, is indeed appropriate for the initial part of the journey in the U.S. academic environment for students who are learning English to complement their academic and professional programs and status. The term ESL (English as a Second Language) may be appropriate for students in elementary and secondary schools who enter the system needing to learn English; but, the same term used in the college environment may create an unwanted, social stigma to

adult learners. It is an easy catch all term that most people recognize, but as adults try to navigate the gap from learning English to using English to participate in higher education it may be a binding cognitive framework that limits their perceptions of what it means to be a college student and may in turn limit their choices and outcomes.

The Role of the Community College

Although a daunting and overwhelming task, community colleges have the opportunity to develop and encourage academic success for all English language learners by providing what is identified as communication competence (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1980), academic literacy (Curry, 2004); linguistic competence (Bourdieu, 1977). The challenge to these institutions will be to provide opportunities beyond traditional ESL courses, yet more academically rigorous than traditional cultural immersion programs offered at many universities. Community colleges are actively recruiting international students because they represent a source of revenue, cultural diversity, and recognition in the global community. If community colleges continue to recruit F1 visa students, they will need to provide more than lower tuition. Institutions will need to recognize the level of sophistication they possess regarding the knowledge economy, the global economy, and cultural diversity. Institutions and local students will benefit greatly by having international students as a part of the academic experience for all students; but institutions need to meet the specific language program needs for this group of students. It is important to remember that many international students come to the community college to learn or refine English language skills, but often they are not entering higher education for the first time. They bring with them an understanding of the world that is very different and often more elite and sophisticated than traditional American college students at the community college or the university.

On the other hand, many immigrant students and some international students are entering higher education through the community college and will need not only English

language classes but also will need to learn what it means to be a college student. In this way they may be more similar to traditional community college students who need remedial classes, additional academic preparation, and support to be successful academically. Students will be academically successful in programs of study providing rigorous undergraduate liberal studies only insofar as they learn skills in critical thinking, communication, and working in groups. These skills require social integration and are the hallmarks of our higher education in the U.S.

Generation 1.5 students will need a slightly modified course of study to prepare them for academic success in higher education. They will need English courses that stress literacy in English as a balance to oral fluency and competence. Academic literacy will be particularly important for this group of students who may be first generation college students, may lack social and cultural capital, and may, ironically, be encumbered by fluency in a social language that is grammatically substandard and hampered by slang. And, finally, immigrant students may have the greatest need to learn English initially, and who, even if they possess cultural and social capital and academic credentials from their home countries, will need language skills and job training for immediate economic gain. Thus, an academic program that integrates the need to work with the need to learn will be required. All of these students will need help in learning how the system works and how to access financial, academic, and personal resources.

English language learners participating in this study view this experience as a long journey. Learning English represents only an interim goal; the longer-term goals include academic success, degree completion, and job attainment. Students may require

time to create new cognitive frames. Students enter college with a conceptual understanding of what it means to be a student. This idealized cognitive frame may be culture bound and difficult to relinquish in favor of a new model. In this new model, what it means to be academically successful includes speaking up in class, engaging in dialogue with other students and with instructors to learn, seeking sources of help and learning to navigate a new system. To facilitate the success of these students, context specific idealized cognitive models of education will need to be expanded and/or adjusted. This process will not likely occur without deliberate intervention and guidance from faculty and student service personnel.

There is an irony in this finding. The individuals in this study from cultures that hold more interdependent and collective values, such as Asian countries, were most likely to pursue academic success independent of the system, although they may work collectively with each other. This comment from a Korean student illustrates this:

YC3: history... it was for get A's for I can get A's without speaking.

R: And is that true?

YC3: I think so. Yeah.

As indicated in the last chapter, participants in this study recognized this isolation as detrimental to continued academic success. The reasons for not speaking may not have anything to do with ability to speak English, and may have more to do with how others respond to them when they do. Not speaking may be a means of coping emotionally and surviving academically. More troubling was the indication that it also perpetuates negative stereotypes leading to discrimination or isolation:

- YC3: And instructors said if one American student is coming to class and sees the Asians, American students drop out because American students say I definitely don't get an A.
- YC3: of the Asian, usually they do like Asian is a geekgeeks and they just study in the library or they don't do any extra curricular activities like that.

