ESL ANXIETY

IN

IRANIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN

by

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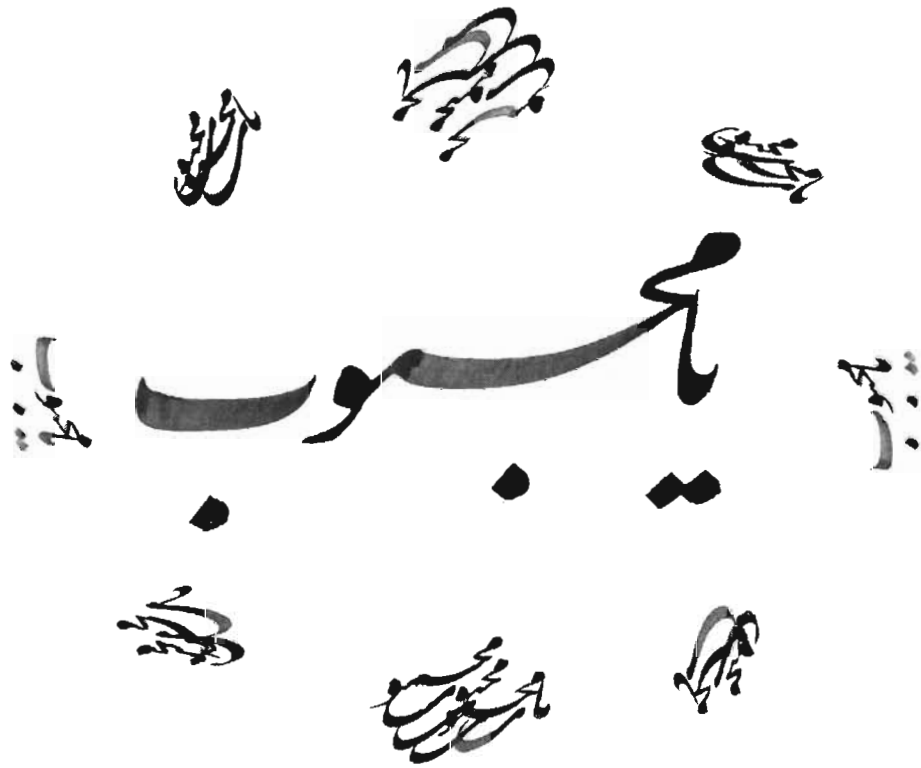
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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates perceptions of ESL anxiety articulated by educated professional Iranian women upon their immigration to Canada. I applied qualitative research methods to gather and analyse these women's articulations of interacting in English as one of their means of social communication. I explored different factors influencing ESL anxiety from the participants' perspectives as opposed to my interpretation of this phenomenon.

Previous research over the last 30 years in second language acquisition has confirmed that attention to affect enhances language learning. Most research on ESL anxiety has investigated learners in second language classrooms. These studies have involved learners from western and non-western languages such as French, German, Spanish, English, Japanese, Chinese, Russian and Arabic.

This study examines learners' experiences not only in classrooms but also in their families and communities, and examines the ESL anxiety experiences of Iranian women, a group that has not previously been studied. I am interested in how we might understand those experiences from physiological, psychological and philosophical viewpoints. I applied insights from physiology, psychology and existential philosophy to understand the phenomenon of ESL anxiety. I conclude that major tasks of ESL anxiety research are to establish interdisciplinary connections and to provide more evidence-based ground for educational research in this field.

Keywords: ESL; ESL Anxiety; Immigration; Women; Qualitative Research

To the Beloved Allah, "Rab el 'Alamin",
"the Lord of the Worlds" (Quran 1: 2)
and to my beloved Allah's messenger,
who accompanied me during this journey.

يعقوب

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PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL CONNECTIONS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

ESL anxiety as a sui generis emotion reveals individual worldviews and diversities, and at the same time universalities about human beings. It is a sense that is closely related to physiology, psychology, and philosophy of existence that show up in the sociocultural milieu.

(Shoaleh, 2007).

In multicultural societies that are host to immigrants from all around the world, ESL anxiety is a major issue. As well, each year Canada becomes home to thousands of people from different countries around the world. Statistics Canada has reported that from July 2004 to June 2005 a total number of 244, 579 persons immigrated to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006). More than 50 percent of these immigrants were from Asia (Edmonston, 2002). The increasing number of these non-English speaking immigrants entering the Canadian education system has increased the demand for ESL programs (Corbeil, 2003). Rossiter (2003) mentioned that most of these ESL programs aim to promote second language learning and social-emotional growth of their learners, however; Brandl's study (1987) showed that second language teachers consciously act as a source of inducing anxiety in second language learners to coerce them into performing (cited in Rossiter, 2003).

In Canada, most ESL students are recent immigrants who come from non-English speaking countries. Immigrants are separated from their country of origin and they need to adapt to the new environment and the life style of the new

society. The sense of detachment or dislocation that they experience due to this separation is anxiety provoking. Mostly, the home language of immigrants is not English. They usually continue to speak their native language at home, and sometimes at their work places. Due to language deficiency, they suffer from a sense of isolation that prohibits them to become mingled with the new society. They do not feel themselves in the same position of power that they had in their homeland. So, because of lack of power and authority over the new situation they feel unconfident, insecure, miserable, and powerless. Therefore, they need sufficient exposure to the English language and professional ESL assistance as they enter the social system of the host country to overcome the language barrier and its consequences.

A considerable number of these immigrants are women who are among vulnerable groups in Canadian society. These vulnerable groups (e.g. women, immigrants, singles, and unemployed) are more susceptible to distress than others (Schaffer, 1978). Immigrant women, especially those who come from eastern societies, play a central role in their families and their communities. They serve as foundations and emotional supporters of their family. Through the immigration process, they experience differences among the old and new socio-cultural systems that are highly challenging for them. These new life situations sometimes emotionally distress them. Thus, their mental and physical health is often at risk.

Distress-inducing factors (e.g. separation from significant others, changing environment, role transitions, new life styles) are all prevalent amongst ESL immigrants. They move from one community to another one. Moving from one

place to another, they confront new roles some of which are conflicting with their previous roles and are highly challenging. They face new and totally different life styles. Through the migration process ESL immigrants encounter sufferings and emotions. These all together put ESL immigrants among the most highly distressed groups of each society. It is worth mentioning that for ESL immigrant women, gender related issues considerably increase their distress. In this situation, ESL anxiety if not prevented or dealt with properly in this group leads to feeling of social isolation, life dissatisfaction, and susceptibility to psychosomatic problems, and will decrease overall capabilities of the individual and society.

Anxiety: A Universal Human Experience

Despite wide-ranging differences in culture, ethnicity, class, wealth, age, gender, and sex, some attributes are universal amongst human beings. The anxiety response to some life experiences is one of the most common emotional attributes that can seriously affect an individual's life. Anxiety manifests itself in common universal neuroanatomical and physiological patterns. However, the psychological and philosophical foundations of anxiety may differ from one individual to another (Bigdeli & Bai, 2007).

Although the physiological manifestations of anxiety are the same among individuals, the reaction of vulnerable groups (for example women, the elderly, the young, immigrants, refugees, and the poor) of each society to anxiety is often more intense than others. I include second language learners (L2) among the vulnerable groups of each host society, especially when they hold the role of immigrants. I take the position that English as a second language (ESL)

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educators encounter mentally and cognitively capable but linguistically non-proficient members of diverse communities who need special attention and support. Amongst second language learners, I believe immigrant women are more susceptible to anxiety, because they play three important roles at the same time: being second language learners, being immigrants, and being women.

To adapt to their new environment and the lifestyle of their new society, it is crucial for immigrants to acquire the dominant "language" of the general public. In this situation, second language anxiety emerges, and in English-speaking societies, it is called ESL anxiety. ESL anxiety is a subjective painful feeling from which many English language learners suffer. At the very beginning, it emerges as a self-focused threat to the second language learner's identity. However, in the long run it becomes a society-focused threat because it jeopardizes not only the physical and mental health and well-being of second language learners, but also society's health and well-being. In most cases, studies investigating ESL anxiety have involved learners from western European languages such as French, German, Spanish, and English (Aida, 1994). Among the speakers of non-western languages, there is some research on Japanese, and Arabic learners (Aida, 1994; Elkhafaifi, 2005). However, to my knowledge there have been no investigations of Iranian immigrant women and ESL anxiety.

In this chapter, I provide a review of those personal experiences that encouraged me to study English as a Second Language (ESL) anxiety among Iranian immigrant women. Second, to discuss ESL anxiety among this group, it is necessary to have an understanding of the Iranian education system and to

present a comprehensive synopsis of the Iranian English language education system. Briefly reviewing texts in the area of ESL anxiety, I raise important issues regarding ESL anxiety that are experienced by second language learners, especially Iranian immigrant women in Vancouver, Canada; then I present my research questions. Finally, I will present a summary of the thesis chapters.