This provides an example of the juxtaposition between some international students who enter the community college with cultural capital and with characteristics of the habitus of that social class and American students who enter the community college precisely because they do not possess the requisite cultural capital and the habitus for academic success. The stratification that results from racism can also be identified in this comment. That the American students fear that the Asian students will get all the As implies that the Asian students have something that is rewarded by the system that the American students do not have. It also implies that the instructor would prefer to have students who know how to earn As. Community colleges should be wary of this type of institutional racism, wherein the system rewards those students who have cultural capital and the habitus of the socially elite even if it means sacrificing independent thought and critical and creative thinking.

Even as community colleges provide access to higher education for those who have fewer resources, less social and cultural capital, and who need academic remediation, institutional racism may be limiting educational opportunities for certain groups of these same students. There is a clear distinction between students who are taking ESL courses to complement and enrich their study abroad program, or develop English proficiency in preparation for taking the TOEFL exam for admission to graduate programs and those who are taking ESL classes to develop basic English language skills,

and who have yet to develop basic academic skills in math, reading, and science. The conflation of these two groups of English language learners into one English language curriculum is not only a clash of social strata, but may serve to disadvantage and reinforce the habitus of those with less cultural capital while rewarding the habitus of those with cultural capital.

As community colleges strive to provide programs of study for a varied and complex student population, they will need to overcome the political restrictions and prejudices of the communities in which they are located. Many communities are becoming increasingly hostile to the needs of immigrants, including educational needs. Such an environment presents a delicate conundrum for community college institutions that are supported by local tax dollars and directed by local constituents. Providing basic ESL classes will serve the local immigrant population, but will be costly and may even be opposed by the community. It will be tempting to shun the political ramifications associated with providing education for the less elite, perhaps undocumented, and financially strapped students who need to learn English to pursue the more lucrative, more socially and academically elite, documented, and wealthier international students.

This study was limited to those who had emerged from the ESL curricula either through assessment or matriculation with the confidence to continue their studies. However, little is known about those who began in the very low levels of ESL just beginning their study of English, who may have had very little academic preparation in their first language, and who may have had limited funds and time to study and did not or could not continue. There is another difference between those who enter the community

college as international students and those who enter as general English language learners (immigrants, 1.5 generation immigrants, undocumented immigrants, etc.). The restrictions of a student visa prevent international students from working off campus, whereas, many immigrant students have to work, sometimes full-time, to support themselves and, often, families. The challenges of juggling two full time responsibilities, school and work, may prove to be too daunting, too overwhelming, and too complex for students who lack economic, social, and cultural capital. Psychologically, it may prove difficult to overcome the habitus that values work over study, that finds value in what you can do with your hands rather than your mind, and that finds comfort in the company of others who share these values. Coupled with a lack of knowledge about the educational system, academic language and basic academic skills, i.e., cultural capital, it is no wonder that many English language learners cannot muster the courage, the support, or the determination to push beyond basic levels of ESL. Institutions should be providing the necessary resources to build up what is lacking in cultural, social, and economic capital to encourage students to continue their education, to see themselves as college students who can find a way to be academically successful in time. It is incumbent upon institutions who offer access through open enrollment to provide students with information about how to participate in the system, how to access available resources, and to speak the language of the dominant class and of the academic field. In essence, there is a need to provide training in how to be a student, in how learn, and the value of higher education.

The point when an individual has adequate language skills to choose occupational or vocational training is precisely the time when they need to be given the option of

learning what it means to continue learning and to participate in higher education. This would create a real choice between vocational training and academic training for students. If this option is available to some, but not others, especially some ethnic groups and not others, then institutional racism is perpetuating social stratification and social reproduction by directing some groups into the labor market and while providing access for others into the knowledge market.

Recommendations for Practice

If as conceptual theory of metaphor holds, our understanding of new experiences is shaped by past experiences, then practitioners in community colleges must understand the varied past experiences of English language learners to understand their current reality. Faculty and student service personnel can help them frame new experiences and create new realities. The power of language to predict understanding, belonging, and expectations should not be denied or ignored and that predictive power can be used to help students think differently about their academic experience. As students travel the metaphorical road of transformation from English language learner to academically successful college student, practitioners in the community college should help them think and behave like a college student for whom high hopes of success will be realized.

Many programs and workshops are available to help faculty and staff understand diversity and cultural differences in communication, values, and attitudes. But, are they addressing the common emotion of fear expressed by the participants in this study? Knowing that these students are afraid of using English in the classroom may motivate faculty to encourage students to speak up, ask questions, and enter into discussion, even if their use of English is not perfect. If students are misunderstood, instructors need to take the time to clarify, and probe for the answer that may lie under the surface of language. Reshaping fear into anticipation, anxiety into confidence, and isolation into belonging may be a matter of reshaping the language used to encourage students, energize student, and engage students.

On the other hand, we need to recognize that fear, anxiety, and lack of confidence may be disguised as self-reliance and determination manifesting itself in hardworking behavior and a quiet demeanor. Attention in class without participation may reflect a different cultural model of education, but it may also reflect this fear of using English, i.e., a fear of rejection or of failure. The simple nod of the head may indicate understanding, or it may mean something very different, such as “I will look those words up when I get home” rather than ask questions, or admit to not understanding. This confusion may be more detrimental when a student is making up with habitus for what is lacking in cultural capital.

Language matters. Practitioners should listen to how students describe their experience attending to their use of metaphor that may not be readily apparent, but by listening beyond mere words it may be discernible. We should be cognizant of the language we use to describe our experiences with students and guard against the reality of unconscious, even unintentional, but nonetheless real, racism or discrimination. As I have developed and introduced communication classes for English language learners in a non “ESL” department, I have noticed how difficult it is to create a new framework of understanding about students who look different, sound different, and behave differently in class. Sharing stories of individual students with other faculty has provided and opportunity to begin the arduous task of reframing what it means to have a student who is studying at the community college and who is learning English, learning a new educational paradigm, and who is afraid of speaking English, in class.

Implications for Pedagogy

The greater challenge is to find ways to shape new experiences to create new social realities. The metaphors that students use to create meaning about new academic experiences will be based in past experiences, and according to Lakoff (1980) will become self-fulfilling prophecies. Pedagogical practices that include service learning, interdisciplinary learning communities, and co-operative learning may be ways of creating new experiences and integrating students into the educational system and into the community. Instructors must find ways to build in classroom dialogue that is meaningful and will allow students to risk participation without sacrificing potential harm to a final grade or jeopardizing social rapport.

Service learning is often used as a capstone methodology for students completing their lower division liberal arts studies or as an introduction into a field of study. Integrating a service-learning component into either traditional ESL curricula, or into academic transition courses for English language learners can provide a new experience and immeasurable learning for students. It can introduce them to a new understanding of learning in relationship to service in a new or different social environment or a new profession or discipline. Service learning puts students in a new role in which what they know can serve the needs of others. For example, an opportunity for a student with little previous academic experience or academic success to volunteer in a first grade classroom to tutor students who are learning English can provide the embodied experience that can help change the idealized cognitive model of learning for that student. For another type of English language learner, a service learning opportunity can match previous academic

experience with new opportunities to use that knowledge while developing spontaneous English speaking skills. For example, an international student with a degree in Marketing or History from his or her native country might be encouraged to volunteer at the local Historical museum as a guest docent. Care needs to be taken to create a learning opportunity that matches the skills and expectations of the student and to find service-learning providers who understand the special circumstances of this experience.

Another method of transitioning students from basic ESL classes to a more traditional college curriculum is the development of learning communities that engage students in collaborative learning environments. Such learning communities might include linking an advanced ESL writing course with a public speaking course and a basic history course. Rather than isolating individual course assignments, students would learn about history, write about history (maybe their own), and speak about history. These linked assignments enrich the academic experience, while strengthening the skills and creating a social environment for students to build confidence and experience success. Another, less involved, collaboration among ESL, English, and Communication faculty might be to design reflective writing projects for English language learners that could become digital stories to be presented to an audience can reinforce basic academic skills. Another collaborative bridge might be to involve American students studying international business, or intercultural communication with English language students who can provide real insight to class discussions. I believe the key to creating a new cognitive model of learning and academic success is interaction with others and active

involvement in the learning process. Students who are involved in their work will feel less nervous and less afraid (Zull, 2002).

Exploring the use of metaphors as an analytical tool to construct meaning provides practitioners with a different perspective on teaching and learning. Zull (2002) argues that understanding how the brain works will not only change the way we think, but will change the way we teach and the way we help people learn. He asserts that “how we teach depends on how we believe the mind works, and how we understand behavior” (p. 7). He concurs with proponents of cognitive science that learning is a physical act. If, as Lakoff and Johnson (1999) claim, metaphors can offer an insight to how individuals experience, understand, and construct meaning in their world, and thus predict behavior, then it is critical that practitioners listen to the metaphors of students. Doing so will help teachers create physical learning experiences to facilitate learning. As practitioners become aware of the metaphors that express an understanding of what it means to learn, to teach, and to succeed, the role of teacher, learner, and the definition of learning may be reconstructed and reframed. Similar to the philosophy of Lakoff and Johnson (1999), Zull (2002) asserts that action is fundamental to learning; action embodies the learning, thus, changing the brain. A new idealized model of learning will require action, involvement, and movement for students and teachers. Zull (2002) concludes that effective teaching is the art of changing the brain.