Personal Experiences

In Canada

"You know…they say suffering helps you improve, so suffer!" I heard this sentence from one of the Simon Fraser University (SFU) professors in one of my first visits, before I was accepted into the doctoral program. At that time, I did not understand the depth and breadth of this saying, and I had no idea about what was going to happen to me during the next couple of months and years. I assumed that I knew about my situation and I was aware of it, so I was eagerly willing to accept the 'unknown sufferings' to improve myself. I did not realize that the major part of this suffering would come from the language that I thought I knew very well.

Over time, I did suffer mainly due to my second language inadequacies, and the pain and anguish I suffered are printed in all my cells. If I had known that I would experience this much suffering, maybe I would not have dared experience it. However, this ignorance gave me the courage to start this journey, navigate it, and improve. While navigating I witnessed similar journeys, and I heard about other newcomers' experiences and "suffering stories" that show the immense pain that they experienced due to their lack of second language

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competencies, the intolerance of the surrounding community for their struggles to appropriate English, and the improvement that they achieved. I want to call it a 'suffering-achievement journey'. This may seem paradoxical, but to me these were different sides of this same journey.

I was born and raised in a family who were all respectful toward me; I received attention and recognition from my family members, friends, workplace colleagues and others according to my talents and capabilities; and I recognized myself as a capable and invaluable being. In Canada, I have experienced the killing pressure of not being recognized by myself and by others because of the lack of acceptable language competence and performance according to my own standards.

The ideas about my previous identity in my homeland and different new identities that I experienced in the host society led me to think more and more about the words that open this chapter. The passage of time and the visible and audible improvement in my language proficiency, as well as time spent among the Iranian immigrant population who suffered from similar problems more or less convinced me that however this suffering at the very beginning is shocking and freezing, during the course of time, some sufferers improve and overcome their language barriers and anxiety.

But, I wondered if there were ways to help these people suffer less and achieve more in a shorter period of time? How could ESL education system help these learners to use their mental capacities to a much fuller extent? In addition, I believed that ESL educators are responsible for finding less threatening

alternatives to help all ESL learners, to lessen their suffering, and increase their achievements, and to promote the overall condition of the host society. It is their responsibility to provide opportunities for ESL learners to use their mental capacities as much as possible and to avoid their pre-occupation with linguistic anxiety. In other words, I believe it is educators' responsibility to find the best possible solution to protect this vulnerable group.

In Iran

Since my early childhood, I have been very interested in becoming educated, and my parents paved the way and registered me in a private school. There, I started to become educated in my homeland. In my elementary school, as in other Iranian schools, English was the major foreign language being taught. At the same time, I had the opportunity to enjoy a private English teacher who tried to prepare me for the school's expectations.

Although I did not feel any anxiety about learning English at the very beginning, after a while I felt anxious. I did not have any idea about the expectations of the elementary school English department and this made me actually worried. I passed the school entrance exam successfully. However, at school I did not feel confident because I did not recognize myself as successful as others in communicating through English. This situation imposed a huge amount of stress on me, but the results were positive; I tried more and more to achieve the accepted level of English competence and performance to satisfy myself and my significant others. However, the anxiety that I experienced resulted in some somatic problems that I have suffered from since then.

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Afterwards, I really did not have any problem during my intermediate, high school, and university years with English and it became one of my favourite subjects of study. However, at exam times the feelings of anxiety returned, and, despite my subsequent success in the following years, this unwanted unpleasant feeling did not leave me when I was in a situation to be judged according to my linguistic competence and performance.

As an Iranian student, I had witnessed my classmates' anxiety about English courses during the school years, which mostly acted as an inhibitor and resulted in their hatred of this language. Also, as a Medical English teacher when I taught in a Medical Faculty in Iran, I witnessed my students become extremely anxious about English courses[1] during their university years. There were two huge monsters for them, English and mathematics. All these thought-provoking experiences showed that the environment for teaching English in Iran created anxiety. This system was anxiety-provoking for most of the learners and unprepared English teachers alike, who were unable to listen, speak, read, and write fluently and efficiently in English.

During my life, I experienced ESL anxiety in different shapes, but my experience in Canada has been the most detrimental one of all. My personal experience of ESL anxiety in Canada was that it lowers self-esteem, self-respect, physical and mental abilities, problem-solving abilities, sense of safety and security, authority, brain functioning, motivation, optimism, and overall bodily energy. Also, it increases fear of communication, self-criticism, self-hatred,

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[1] English Pre-requisite, General English (GE), and English for Special Purposes (ESP)

pessimism, anger, incapability, negative feelings, recurrent pains with unknown origins, negative evaluation of one's self, and flight from unknown or even known situations, and finally results in isolation and loneliness.

English as a Foreign Language in Iran

Generally, English is an inseparable part of the Iranian curriculum, and is taught at public and private schools. Public schools offer it from the guidance school level[2] and private schools offer it from elementary school. It is the formal foreign language chosen by the government to be taught at schools (Arabic is the other formal foreign language of the Iranian education system). At the university level, English is the supplementary medium of instruction (besides Farsi). English courses are offered at different levels as prerequisite, general, and English for Special Purposes (ESP). It is emphasized for certain teaching groups (e.g. medical, paramedical, and engineering students). In addition, there are many English classes in Iranian society that offer other English preparatory courses at the elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced levels. Furthermore, TOEFL[3] and IELTS[4] preparatory courses have gained more popularity during the last few years in Iran.

In spite of the popularity of the English language in Iran, I did not find my Iranian Farsi-speaking students to be that successful in communicating through this medium, and they lacked sufficient fluency in listening, speaking, reading,

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[2] The Iranian education system is divided into kindergarten, pre-school (1 year), elementary school (5years), guidance school (3 years), secondary school (3 years), and pre-university (1 year preparation for those who want to take part in universities entrance exam).

[3] Test of English as a Foreign Language

[4] International English Language Testing System

and writing in English. Iranian immigrants who come to Canada (newcomers) seem to have similar difficulties. Moreover, regardless of the popularity of the English language in Iran, my firsthand experience in Canada showed that some Iranian immigrant adult ESL learners are prone to ESL anxiety.

General Overview

During last 30 years, it has been confirmed that attention to affect enhances language learning (Rossiter, 2003). In addition, the relationship between anxiety and education has been investigated previously, but the relationship between ESL and anxiety has only gained more interest in the last two decades (MacIntyre, 1995a). Language anxiety is a social anxiety that stems from the social and communicative aspects of language learning (MacIntyre, 1995a). This anxiety not only influences learners' literacy, but for school students, it also affects their mastery of all other subjects such as social studies, mathematics, and science (Durkin, 1995). I believe that this anxiety affects all areas of second language learners' lives. Not only do these learners struggle with their still-developing language and literacy in English, but also they suffer from societal pressures that keep them behind the mainstream of the second language society.

One of the major sources of distress or anxiety is changing sociocultural environments. This is not only because of the influence of the second language per se, but also as Zuckerman and Spielberger (1976) pointed out, because changing one's environment holds potential for anxiety inherently, and can act as

a great source of threat to one's self. Anxiety disrupts cognitive systems related to personal identity (Zuckerman & Spielberger, 1976).

Likewise, Schaffer (1978) proposed diverse reasons for distress; for example, geographical mobility (moving from one community to another), role transition, and lifestyle change. These states are prevalent among immigrants. They have changed their place of living, they are separated from their significant others (e.g. parents, close relatives, and friends), their social and cultural roles have changed abruptly and immensely, and they have gone through major lifestyle changes, all of which are greatly anxiety provoking. As Bowlby (1973) stated, separation is a source of distress among most social species. Immigrants' detachment from their original states of life and their residence in a new environment are the major sources of socio-cultural threat (cited in McReynolds, 1976).

The process of immigration thus affects immigrants emotionally. Interestingly, from the point of etymology, the term emotion is derived from the Latin *e+ movere*, which means to migrate or transfer from one place to another. It was also used to refer to states of agitation (Averill, 1976). It indicates that the terms immigration and emotion have a common root that could be used to show the changing place and at the same time refers to emotional instability from which immigrants suffer during the first years of immigration. In addition, formerly, from the ancient Greek to the middle of the 18th century, emotions were called passions. The term passion is taken from the Latin, *pati* (to suffer), which

means that the individual is undergoing or suffering from some change that happens to her (Averill, 1976).

It is worth mentioning that emotional state (emotion) is a complex feeling with psychic, somatic and behavioural components, that is related to affect and mood, or any strong feelings such as anxiety, excitement, distress, happiness, sadness, love, hatred, fear, or anger, combined with all human experiences. Emotion has a great influence on learning (Bourne, Dominowski, Loftus & Healy, 1986; Hertel & Hardin, 1990; Rathus, 1990), information processing, and memory (Ellis, 1990; Hedl, 1986; Hertel & Hardin, 1990). As well, ESL anxiety greatly affects information processing stages, memory recall, and learning.