Implications for Institutions

The characteristics needed to construct a path leading students from the traditional and basic ESL curricula and classes to academic programs of study may be incomplete or even non-existent at some institutions. Institutions that recognize the vulnerability of students making this transition will be better positioned to provide necessary resources to ensure a successful transition. This may include resources to encourage innovative curricula design promoting additional communication skill building, study skills, and social integration skills. Innovative curricula should address the different perspectives and needs of different groups of English language learners. Blumenthal (2002) argues that ESL curricula designed for F1 visa students include large blocks of instruction devoted to the American culture, which is not needed by 1.5 generation students. For these students more attention needs to be placed on developing academic reading and writing skills, while recognizing oral fluency and familiarity with American culture. It is important for curricula design to acknowledge the global awareness and sophistication of many English language learners. As students become more active in their learning process, all students will benefit from one another enhancing and enriching the entire learning experience for everyone at the community college.

I believe it is important for institutions to recognize that English language learners are not all alike. Immigrant students, including generation 1.5 students are quite different than those who are entering community colleges as F1 visa students. Among English language learners, we find that purposes for coming to the community college to study English may be very different. Unlike many immigrant students, it is common for

international students to have studied English for several years before coming to the U.S. In the past, most international students sought graduate degrees, coming to the community college to increase their English skills before continuing on or as a prerequisite to admittance into graduate programs of study. Students in the present study identified another, different goal. They wanted to learn English, not to enter graduate school, but to enter the global marketplace either in their home countries or abroad.

Certificate programs in communication competence could provide incentives for students to develop strong skills in written and oral English skills while earning credentials to bolster their resumes in the job market or demonstrate language proficiency for graduate programs of study. Special tuition incentives for continued English study for immigrant students completing ESL programs might be used to retain students and ensure greater academic success at all levels of higher education.

Institutions should examine how different groups of students encounter the academic experience to uncover embedded institutional racism and social discrimination. This type of racism and discrimination goes largely unnoticed or ignored often because it is uncomfortable to admit and even more complex to unravel and remediate. Institutions that serve a largely Latino immigrant population should examine how students are advised or registered for classes. Students may need more individual intervention and guidance. If they do not have language skills to register for classes, it is not likely they will have the language skills necessary to navigate the financial aid system or find additional resources. Patterns of advisement should be identified and examined to identify who is being advised to continue taking academic coursework and who is

advised to enter vocational or occupational tracks. Program advisors will need to be trained to provide individualized education plans for students that would include not only ESL classes, but developmental classes in math and science also.

Community colleges may find themselves in an untenable position with regard to policies surrounding the admission of undocumented English language learners. Local and state laws reflecting a restrictive policy may be in direct conflict with the stated missions and implied role of community colleges to serve the educational needs of the community, especially those unable to take advantage of other means of higher education or adult education. At the same time community college administrators and boards are examining this parochial role, it must also examine its responsibility to provide a global education for all its students.

Administrators should be vigilant regarding policies of recruitment of international students lest they become merely a revenue source rather than a means of creating a global understanding and cultural interaction for all students. As institutions respond to the sirens of globalization, care must be taken to recognize the value international students bring to the institution beyond tuition dollars. Courses and programs need to be in place to provide the kind of academic experience these students want and expect when they apply for admission. It is important that students are rewarded with some official credential that indicates the type and level of English learning in which the student has participated. This credential may not be in the form of a degree, but an official certificate of completion that would be recognized by employers in a home country or U.S. corporations doing business abroad. Specific programs of

study for TOEFL preparation might be offered for graduate students; less intense conversation courses may be more appropriate for students on a temporary travel visa, or spousal visa.

I believe that institutions, particularly community colleges, which are recruiting international students and welcoming immigrant students, should review the programs they offer to English language learners. Community colleges and other institutions of higher learning that promote ESL classes for immigrant students need to provide additional resources that will improve retention and build the cultural capital that may be lacking in students. Institutions can implement policies that encourage advisors to follow students and to help with incremental decision-making as students encounter new opportunities. This would provide greater continuity and a stronger sense of belonging to the institution. At the same time, the institutions recruiting international students need to ensure that programs of English study match the needs and expectations of these students. The different types of English language learners are not the same and it makes sense that the programs of study may not be the same either. It may be more expensive to look at students individually rather than by a label of English language learner, immigrant, F1 visa, but it is called for if an institution is about serving students and providing access to higher education. To do otherwise jeopardizes the integrity of the institution by perpetuating embedded racism and it remains, as Bourdieu argued, a mechanism for social reproduction.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study entertained a broad question concerning the specific phenomenon of the English language learner on the community college campus. The findings illuminated issues of concern that warrant more research, both qualitative and quantitative.

Community colleges have tried to address diversity issues but this research suggests the need for more exploration of the issue from the perspective of those experiencing marginalization, if not racism. Cultural diversity workshops and diversity training have proliferated on college campuses encouraging faculty to incorporate diversity into the curriculum. But are they sufficient to uncover these truths? To do this, more in depth qualitative work must address this phenomenon from the perspective of others involved in the experience. For example, what does it mean to faculty to have non-native speakers of English in class. If the language of metaphor can help us understand how one understands a phenomenon, then perhaps a study in which the language and metaphors of the faculty and other student service personnel would deepen that understanding. What do they understand about the experience of the students and how do they respond to the needs of these students? Exploring the perspective of the faculty of various core disciplines may shed additional light while providing the proverbial “other side of the story”.

Issues of discrimination and linguistic stereotyping may be more problematic than indicated by the findings in this study. Institutional racism may be manifested in covert patterns of advisement, grading, and possibly budget distribution. Quantitative studies

that examine academic completion, retention, and university transfer will uncover patterns that will help institutions identify and solve problems. Qualitative studies that disaggregate cultures, countries, and first languages may provide greater insight to differences found in quantitative studies. Much more work is yet to be done with students in beginning levels of ESL programs (who are most likely immigrant or generation 1.5 students) to understand their experience as it relates to institutional policies and procedures, including advising, grading, retention, and financial aid.

Understanding the impact of cultural capital on the academic success of community college students who are learning English was limited by the criteria used to select students. It is unclear whether their academic success is a result of the characteristics of hard work, self-reliance, and determination or, an advantage gained by inherited cultural capital. Additional work that isolates those who are in the beginning levels of ESL is needed to understand what motivates, enables, and allows students to achieve academic success learning English and to successfully begin using English to learn and what inhibits that learning. The question about what transforms an English language learner into a student using English to learn and then, into an academically successful student in higher education has been highlighted but largely unanswered in this study. A grounded theory study may provide a better explanation of the factors that increase academic success and university transfer, facilitate the move from ESL to college coursework, and develop the habitus of the college student and academic literacy.

Additionally, the factors in both teaching and learning that affect the development of linguistic capital for English language learners should be addressed. Are the

characteristics of successful students simply the habitus of those possessing a fair store of cultural capital when they arrive at the community college; or, are they characteristics of individuals who seek the community college a way to develop cultural capital? Either way, it will be important to explore what institutions are doing to respond to their needs. This will be particularly important in light of the current anti-immigration laws being enacted throughout the United States. Many students who begin their study at a community college hope to transfer to a university to complete professional and academic undergraduate degrees; others use the community college as additional English language preparation for graduate study. More research is needed to identify the differences in the experiences between the community college and the university.

Research should address and explore the effect that dwindling public funds is having on institutions experiencing greater demand for more and diverse services. Academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2003; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997) asserts that institutions are responding indirectly, if not directly to globalization by marketing itself and the services of the academy for profit. Recruitment of and catering to high tuition paying international students at the expense of services to immigrant students may be an indication that community colleges are engaging in academic capitalism and is something that warrants oversight, moderation, and restraint.

It is not the purpose of qualitative research in general to find definitive answers or to define reality. This study did neither of these things. It did explore the phenomenon from the perspective of those currently experiencing learning English at the community college. In doing so, it generated many new questions, offers additional insight to a

growing phenomenon on community college campuses. These questions span several disciplines including cognitive science, linguistics, sociology, and higher education. The context of each contributes to the greater understanding of what it means to be an English language learner on a community college campus in the United States.

Summary

This chapter identified the most salient findings of this study and discussed how the two theoretical perspectives provided insight to data analysis. Each perspective allowed for a grounding of the interpretation of the data within a theoretical framework. The community college plays a significant role in helping develop a new cognitive model of learning for English language learners. Interactive learning and innovative teaching strategies are needed to facilitate the change and student success. Additional qualitative research that explores different perspectives of the same phenomenon and quantitative research that analyzes the factors of the experience are needed.