Other considerations in the field of emotions are the ideas of Kaplan and Sadock (1991), who believed that emotional states and their expressions are regulated by biological, cultural, and seasonal influences. Biologically, emotions are affected by periodic shifts and drive-related processes. Emotional expressions to the same life events are variable from culture to culture. Also, seasonal changes in light and the prevalence of negative ions in the air change emotional states (Kaplan & Sadock, 1991). All of these are prevalent among Iranian immigrants who move to British Columbia. They are under the influence of their biological states, they have different cultural perspectives, and at the same time, they, like others, confront dramatic weather conditions, especially lots of rain that is sometimes depressing. All of these impact their anxious states and aggravate their learning situation. Generally, this anxious state is related to intrapersonal processes and interpersonal processes, which are under the

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influence of culture and society. And society, from the point of physical, structural, material, ecological environment, and human relationships, greatly influences anxiety (Bigdeli & Bai, 2007).

Sociocultural Milieu

> The experience of separateness arouses anxiety; it is indeed, the source of all anxiety. Being separate means being cut off, without any capacity to use my human powers. Hence, to be separate means to be helpless, unable to grasp the world– things and people–actively; it means that the world can invade me without my ability to react. Thus, separateness is the source of intense anxiety. Beyond that, it arouses shame and the feeling of guilt (Fromm, 1956, p. 8).

This separateness is definitely experienced by immigrants who suffer a bilateral separateness, being separate from their previous ties (especially from their powerful identities), and at the same time feeling separate from the host society because of their language insufficiency and their new unfamiliar identity. This aggravated separateness is part of their ESL anxiety.

Another significant factor in ESL anxiety is lack of empathy by English speakers, a lack of understanding or sensitivity to immigrants' states of mind. There is an empathic resonance that helps individuals to simulate internal models of actions and feelings that others might be experiencing or thinking. In understanding how another person sees the world, due to his or her unique life circumstances and experience, a sense of connectedness and mutual understanding arises (Gilbert, 2005). This sense is missing for these immigrants and a sense of not being understood is a significant provoker of anxiety, which becomes especially critical in English environments.

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Eric Fromm (1956) suggested that the "interpersonal union achievement" is necessary for a successful "intrapersonal union achievement" or "self-love ". If one can achieve self-love from deep inside and make it the most important passion of her life, one can handle anxieties as well as possible. For Fromm, one has to unite the internal and external forces to achieve the inter-intra union and self-encompassing love that is necessary for her successful survival. Lack of successful interpersonal achievement leads to human separateness and"...the deep sense of insecurity, anxiety, and guilt" occur (Fromm, p. 86).

Here, I will explain Vygotsky's and Bakhtin's sociocultural theories in brief. Sociocultural theory is a topic that is beyond the scope of this thesis, but because of the importance of the sociocultural dimensions of anxiety, I decided to review it briefly.

Sociocultural Theories

According to Bakhtin (1981), language is not a neutral medium but a difficult and complicated process. Second language learning is a [an emotive] complex dynamic phenomenon, a process of learning a new language and acquiring a new culture as well (McGroarty, 1998; Norton, 2000; Toohey, 2000) that not only has the complexities of learning the first language, but also carries the influential impacts of the new sociocultural milieu that increases its complexity.

In addition, Bakhtin (1986) believed that to acquire a language is related to developing different voices to "(re) construct utterances for our own purposes from the resources available to us within and through our social identities, in

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many and varied interactive practices through which we live our lives" (Hall, 1995, p. 218). In the case of these women, I believe that to achieve different voices at least at the very beginning, they need a preliminary communicative voice rather than keeping silent. The voices shouted through their entire minds, bodies and lived experiences are in their own language, or mostly in the form of silence, and therefore are unheard in the second language and mostly ignored in the host society. Even their immediate family members do not hear through their silences or objections. In other words, they have few, if any, resources available to convey their ideas, and for this lack of language proficiency, their social identities are jeopardized or reduced to non-capable and victimized identities.

To learn how to communicate through the second language effectively, these women need to be actively involved in the sociocultural practices of the society from which they are exempted due to their lack of language proficiency. In my opinion, it is a vicious cycle: they do not have the necessary tools to communicate and learn the cultural language of the society, and, on the other hand, since they do not have the opportunity to learn the cultural language of the society, they do not find opportunities to acquire the tools.

Their discourses of anxiety are part of their 'transcendental identity' that is emerging due to their lived experience. It is due to their 'situated lived experience', an experience through which they live in the host society that is explicitly in conflict with their previous dominant experience in their country of origin. Their dominant identities lack power, agency, and authority as a result of

their lack of language proficiency, and this is contrary to their dominant identity that they acquired during their life challenges previous to immigration.

In addition, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development sociocultural theory (1978) might be helpful in theorizing some of what these women need, or could benefit from. Their "potential development level"is beyond their "actual development level" (Vygotsky, 1978) provided that they have the opportunity to experience less anxiety and employ their capacities in interaction with more skilled peers.

Discussion

During our lives, we experience positive, negative, and neutral feelings towards others, our different life situations, and ourselves. Sometimes a feeling is encouraging and helps promote our situation, and sometimes the same feeling impedes our success and is destructive. One of the feelings that greatly influences all aspects of our lives is anxiety. It has become one of the major mental health issues that need prompt attention and relief[5].

Physiological changes in the body during anxiety or internal feelings of anxiety sometimes are extremely dominant and may lead to unrest, sleeplessness, or even death (Hubbard & Workman, 1998). These feelings are the result of mind and body interaction. Mind and body are so closely related to

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[5]According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) one in seven Americans suffer from anxiety disorders and it is the number one mental health problem in U.S. society. (Lerner, 2000 as cited in Kline and Silver, 2004).

each other that we can say they are different sides of the same coin, and the experience of our embodied anxious feelings is the result of their interaction.

Although small amounts of anxiety can be useful, too much anxiety leads to physical or emotional breakdown, and inter-personal difficulties. Anxiety overload leads to impaired perceived reality, difficulties in information processing (remembering, reasoning, problem solving), and deficient decision-making (Schaffer, 1978). High anxiety lowers the ability to process information, and when anxiety is low, information processing capacity is maximal. In addition, it seems that during stressful states, intrapersonal and interpersonal clashes appear at the same time. However, I assume that considerable unwanted unpleasant intrapersonal changes precede interpersonal conflicts. In addition, it is noteworthy that in new life situations, and in instances in which one is conditioned to a similar unpleasant stimulus, the anxiety response is the same.

Research Questions

Learning a second language is a complex phenomenon that is accompanied by emotion. ESL anxiety has been shown to exist as a part of ESL teaching and learning contexts, and, in multicultural societies, being an immigrant intensifies the case. It is therefore important for ESL educators to understand how ESL learners deal with this complex phenomenon. For these reasons, I have interviewed a sample of Iranian immigrant women in Canada, hoping that in the light of understanding their anxiety, I could develop a framework that could help ESL educators and ESL learners in their struggle to become more successful in ESL contexts. Therefore, this study tries to answer the following questions:

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(1) What is the lived experience of learning English as a second language like for Iranian immigrant women?

(2) How can the existing dimensions of this lived experience help promote English as a second language curriculum design for this group to be conceptualized?

Structure of the Chapters

One of the contributions of this thesis is that it examines anxiety from three disciplinary perspectives: physiological, psychological, and philosophical. Previously documented research has dealt with psychological and physiological issues but the philosophical domain has not been investigated in this regard. In my thesis, I will approach understanding anxiety from a philosophical point of view, which is an unusual approach to the topic, but one that I believe holds great promise for addressing ESL anxiety.

My second chapter deals with the psychology and physiology of anxiety, and its commonalities among individuals. Then, I illustrate the impacts of the psychology and physiology of anxiety on learning English as a second language and its influence on the life of ESL learners. In this chapter, I describe the underpinning structures of psychology and physiology in detail. Psychological theories that are related to stress and anxiety will be reviewed, and physiological signs and symptoms of ESL anxiety will be discussed in detail. I also argue that the general principles of physiology and psychology of anxieties are common to those that show up in the event of ESL anxiety.

In the third chapter, I review ESL anxiety as an emerging area of research in ESL teaching and learning contexts. In this chapter, I review previous research on ESL anxiety and I present theoretical perspectives that investigate learners in formal contexts of ESL teaching and learning.

The fourth chapter describes my research methodology. In this chapter, I explain qualitative research methodology with specific focus on ethnography, phenomenology, case study, and grounded theory. In addition, I explain the rationale and purpose of applying these methodologies to perform this research.

In chapter 5, I introduce my seven participants, who are all Iranian immigrant women. I present excerpts from their interviews, their experiences of ESL anxiety, and their attitudes toward this specific construct. I employ the participants' discourses of anxiety as a tool to show the importance of a broad framework that considers anxiety from psychological, physiological, and philosophy perspectives. I draw administrators', educators', and teachers' attention to immigrant women's ESL anxious states, and its connection to their value systems, and their self-discovery. I believe helping our learners to become aware of their limitations and potential adjustment to daily life challenges will promote their learning.

The sixth chapter deals with the philosophy of ESL anxiety. I review the philosophical framework of ESL anxiety and show the relationship of ESL anxiety to current psychoanalytical theories, existentialist, and Buddhist diverse perspectives.