Cultural capital theory holds that institutions of higher education perpetuate social stratification and social reproduction by rewarding students who possess cultural capital and marginalizing those who do not possess it. The community college environment offers an educational environment unlike university settings from which this theory emerged. The diverse and complex characteristics of students who attend community college to learn English and enter higher education do not conform to the characteristics of traditional university students, nor do they conform to the characteristics of the typical community college student. Cultural capital that may have advantaged students in their home countries may not provide the same initial advantage for students in the U.S. because they do not speak the language of the dominant culture fluently, or they do not have social or financial capital to compensate for lack of linguistic competence. A new model of education may be required of these students before they can achieve academic success or use their cultural capital for any additional advantage. Students who may have

lacked cultural capital in their home countries may find they are able to build necessary skills in language and academics by perseverance and hard work. Traditional cultural capital is inherited from one's parents, but in the case of some immigrant families, children who have mastered the language and are succeeding academically are the benefactors of cultural capital and linguistic competence for their parents who are learning English at the community college. While it seems that cultural capital does provide students with an advantage in the academic environment, it may operate differently in the community college and for English language learners. The community college may be a field of education in which one can learn language and academic skills while at the same time build social and cultural capital for use in the professional job market abroad, in the global marketplace, or in continued higher education. Cultural capital theory works as an explanation for what is occurring beyond the nation state to the global economy only when modified and adapted to new academic environments and new social situations for students who are unlike the traditional parochial students bound by a defined culture who determined what would be valued and what would be rewarded by the higher education system. Diversity converges in higher education and reaps its rewards globally. Researchers will need to adapt and modify cultural capital theory to embrace the reality of our students in a new environment, a global market and a knowledge economy.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORMS

Group Interview

I would like you to consider participating in my doctoral dissertation research that will focus on *The Academic experience of English language learners at the community college*. The purpose of this research is to explore how English language learners understand their community college experience. I am conducting this study as a student in the College of Education, Department of Higher Education Department at the University of Arizona.

You are being invited to participate in this research study because you are enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and are continuing to take classes at Mesa Community College (MCC).

For this study, I plan to conduct two group interviews with English language learners who are currently enrolled in 100 level and above classes at MCC. This group interview will last about one hour. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be interviewed with 6 or 7 other students in a study room on the second floor of the library. I would like to hear about your academic experiences as an English language learner. Although I am an instructor here at MCC, your participation in this study is completely voluntary and your participation or not will not affect your status in any of your classes at MCC. I will ask you questions about your classroom experiences and you may decline to answer any or all questions. I will audiotape the interviews and transcribe them so I can capture your thoughts and ideas accurately. There are no expected risks to you as a participant and no direct benefits; however, I believe it will be of interest to you to talk with other students who may share your experiences.

Your identity will be kept strictly confidential; only I, and maybe some of the other students in the group, will know your identity. Nothing you reveal in the interview will be connected with your name and no personally sensitive topics will be discussed.

If you decide to participate in this study please complete the attached questionnaire before the interview and return it when you come to the interview, or you may return it to my campus office AC13.

You may contact me, Loretta L. Kissell, University of Arizona Doctoral Candidate if you have questions or if you are interested in participating in this study by email at llkissell@gmail.com or by phone 480-461-7761.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant please contact the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program at 520-626-6721, or toll free at 866-278-1455.

By completing this survey you are agreeing to allow me to use your information for the stated research purposes.

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate.
Loretta Kissell

Individual Interview

I would like you to consider participating in my doctoral dissertation research that will focus on *The Academic experience of English language learners at the community college*. The purpose of this research is to explore how English language learners understand their community college experience. I am conducting this study as a student in the College of Education, Department of Higher Education Department at the University of Arizona.

You are being invited to participate in this research study because you are enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and are continuing to take classes at Mesa Community College (MCC).

For this study, I plan to meet with 15-20 English Language Learners for individual interviews. You must be currently enrolled in 100 level and above classes at MCC. This individual interview will last about one hour. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be interviewed in a study room on the second floor of the library. I would like to hear about your academic experiences as an English language learner. Although I am an instructor here at MCC, your participation in this study is completely voluntary and your participation or not will not affect your status in any of your classes at MCC. I will ask you questions about your classroom experiences and you may decline to answer any or all questions. I will audiotape the interviews and transcribe them so I can capture your thoughts and ideas accurately. There are no expected risks to you as a participant and no direct benefits, however, I believe it will be of interest to you to talk and share your experiences.

Your identity will be kept strictly confidential; only I will know your identity. Nothing you reveal in the interview will be connected with your name and no personally sensitive topics will be discussed.

If you decide to participate in this study please complete the attached questionnaire before the interview and return it when you come to the interview, or you may return it to my campus office AC13.

If you have questions or if you are interested in participating in this study you may contact me, Loretta L. Kissell, University of Arizona Doctoral Candidate, by email at llkissell@gmail.com or by phone 480-461-7761.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant please contact the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program at 520-626-6721, or toll free at 866-278-1455.

By completing this survey you are agreeing to allow me to use your information for the stated research purposes.

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate.
Loretta Kissell

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Information of English language learners

This questionnaire is designed to gather information in preparation for your upcoming interview. The information provided by you is strictly confidential; no one but the researcher will know it came from you.

Instructions: Please read the following questions and answer them by filling in the box that looks like this []. Mark the box that you think is most appropriate. Where needed, write your answers on the line provided.

1. Name: _____

Current Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Phone: _____

First language _____ Country of Origin _____

2. [] Female
[] Male

3. Age

[<input type="checkbox"/>] 15-19	[<input type="checkbox"/>] 35-39
[<input type="checkbox"/>] 20-24	[<input type="checkbox"/>] 40-44
[<input type="checkbox"/>] 25-29	[<input type="checkbox"/>] 45-49
[<input type="checkbox"/>] 30-34	[<input type="checkbox"/>] 50+

4. Name and semester of specific ESL courses you have taken at MCC
(example: ENG 107 Fall, 2005)

5. Name and semester of other courses you have taken at MCC

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. How many years of English instruction did you have before entering MCC

one year Where: _____

2 – 4 years Where: _____

4+ years Where: _____

7. How would you describe how well you speak English?

(Mark all that apply)

I understand most of my instructors

I understand most of my English language learning classmates

I am comfortable speaking English in my classes

I am comfortable speaking English to my American friends

I am comfortable speaking English in most situations

I read and write English well enough to be successful in courses designed for American students

I read and write English better than I speak English

8. What is the highest level of education you have earned?

high school diploma or equivalency Where: _____

2 year Occupation or Professional degree Where: _____

Name of degree: _____

4 year Bachelor degree Where: _____

Name of degree: _____

Master's degree Where: _____

Name of degree: _____

Doctorate degree Where: _____

Name of degree: _____

Mark all answers that apply to you:

9. I plan

- to graduate from MCC degree or certificate: _____
 to transfer to a university major or degree: _____
 to return home to complete my education major or degree _____

10. Following my education in the United States, I plan

- to look for employment in the United States
 to look for employment in my home country
 have no specific plans

11. What is your mother's highest level of education:

- elementary education Where: _____
 high school diploma or equivalency Where: _____
 2 year Occupation or Professional degree Where: _____
 Name of degree: _____
 4 year Bachelor degree Where: _____
 Name of degree: _____
 Master's degree Where: _____
 Name of degree: _____
 Doctorate degree Where: _____
 Name of degree: _____

12. What is your father's highest level of education:

- elementary education Where: _____
 high school diploma or equivalency Where: _____
 2 year Occupation or Professional degree Where: _____
 Name of degree: _____
 4 year Bachelor degree Where: _____
 Name of degree: _____
 Master's degree Where: _____
 Name of degree: _____
 Doctorate degree Where: _____
 Name of degree: _____

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT IDENTIFIERS

Focus Group One

N=8 4=M 4=F

F1J	Mexico	Spanish	M	[25-29]	BA Mexico	NA/BA
F1G	Mexico	Spanish	F	[25-29]	HS Mexico	
F1M	Mexico	Spanish	F	[40-44]	HS	HS/HS
F1M	Cuba	Spanish	F			
F1A	Sudan	Arabic	M			
F1B	Ethiopia	Amaharic	M	[25-19]	HS Ethiopia +	NA/2yr
F1K	Taiwan	Chinese	M	[25-29]	BA Taiwan	MA/BS
F1H	Vietnam	Vietnamese	F	[35-39]	HS Vietnam	NA/NA

Focus Group Two

N=6 2=M 4=F

F2L	Mexico	Spanish	F	[20-24]	2yr. US	HS/HS
F2E	Cuba	Spanish	M	[20-24]	2yr Cuba	HS/HS
F2T	Taiwan	Chinese	F	[15-19]	HS Taiwan	NA/NA
F2Y	Taiwan	Chinese	F	[30-34]	2yr Taiwan	HS/HS
F2A	Vietnam	Vietnamese	M	[20-24]	HS US	HS/HS
F2S	Japan	Japanese	F	[40-44]	2yr Japan	HS/HS