In chapter 7, Finally, I will propose a "Triune model of anxiety reduction for learning English as a second language" (Bigdeli & Bai, 2007) as an interactive parallel-processing model that is at work in teaching and learning contexts with the eventual goal of building a comprehensive, multidimensional model of anxiety reduction. It is hoped that this new model will complement previous theories in the area of anxiety reduction.

Summary

In ESL teaching and learning, the general characteristics of the ESL anxiety construct are similar among anxious ESL learners. However, ESL learners are individually different and they are uniquely involved with ESL anxiety in accordance with their thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and expectations. ESL anxiety has consequences for ESL learners. As ESL educators, one of our major roles is to lessen our learners' fears and anxieties. Poorly equipped ESL learners are condemned to suffer and prolong their learning, and those who are well equipped adapt better to this anxiety; by employing appropriate coping mechanisms they could overcome the anxiety barriers. They will be successful, and they will promote their success and that of society.

CHAPTER 2: PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY OF ANXIETY

Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of major elements of psychology and physiology of emotions with a specific focus on anxiety. Any substantive discussion of anxiety presupposes some understanding of the psychology and physiology of emotions and anxiety. At the very beginning, before presenting different aspects of ESL anxiety, I will define psychology, physiology, and psychophysiology to give a better understanding of these fields. In the following sections, I will discuss various meanings of emotion in relation to anxiety. Finally, I will present a general overview of the psychology and physiology of anxiety.

Psychology, like education, is the field that is concerned with mental processes and behaviour (Berube et al., 1997). Physiology is the field of science that provides researchers, especially educationalists, a common frame of reference to deal with "the functions of the living organism and its parts, and of the physical and chemical factors and processes involved" (Dorland's Medical Dictionary, 2007). In addition, the science of physiology assesses the functions of the body organs and their interaction with the environment (Ziada, 2000). Psychology and physiology together make a field of physiological psychology[6]

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[6] Psychophysiology, biopsychology, and behavioural neuroscience

commonly called psychophysiology that is devoted to understanding of the physiology of behaviour.

One aspect of the importance of physiology of behaviour in teaching and learning contexts is that it could be used to focus on different aspects of physiological behaviour during the experience of ESL anxiety and its effects on successful teaching and learning. ESL anxiety is deeply rooted in the mind, body, and emotions of ESL learners and psychophysiology of anxiety provides means for studying this phenomenon.

Physiology of Emotion and Anxiety

> *As I encounter this situation I feel so upset and miserable. My heart pounds badly, I feel an acute pain in my abdomen, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, low blood pressure, fainting…. Sometimes I have this urgency to go to the washroom as soon as possible. I feel this situation with all my cells. To get rid of this fear and pain I like to cry. It is unbelievable I mean how I feel. I do not know what is going on but I see my body reacts to this situation intensely.*
> *(Adeleh, 2006, personal interview).*

There are universalities among human beings regardless of their society, culture, race, ethnicity, age, and sex. Human bodies, as kindred entities, often show similar signs and symptoms to similar life experiences. The language of the body is connected to the psychology, physiology, and philosophy of its existence. The physiological and psychological correlates of emotions seem to be nearly the same among all individuals. A major part of this common language of human beings relates to emotions, of which humankind essentially shares the physiological expressions or bodily manifestations. Of course, there are cultures

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where emotional expression is accepted and cultures where emotional expression is suppressed. Even within cultures, these binary emotional expressive values can be gender-oriented. However, the underlying physiology of anxiety is common to human beings.

Not only the universe but also each human being is a macrocosm. There are different complexities inside each human being and the human body is as sophisticated as the universe. The private sphere of the body is in a constant relation to the public sphere of the world. Notably, there are many mysterious unknowns about this personal private sphere. Individual differences as a part of this personal private sphere are enormous, but there are commonalities that should not be ignored. Through their life, human beings experience some common states. For example, we experience common feelings, sensations, or in other words emotions (e.g., anxiety, anger, happiness, hatred) that are universal among us.

Among emotions, anxiety affects individuals in a positive (excitatory) or negative (inhibitory) way. Both ways lead to unwanted unpleasant imbalance in the normal state of mind and body[7] although they lead to very different results. Anxiety is an inseparable part of human life, and it greatly influences personal and social functioning. The causes of anxiety are intra-personal (related to individual characteristics), inter-personal (due to relationship with others), and extra-personal (under the influence of environmental factors). In the process of anxiety, our "self" becomes threatened. In this challenge when individuals do not

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[7] Homeostasis is used to describe this "normal" or " neutral" state.

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find a suitable way to overcome it, anxiety often results in isolation and loneliness. Emotion is a complex feeling with psychic, somatic, and behavioural components related to affect and mood, or any strong feelings such as anxiety, excitement, distress, happiness, sadness, love, hatred, fear, or anger, combined with all human experiences. Emotion has a great influence on learning (Bourne, et al., 1986; Hertel & Hardin, 1990; Rathus, 1990), information processing, and memory (Ellis, 1990; Hedl, 1986; Hertel & Hardin, 1990).

Clore, Ortony and Foss (1987) and Lazarus (1991) suggested that emotions usually are relatively standard (negative and positive): those that result from harms, losses, and threats (e.g., anger, anxiety, fear, guilt) or those that result from benefits, attaining goals, or subjective movement toward them (e.g., happiness, joy). In addition to these groups there are some borderline case emotions (e.g. hope) and non-emotions (e.g., challenge, alertness) (Clore et al., 1987; Lazarus, 1991).

From another perspective, Kaplan and Sadock (1991) believed that emotional states and their expressions are regulated by biological and cultural influences. Biologically, emotions are affected by periodic shifts (e.g., weather conditions or physiological changes) and drive-related processes. Also, they argued that seasonal changes in light and the prevalence of negative ions in the air change emotional states. They also observed that emotional reactions to the same events change variably from culture to culture (Kaplan & Sadock, 1991).

From an environmentalist point of view, Lazarus (1991) argued that emotion is not generated per se by the factors in the environment or by intra –

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psychic processes but by person-environment relationships that change over time and circumstances. Acute emotions are reactions to status of goals in everyday adaptation encounters and in our over all lives. For Lazarus, emotion is due to the interplay between internal mental processes and external environmental factors (Lazarus, 1991).

Most writers agree that anxiety, as a negative emotion, is a state of uneasiness and apprehension; a state of intense, often disabling apprehension, uncertainty, and/or fear caused by anticipating something threatening (Berube et al., 1997), which mostly arises from psychological and social (situational) causes (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). Gower (2004) has found that anxiety results in deficient inductive reasoning, slowed decision latencies, shallow depth processing, reduced memory span, impaired attention control, biased memory recall for negative event, mis- or non-achievement, incapability, and mal-performance. The behavioural dimension of anxiety includes reactions such as increases in sympathetic nervous system arousal, inhibited actions, and attempts to escape the situation (Levitt, 1980, cited in MacIntyre, 1995a).

Aubrey Lewis (1967) characterized anxiety as a subjective unpleasant emotional state accompanying fear, terror, horror, alarm, fright, panic, trepidation, dread, and scare, in reaction to a recognizable threat. It is directed towards the future. It follows bodily sensations such as dryness of mouth, sweating, horripilation (the bristling of body hair), tremor, vomiting, palpitation, giddiness, abdominal pain, chest pain, tightness in the throat, difficulty in breathing, weakness in the legs, running in panic, agitation, screaming, sudden defecation

and other physiological and biochemical functions. He considered anxiety as normal (exam anxiety), pathologic (an anxiety neurosis or anxiety state), mild or severe, mainly detrimental to thought or action, but in some respects advantageous, episodic or persistent, physical or psychogenic, occurring by itself or accompanying other mental disorders, and affecting perception and memory during the attack (cited in Kelly, 1980).

Cattell and Scheier (1960) coined the terms state anxiety (temporary, momentary, transient and situational) and trait anxiety (proneness due to personality characteristics). Spielberger (1983) divided anxiety into state anxiety as an immediate, transitory emotional experience with immediate cognitive effects that is marked by feelings of worry, apprehension, nervousness, and tension. It manifests itself in response to a particular situation. Trait anxiety, on the contrary is a stable individual difference in predisposition to become anxious in a wide range of situations (cited in MacIntyre, 1995a). It is a rather stable personality characteristic (MacIntyre, 1995a, Young, 1986). Furthermore, Levitt (1990) argued that state anxiety reveals itself in different ways: for example, in a personal report, as physical or physiologic involuntary reactions, and voluntary gross motor behaviour or absence of behaviour.

MacIntyre (1995a) argued that most theorists agree on the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components of socially based anxiety. He defined social anxiety as feelings of tension and discomfort, negative self-evaluation, and a tendency to withdraw in the presence of others. Cognitive effects of anxiety are increases in distracting self-related cognition, expectations of failure, and a

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decrease in cognitive processing ability (MacIntyre, 1995a). In other studies, researchers investigated the effects of genetic factors on anxiety. These investigations accompanied with twin studies showed the genetic transmission of anxiety symptoms in human beings (Kelly, 1980).