Individual Interviewees

N=13 4=M 9=F

GR6	Mexico	Spanish	F	[30-34]		
JL9	Mexico	Spanish	F	[35-39]	2yr Mexico	HS/
HA2	Mexico	Spanish	F	[20-24]	GEDUS	HS/HS
MA1	Mexico	Spanish	M	[15-19]	GEDAZ	HS/PhD
FC4	Colombia	Spanish	F	[40-44]	2yr Colombia	HS/HS
FE5	Cuba	Spanish	M	[20-24]	2yr Cuba	HS/HS
BR12	Brazil	Portuguese	F	[25-30]	HS Brazil	
PM10	Bulgaria	Bulgarian	F	[30-34]	HS Bulgaria	HS/HS
					2yr US	
ZI7	China	Chinese	F	[20-24]	HS US	2yr/HS
TK8	Taiwan	Chinese	M	[25-29]	BA Taiwan	MA/BS
LW13	Korea	Korean				
YC3	Korea	Korean	F	[25-29]	MS Korea	HS/HS
VN11	Iran	Persian	F	[30-34]	HS Iran	HS/HS

Total N = 25

M=9 F=16

First Languages=10

Countries=13

11	Spanish	
	Mexico	8
	Cuba	2
	Colombia	1
4	Chinese	
	Taiwan	3
	China	1
2	Korean	
2	Vietnamese	
1	Japanese	
1	Portuguese	
	Brazil	1
1	Bulgarian	
1	Persian	
	Iran	1
1	Arabic	
	Sudan	1
1	Amaharic	
	Ethiopia	1

APPENDIX D

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

First and Second Individual Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about your experience coming to the US to study:
(probes: How long have you been here? How long have you been speaking English? How long have you studied English before coming to the US? What are your educational goals while here?)
2. When did you start taking ESL classes here? (probes: Was this your first experience in college?)
3. How comfortable are you speaking English? (probes: In what situations? What is most difficult for you?)
4. Did you take any classes that were not for English language learners?
5. How did you learn English outside of the classroom?
6. What helped you be successful in regular academic classes?
7. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your academic experience in the American community college classroom?

Protocol for Individual Interviews

Interviewees were invited to state their names, country of origin, first language, and length of time in the United States.

1. Tell me why you chose to study at this community college. (probes: How did you find out about this college?)
2. Tell me about your thoughts and feelings during your first week in classes at this community college. (Probes: How was this different from your previous experiences at school? Did you have any anxiety or concerns about your classes?)
3. Tell me about the course content for your classes. (probes: What did you expect it to be like? Did anything surprise you? Did you think the textbook was difficult to read? How did you prepare for class?)
4. Tell me about your interactions with other students and how you felt about those interactions? (Probes: Describe a specific experience; What was it like to work with other students in class? How was working with American students different than working with other English language learners? Did anything surprise you?)
5. Tell me about your experience with instructors? (probes: Were your ESL instructors different than other instructors, how so? Where did you talk with instructors? How often? Did anything surprise you?)
6. Tell me about your school experience before coming to this community college. (probes: What were the expectations of instructors? What were your classes like? What was easier? What was more difficult?)
7. Tell me what it is like to be a student on an American college campus? What did you expect? How is it different than you imagined? Were there any surprises?)
8. Describe a funny experience you have had at this college.
9. Describe a difficult experience you have had at this college. (Were you ever misunderstood? Did you ever misunderstand a classmate or an instructor?)
10. Tell me about your experience outside the classroom. (Probes: What was it like to register for classes? How did you know what classes to register for? Where do you go for help with your assignments?)

APPENDIX E

GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviews will be preceded by collecting some demographic information including:

Name

First language/country of origin

Length of time in U.S.

The following questions will be used to guide the semi-structured interviews:

1. How would you describe your experience at the community college?
2. How does this compare with your educational experience in your home country?
3. Why did you choose to study at the community college? At this college?
4. How will this educational experience help you?
5. How would you describe your experiences with teachers (ESL and other faculty)?
6. What are the main differences between your English language classes and your other classes?
7. How confident are you using English in classes and coursework? Socially?
8. What do you plan to study? Are you planning to transfer to a university? If yes, how close are you to doing so?
9. What has been your best academic experience at this college?
10. What has been your worst experience?
11. What would you say are your greatest difficulties as a student in the U.S.?
12. How have you overcome those difficulties?
13. Do you have any questions for me?

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