Human Physiology

The human body has self and species preservative systems. These systems are under the control of the autonomic and hormonal systems. They help us mentally, physically and emotionally to become aware of others and ourselves. Emotions affect our awareness of others and ourselves. Certain brain structures (prefrontal cortex, cingulate cortex, the ventral vagal complex), the autonomic nervous system, and the hormonal system (oxytocin, cortisol) are important parts of the species-preservative system (Wang, 2005).

Kelly (1980) believed emotional states lead to involuntary or autonomic adaptation of the body. Sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems are involved in this process. Reactions to emotions in the majority of people are mostly due to sympathetic activity. The major neural systems mediating anxiety are the neocortex, the limbic system, and the reticular activating system in the brainstem (Kelly, 1980).

Early Theories of Neurophysiology of Emotions

William James- Carl Lange Theory of stimulus-response (1884-1885) was a precursor to neurophysiological theories of emotion. James & Lange stated that

when an individual perceives a stimulus, involuntary reactions are evoked and awareness of these reactions leads to the experience of emotion (Levitt, 1990).

In 1920s, Walter Canon and Philip Bard (1920s) proposed that the thalamus and hypothalamus mediate physiological reaction and emotional experience. Then, Papez and MacLean suggested that the limbic system is responsible for emotions (Levitt, 1990).

In 1951, Lindsley presented the Reticular Activating System (RAS) that is located at the center of the brain and is connected to the spinal cord. The RAS has a broad influence on the Central Nervous System (CNS) (Levitt, 1990; Marieb, 2001; Silverthorn, 2004).

Schachter and Singer in 1962 and Schachter in 1964 proposed a two-factor theory of emotion, which was a refinement of the James-Lange theory. This theory believed that emotion consists of physiological arousal and cognition that in a particular situation interpret physiological arousal; therefore, environment can have a significant impact on the emotional state (Eysenck, 1997).

In 1968, Routtenberg proposed two arousal systems. In Arousal System I Routtenberg suggests that the lowest brain and reticular formation functioning organize musculature, senses, and internal organs of responses of various organisms. Arousal System II comprises the limbic area in which personal experience of emotions and anxiety happens (Levitt, 1990).

All these neurophysiological theories indicate that emotions and anxiety are under the control of the brain (especially limbic system) and nervous

systems. These systems are closely related to the endocrine system and their relationship will be discussed in later sections.

Neurology of Anxiety

The nervous system can be divided into the central and the peripheral nervous systems (Fig.2.1). The central nervous system (CNS) consists of the brain and spinal cord, and regulates adrenocortical response to stress (Fig.2.1). The release of adrenocortical hormones is under the control of the anterior part of the pituitary gland in the brain. Through its adrenocorticotrophin (ACTH) hormone, it stimulates the adrenal cortex to produce cortical hormones under stressful situations. The limbic system is also involved in secretion of adrenocortical hormones since stimulation of the hypothalamus causes an increase in the amounts of ACTH (Kelly, 1980; Ziada, 2000).

Figure 2.1: Divisions of the nervous system
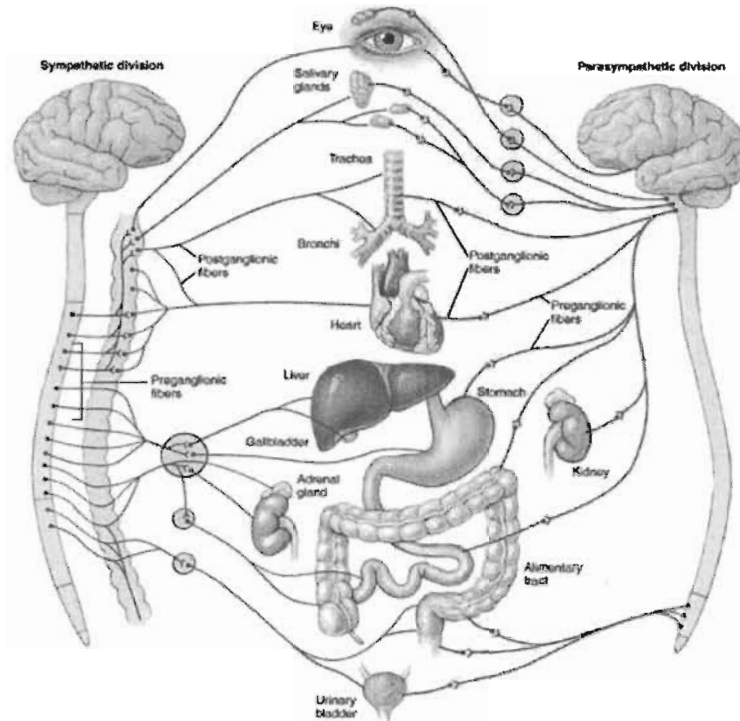
The autonomic nervous system (ANS) is a portion of the peripheral nervous system concerned with the regulation of smooth muscles in the skin, blood vessels, and eyes, in the walls and sphincters of gut, gall bladder, and urinary bladder. This system (ANS) controls blood pressure, body temperature, digestive functions, and other physiological functions. The autonomic nervous system can be divided into the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, which act opposite to each other (Fig.2.1). The sympathetic nervous system works when an organism is excited and is involved in activities largely associated with expenditure of energy from body reserves. The parasympathetic nervous system increases the body's supply of energy (Carlson, 2002).

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Limbic System

The limbic system (hippocampus, thalamus, hypothalamus, amygdala, cingulate cortex insula cortex) and orbitofrontal cortex are the brain structures that are involved in emotional responses (Fig.2.2). Broca in 1878 discovered the limbic system (limbus, border, ring). It is located along the border between the cerebrum and the diencephalon (thalamus and hypothalamus) and is concerned with emotions, the regulation of autonomic and endocrine functions, motivation and learning (Carlson, 2002; Janson Cohen & Wood, 2000; Kelly, 1980; Marieb, 2001; Silverthorn, 2004).

Figure 2.2: The Limbic system
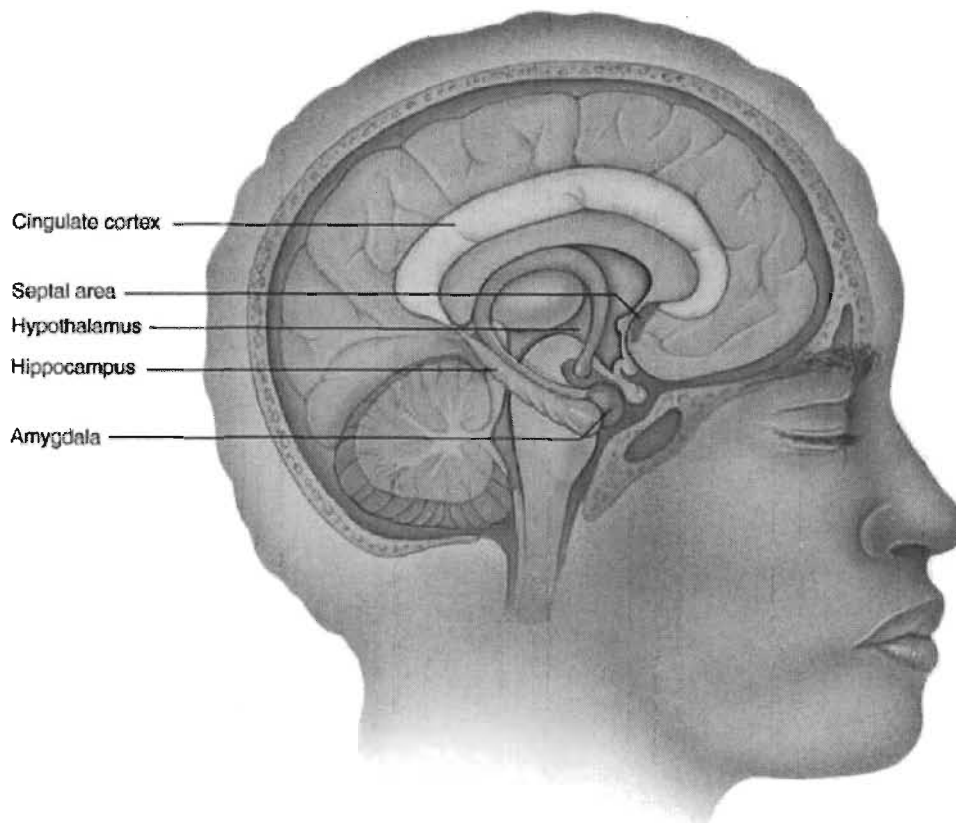
The hippocampus[8], hypothalamus, amygdala[9], and anterior cingulate gyrus (Fig.2.2) are main structures of the limbic system that are concerned with emotions, autonomic and endocrine control (Carlson, 2002; Janson Cohen & Wood 2000; Kelly, 1980; Ziada, 2000). The orbitofrontal cortex plays a crucial role in emotions and stimulation of the hypothalamus and produces responses to anxiety.

Hippocampus

The Hippocampus functions in learning and the formation of long-term memory (Silverthorn, 2004), and it is "one of the most memory related structures in the brain". The hippocampus is also in association with episodic memory retrieval (Homma, et al., 2001, p. 4). The hippocampus holds a large number of glucocorticoid receptors (Borer, 2003), and any damage to the hippocampus severely impairs learning ability (Ziada, 2000).

Thalamus

Thalamus (Inner room, bedroom) (Marieb, 2001; Silverthorn, 2004) is the highest subcortical sensory center, and all sensory signals except olfactory ones on their way to the cerebral cortex pass the thalamus. It plays an important role in emotional reactions, coding, storing and recalling memories (Ziada, 2000).

Hypothalamus

The hypothalamus occupies less than 1% of the total brain volume. It is the center for homeostasis and contains centres for various behavioural drives. The hypothalamus controls sympathetic and parasympathetic divisions of the

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[8]Called 'sea horse' due to its resemblance in form to sea horse
[9]Called 'almond' due to its resemblance in form to almond

autonomic nervous system and endocrine system including anterior and posterior pituitary glands, and integration of species-typical behaviour (Janson Cohen & Wood, 2000; Kelly, 1980).

The hypothalamus maintains body homeostasis by controlling body temperature (shivering and sweating), controlling of body osmolarity, water and electrolyte balance, thirst and drinking behaviour, sleep, and some emotions. Also, the hypothalamus influences the heart-beat (pounding heart), blood pressure, force and rate of heartbeat. In addition, it controls digestive tract motility, respiratory rate and depth, eye pupil size, the contraction and relaxation of the walls of the blood vessels, vasopressin hormone secretion, other vital body functions such as regulation of appetite and food intake (hunger and satiety) in response to changing blood levels of glucose and insulin, pallor, dry mouth, control of cathecolamine release from the adrenal medulla, maintenance of blood glucose concentration. The hypothalamus affects behaviours and emotions involved in perceptions of pleasure, fear, rage, sex drive, and regulation of sleep-wake cycles (Janson Cohen & Wood, 2000; Marieb, 2001; Silverthorn, 2004; Van de Graaff, Fox, & Lafleur, 1997; Ziada, 2000).

Amygdala

The amygdaloid complex functionally has three areas: medial, lateral, and basolateral. Stimulation of the amygdala creates flight behaviour; changes in respiration, pupil dilation, and cardiovascular function changes are less. Through endocrine studies Kim and Umbach (1973) showed that electrical stimulation of amygdala could produce a considerable rise in cortisol (cited in Kelly, 1980, p.

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209). The amygdala mediates the self-preservative system, which becomes activated under negative emotional states (Wang, 2005). The amygdala assesses danger and elicits the fear response (Marieb, 2001). A vast amount of research on the amygdala shows that this structure is involved in conscious and unconscious fear, conditioned and learned fear, autonomic arousal in response to fear (Dalton, Kalin, Grist, & Davidson, 2005).

Cingulate Cortex

" [T] he cingulate cortex, specifically the anterior cingulate cortex, serves as a point of integration for visceral, attentional and affective information that is critical for self-regulation and adaptability" (Thayer & Lane, 2000 as cited in Wang, 2005, p. 77). The cingulated gyrus plays a role in expressing our emotions through gestures and resolving mental conflicts when we are frustrated (Marieb, 2001).

Insula Cortex

The insula cortex is involved in autonomic arousal, awareness and control, pain perception, and fear responses (Dalton, et al., 2005).

Endocrinology of Anxiety

Anxiety, like other emotions, consists of behavioural, autonomic, and hormonal responses. These bring catabolic changes in the body, which move the body's energy resources. In anxious states the sympathetic nervous system becomes active, and adrenal glands secrete epinephrine, norepinephrine, and steroid hormones. Under emotional and physical stress, secretion of these hormones is increased (Carlson, 2002; Selye, 1974).

The adrenal gland has two parts: cortex and medulla. The adrenal gland medulla produces catecholamines adrenaline [10] and noradrenaline[11]. It is believed that physiological responses to anxiety are due to adrenaline (Levitt, 1990). Adrenaline affects glucose metabolism and causes nutrients in muscles to be available to provide energy for strenuous exercise.

Figure 2.3: Endocrine system
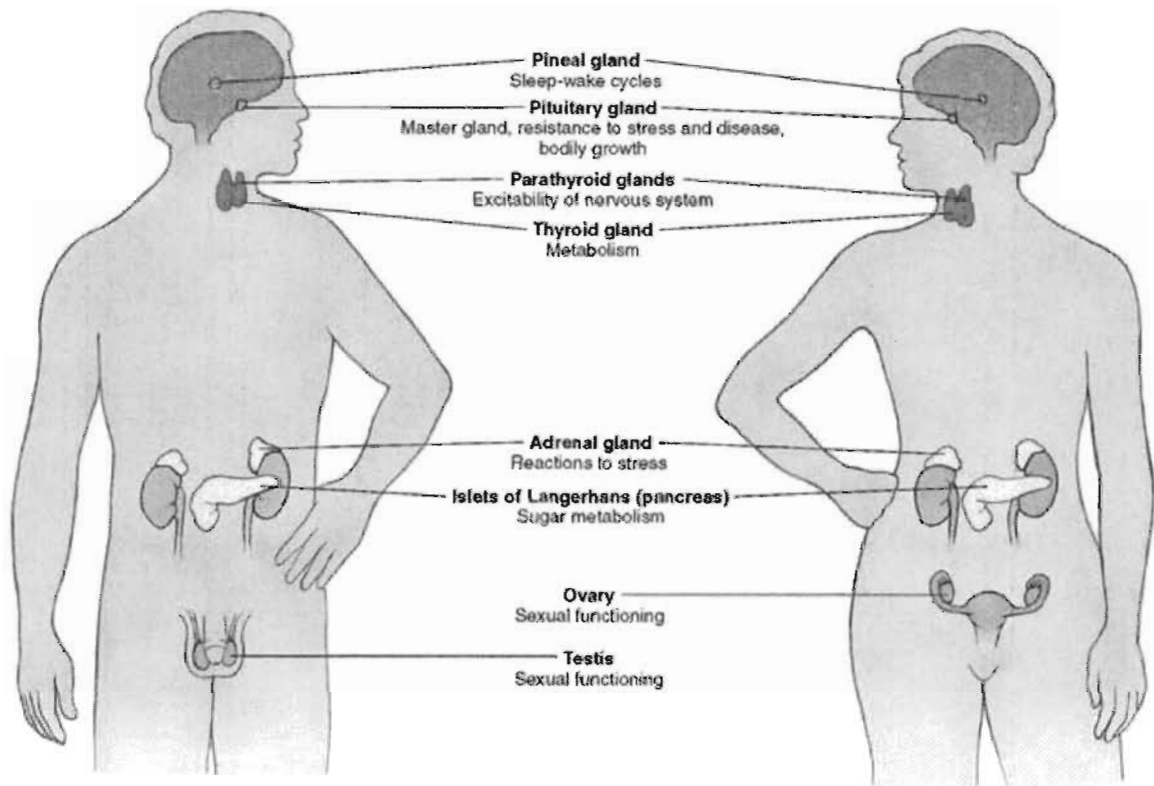
www.mhhe.com/socscience/intro/ibank/set1.htm,images,retrieved August,2007
Copy right permission McGraw-Hill.

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[10] Epinephrine
[11] Norepinephrine

Along with noradrenaline, adrenaline increases blood flow to the muscles, increasing the output of the heart and blood pressure (Carlson, 2002). The adrenal gland cortex excretes a number of steroid hormones such as hydrocortisone, cortisol, 17-ketosteriods, and 17-hydroxyketosteroids, which are called glucocorticoids. Most of the harmful effects of stress are due to prolonged secretion of glucocorticoids (Carlson, 2002; Kelly, 1980; Selye, 1976).

Glucocorticoids affect glucose metabolism, help to break down protein and convert it into glucose, make fats available for energy, increase blood flow, and stimulate behavioural responses. Long-term harmful effects of glucocorticoids are increased blood pressure, damage to muscle tissue, steroid diabetes, infertility, inhibition of growth, inhibition of the inflammatory responses, suppression of the immune system and antiallergic responses (Carlson, 2002; Kelly, 1980; Ziada, 2000).

Increased adrenal cortical activity is seen in response to different life situations (e.g., interviews, examinations, driving, flying, sickness). In anxiety states, plasma and urinary corticoid levels will raise. Pleasant emotional experiences also increase catecholamines excretion. The intensity of emotional reaction is important in secretion of catecholamines. The situation in which subject finds itself and its cognitive factors determine the quality of emotional response (Kelly, 1980).

Anxiety increases sympathetic stimulation with an increase in heart rate, bundle of His [12] conductivity, and contraction of heart muscle that leads to high blood pressure. Stimulation of the motor cortex and hypothalamus of the limbic system of the brain increases sympathetic nervous system activity. This increase is associated with an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and muscle blood flow. Anxiety can also produce hyperventilation, shallow breathing, disorganized respiratory rhythms, and breathlessness (Kelly, 1980).

There are other crucial hormones that affect anxiety. One of the important hormones in regulating anxiety is oxytocin, which is a neurotransmitter in the brain and a hormone secreted from posterior pituitary gland. Oxytocin secretion is crucial for the self-preservative system. In the context of social support, oxytocin is more effective in reducing anxiety (Gilbert, 2005). In addition, high levels of thyroid hormones are anxiety provoking. Hyperthyroidism [13] as a well-known cause of anxiety can cause panic attacks, tremors, insomnia, palpitations, and other symptoms of anxiety.

Furthermore, the female hormones estrogen and progesterone affect anxiety. Progesterone has breakdown products that have effects similar to benzodiazepine medications like clonazepam and diazepam (www.adaa.com, 2006) and it reduces anxiety symptoms. In stressful situations, progesterone

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[12] The bundle of His is a collection of heart muscle cells specialized for electrical conduction that transmits the electrical impulses from the Atrio Ventricular node (located between the atria and the ventricles) to the point of apex of the fascicular branches. It provides the electrical conduction between the atria and ventricles. The electrocardiogram (ECG) deflection of His bundle is used as a marker to distinguish normal from abnormal conduction. These specialized muscle fibers in the heart were named after the Swiss cardiologist Wilhelm His, Jr. , who discovered them in 1883(Luderitz, 2005).

[13] Overactivity of the thyroid gland

output reduces, while on the other hand, the estrogen to progesterone ratio changes in favor of estrogen, which leads to insomnia and anxiety. This phenomenon after a few years leads to adrenal gland exhaustion, blood sugar imbalance, hormonal imbalances, and chronic fatigue (www.drlam. com, 2006).

Limbic System and Endocrine Changes

The anterior parts of the limbic system are concerned with emotional and social behaviour and mainly elicit autonomic responses. The control of pituitary endocrine secretion (plasma cortisol or aldosterone) is regulated by the hypothalamus, which is influenced by the frontal lobes (Kelly, 1980).

Neuroimmune System and Anxiety

Research on the effects of stress (e.g., anxiety) on the immune system shows that during stress the immune system is suppressed and the impacts of stress (e.g., anxiety) on the immune system are partially influenced by social support (Kosslyn et al., 2002).

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)

Hans Selye (1974) proposed a General Adaptation Syndrome or Biologic Stress Syndrome. During the 1940s-1950s he emphasized stress management coping mechanisms that lead to optimal health, happiness, and prolonged life. He argued that stress creates imbalance in the body, and the body response to this imbalance is resistance or tolerance. The involuntary biochemical responses during stress are identical to regulating voluntary interpersonal behaviour. According to his model, prolonged exposure to stress leads to psychological and

physical damage. He presented three stages for the General Adaptation Syndrome:

Alarm Stage: reaction of surprise and anxiety due to a new situation. Fight or flight reaction happens at this stage. A stressor such as anxiety disrupts body homeostasis and adrenal cathecolamine secretion happens (Hubbard & Workman, 1998; Selye, 1974).

Resistance Stage: the body tries to eliminate the stressor or learns to cope with the stressor and changes in homeostasis efficiently (Hubbard & Workman, 1998; Selye, 1974).

Exhaustion Stage: when resistance fails, depletion of energy reserves decreases sleep and rest; fatigue or even death may occur (Hubbard & Workman, 1998; Selye, 1974).

Psychology of Anxiety

In this section I will discuss the views of several influential psychologists who have made major contributions to the understanding of anxiety. The anxiety construct is not physical and tangible per se, but its manifestations are physical and tangible. It has been considered as the most pervasive psychological phenomenon of our time (Hoch & Zubin, 1950), the most important concept in psychoanalytic theory (Hall, 1954), and the official emotion of our time (Schelesinger, 1970, cited in Levitt, 1990).

Among those psychologists who studied anxiety, Freud, Goldstein, and Horney believed that anxiety is a "*diffuse* apprehension", and the essential

difference between fear and anxiety is that fear is a reaction to a particular danger. Anxiety, on the other hand, is an unspecific and vague reaction toward an unknown danger; in other words, it is objectless (May, 1977, cited in Levitt, 1990).

First I want to discuss Freud's views in more detail. According to Freud, anxiety is a common experience among all higher order species (Fischer, 1970). He viewed the birth experience as the first experience of human anxiety because neonate leaves the safe environment of the mother's body and comes to this world (Fischer, 1970; Levitt, 1990). In addition, Freud viewed human personality as holding three parts: the id, the ego, and the superego. The id is biological and instinctual drives; it is animal and the reservoir of instinctual urges. The ego is the place of anxiety that reasons, thinks, solve problems, and is human. It maintains emotional balance and prevents the conscious experience of anxiety arising from id and super ego threat. The super ego or conscience (Fischer, 1970; Levitt, 1990) is the faculty, power, or principle of moral goodness or blameworthiness of one's own conduct, intentions, or character, together with a feeling of obligation to do right or to be good or bad (Webster online, 2007). Furthermore, Freud divided anxiety into a) reality anxiety whose source exists in the external world and is synonymous with fear; b) neurotic anxiety that is a reaction to the threat of the id impulses; and, c) morality anxiety or a reaction to the threat from the super ego (Fischer, 1970; Levitt, 1990).

Neo-Freudian scholars like Harry Stack Sullivan, Karen Horney, Eric Fromm, and Abram Kardiner (1930s-1940s) "...changed the orientation of

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psychoanalysis from biological and instinctual to the cultural and environmental" (Levitt, 1990, p. 21). They believed that human personality development is more social than biological. They divided human anxiety into primary anxiety, much the result of threat to dependency needs to supporters; and, secondary anxiety, most of human anxiety and the consequence of defences employed against primary anxiety (Levitt, 1990).

The common point of the Freudian and Neo-Freudian schools was the belief that heredity is an influential factor affecting anxious states, although the Neo-Freudian scholars argued that environment, people, and culture are most important in manifestations of anxiety. They agreed that anxiety is a human social phenomenon that results from relations with others (Fischer, 1970).

The third major approach to anxiety is the ego-psychological one. This approach considers ego as mediator of instinctual drives and external reality. Amongst ego-psychologists, Jacobson (in Fischer, 1970) puts emphasis on the impacts of ego development on affects. She divided affects into four categories: those which 1) arise directly from tension in the id (e.g., sex, excitement and rage), 2) arise directly from tensions in the ego (e.g., reality fear, and physical pain), 3) are induced by tensions between the ego and the id (e.g., anxiety, shame, pity), and 4) are induced between the tensions of ego and superego, (e.g., guilt, and depression). In this view anxiety is a signal and an adaptive phenomenon that is required for equilibrium of the organism (Fischer, 1970).

Psychological Theories of Anxiety

Gray's theory of trait anxiety (1982) and Eysenck's theory of neuroticism (1967) showed the importance of hereditary factors in anxiety. They believed that inheritance contributed to 50 percent and 66 percent of anxiety, respectively. Eysenck (1967) argued that the visceral brain[14] is essential in individual differences of neuroticism. Comparatively, Gray (1982) proposed that it is the behavioural inhibition system[15] that leads to individual differences in trait anxiety (Eysenck, 1997).

Williams, Watts, MacLeod, and Mathews (1988, 1997) in their cognitive theory of anxiety proposed that 1) anxiety affects the passive, automatic encoding of retrieval, 2) trait anxiety and state anxiety are interactional, meaning that high trait anxiety directs attention to threat, and low trait anxiety directs attention away from threat, and 3) anxiety should be associated with implicit memory bias to produce more threat-related than neutral words (Williams, Watts, MacLeod, & Mathews, 1988, 1997).

Eysenck (1992) presented a cognitive theory of trait anxiety or hypervigilance theory. He argued that individuals high in trait anxiety have selective attentional bias, interpretive bias, and negative memory bias, which are more prominent when they are stressed (Eysenck, 1992).

Weinberger's (1990) repressor theory made a distinction between low anxiety individuals and repressors. According to his theory, repressors repress threatening memories and use neurotic level defense mechanisms such as

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[14] Hippocampus, amygdala, cingulum, septum and hypothalamus (Eysenck, 1997).

[15] Septo-hyppocampal system, its neocortical projection into the frontal lobe, and its monoaminergic afferents from the brain stem (ibid).

intellectualisation and denial. Their " …preoccupation with avoiding awareness of anxiety may interfere with effective coping and actually heighten behavioural and physiological indications of stress" (Eysenck, 1997, p. 24). They selectively avoid attending to their bodily sensations and interpret them in a non-threatening fashion (Eysenck, 1992).

Parkinson's (1994, 1995) four-factor theory of anxiety suggest that there are four different sources for emotional experience of anxiety: 1) cognitive appraisal of the situation, 2) high physiological arousal, 3) cognitions based on information stored in long-term memory, and 4) individual's own action tendencies and behaviour (Eysenck, 1992).

Discussion

The effects of anxiety are long lasting; even when the stressor is deleted, its effects remain. We remember our bad feelings (Selye, 1974) or good feelings about a particular situation even after years. We experience our emotions, such as happiness, hatred, anxiety, sorrow, sadness, through our body. By remembering our emotional experiences, our minds trigger the same feelings in our body. Our mind and body are closely related to each other and the experience of embodiment that ESL learners experience is the result of their interaction.

I believe that in any teaching and learning context, considering the physiological states of individuals is crucial, because it determines their overall bodily energy and the kind of emotional waves that are spread in the immediate environment. Physiological consciousness plays an important role in these

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contexts. It helps teachers to gain insight about the impact of their student's mental states on their bodies and vice versa. Recognition of these impacts and their consequent changes are necessary in all human interactions, as well between teacher and learner. Ignorance, neglect or lack of physiological recognition in educational settings will lead to an unsuccessful teaching and learning context. Acquiring knowledge and understanding about this issue is of crucial importance to prevent this unwanted disturbing state of mind and body in learners. Anxiety jeopardizes "self" and "identity" and may lead to severe damage to mental and physical health of those involved in teaching and learning contexts.

To become aware of psychophysiological influences of anxiety on learners in educational settings, different means are available. I will briefly discuss these measures in the subsequent sections.

Measures of Anxiety

There are different ways to measure anxiety: 1) subjective personal report or self-report of anxiety, questionnaires to measure trait or state anxiety, 2) the experimenter's observation of physiological changes in participants, 3) the experimenter's perceptions and evaluations of stimulus/stimuli conditions that arouse emotional response in participants, objective or behavioural observation or ratings, and 4) physiological measures of state anxiety. The systems involved in anxiety are skin, cardiovascular, respiration, endocrine, neurological, musculature, salivation, gastrointestinal, senses, and endocrine (Fischer, 1970, Levitt, 1990, Horwitz & Young 1991).

Physiological Measures of Anxiety

To measure major physiological bodily changes during anxiety different instruments such as, EEG (electroencephalography), ECG (electrocardiography), EOG (electrooculography), and GSR (Galvanic Skin Response) can be used. Each of these instruments provides information about involved systems of the brain, heart, eye, and skin that I discuss each in turn below.

Electroencephalography

Electroencephalography (EEG) is the neurophysiologic measurement of the electrical activity of the brain. Neurons within the cerebral cortex continuously generate electrical activity that can be recorded as electroencephalogram. An EEG is the collective expression of millions of action potentials from neurons (Van de Graaff, Fox, & Lafleur, 1997), which provides information about the electrical fluctuations between neurons and characterize the overall activity of the brain (Silverthorn, 2004).

Electrocardiography

Electrocardiography (ECG or EKG) is the recording of the electrical voltage in the heart. ECG shows the sum of the electrical potentials generated by all the heart cells at any moment. The electrical events of the ECG are associated approximately with the contraction and relaxation of the atria or ventricles (Webster online, 2007).

Electrooculography

Electrooculography (EOG) is a method used for measuring eye movements (Rohner, 2004). It is a record of the difference in electrical charge between the front and back of the eye that is correlated with eyeball movement. Electrodes that are placed on the skin near the eye are used to measure it (Webster online, 2007).

Galvanic Skin Response

Galvanic Skin Response (GSR) or electrodermal response (EDR) measurements show the activity of the eccrine sweat glands, with the concentration of these glands being the highest at the fingertips. This psychogalvanic reflex is based on the fact that emotional states lead to reflex increase in sweating. In other words, the skin's moisture due to sweat gland activity affects skin conductance. Stress (e.g. anxiety) increases sweat gland activity and skin conductance (Elkadi, 1984; Luria, 1987). "Spontaneous skin conductance is systematically related to additional factors, such as anxiety, perceptions of threat, or negative emotion more generally" (Pecchinenda & Smith, 1996, p. 499).

These physiological measurements are available in the field of ESL anxiety research in laboratory environments. In this research, I relied on subjective personal report (self-report) of Iranian immigrant women's about their ESL anxiety.

Summary

Anxiety is commonly experienced among human beings and the reasons that I chose physiological and psychological approaches toward anxiety are to get a better understanding about this phenomenon. It is part of our humanity and to acknowledge its importance is crucially important in different contexts, especially teaching and learning ones. There are positive and negative elements for anxiety and my focus in this research is on the unwanted consequences of this construct. I believe that whenever human beings encounter unsafe and insecure environments, their minds (soul, psyche), bodies (physic, physiology), and behaviour (attitude, belief system, philosophy) become involved and afflicted.

In this chapter, I adopted the distinct but interconnected paradigms of physiology and psychology to discuss the physiological and psychological manifestations of anxiety, which could be generalized to English as a second language anxiety. In addition, physiology and psychology share a common border, and together they impact learning anxiety, and in this case learning English as a second language. ESL anxiety is a state of mind, body, and behaviour, which emerges from human nature in confrontation with the second language in an English environment. I believe that it affects ESL learners broadly and if it is not dealt with properly, it will become the dominant second nature of these learners and will influence their being.

The psychophysiological dynamics of ESL anxiety shape ESL teaching and learning environments. A consideration of this phenomenon is necessary for

those who are involved in ESL teaching and learning situations to be aware of the disciplines that have studied anxiety and to consider the immense influences on mental health, physical health, social relations, understanding, motivation, and learning of ESL learners.

The importance of psychophysiology is that it influences information processing and the performance of learners. An uncomfortable body does not act as an appropriate medium for the mind. Bodily systems are interactive and they are affected in the interplay of anxiety and human physiology and psychology. Physiological and psychological imbalances due to ESL anxiety not only influence the body but also the mind, and finally hamper learning. Therefore, it is recommended that psychophysiological aspects of anxiety be considered in curriculum design and teacher training programs. Moreover, reconsidering the role of anxiety in environments of teaching and learning English as a second language is encouraged.

PART TWO:

A SOCIOCULTURAL STUDY
OF ESL ANXIETY

CHAPTER 3:
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE ANXIETY

Introduction

> *What is wrong with me? Why do I feel so incompetent and miserable? I am not the same very person. This new "I" is quite different from my strong "I". Why am I afraid of everyone and everything? Sometimes I feel this misery within all my cells immensely. Whenever I confront it something such as a poison is diffused along my body. Even thinking about these experiences makes me feel sick.*   *(Adeleh's Journal, 2004)*

The study of English as a Second Language anxiety is an emerging area of research in ESL education, which is interdisciplinary in nature insofar as it draws on and is informed by diverse perspectives of physiology, psychology, and philosophy. Previous research over the past three decades has confirmed the importance of attention to affect to enhance language learning, and anxiety has been considered one of the factors of success or failure in second or foreign language learning (Rossiter, 2003). In this regard, research on ESL and ESL anxiety investigates learners in formal contexts of language teaching and learning, in other words, in second language classrooms (Aida, 1994; Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, & Daley, 2000; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999; Phillips, 1992; Woodrow, 2006; Young, 1991; Zhang, 2001), and is not concerned with the mechanisms underlying and supporting physiological and psychological dimensions of anxious states. These

studies have involved learners from western and non-western languages such as French, German, Spanish, English, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, and Arabic.

In this study, physiological, and psychological paradigms of anxiety were examined to demonstrate various possibilities in ESL educational research. Accordingly, to investigate English as a second language anxiety, I interviewed a number of expatriate Iranian ESL learners (immigrant women) in the lower mainland of British Columbia, to develop a better understanding of the nature of ESL anxiety and its implications for language and literacy education among this group. It is hoped that this empirical exploratory study will shed some light on the nature of this phenomenon and expand its scope and implications.

Literature Review

ESL anxiety is a negative emotion, a state of an unwanted uneasiness and apprehension, uncertainty, and fear caused by anticipating threat to one's identity. It mostly arises from the psychological and social influences of the second language and the host society. ESL anxiety is related to different aspects of the second language and one's status in the new society. Although small amounts of ESL anxiety can be useful, inordinate amounts of prolonged ESL anxiety will lead to physical or emotional breakdown. As we have seen, anxiety leads to interpersonal difficulties; impaired perceived reality; deficient inductive reasoning; difficulties in remembering; reasoning; and problem solving; slowed decision latencies; shallow depth processing; reduced memory span; impaired attention control; biased memory recall for negative event; mis- or non-achievement; incapability; and mal-performance (Gower, 2004; Toffler (nd), as

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cited in Schaffer, 1978). These characteristics are predominant in ESL anxiety. An anxious ESL learner may suffer from negative self-image, forget even simple words or sentences, experience inattention, and finally encounter incapability and mal- performance that create a vicious cycle, which threatens the physical and mental health of ESL learners.

Anxiety and other emotional states play an important role in cognitive processes and learning, especially learning English as a second language. ESL anxiety, as an influential negative emotion, is related to success and failure in second language acquisition (Durkin, 1995; Krashen, 1989). Krashen (1976), in discussing the" Monitor Model" for adult second language acquisition, argues that to learn a new language, adults engage in two types of activities. The first one is called language acquisition. This activity is informal and unconscious and takes place in the same way as the children learn a new language. The second one is called language learning, which is formal and conscious and gives adults the ability to monitor their language output. Krashen believes that in second language learning adults use the language rules and patterns that they have been taught formally to edit their target language production. In other words, they have monitoring authority over their language learning (cited in Scovel, 1976). In addition, Krashen (2003) believes that anxiety is an affective filter that blocks the capacity to learn, inhibits learning, and engenders academic achievement. I believe that monitoring is greatly influenced by emotional states in general and anxiety in particular. In adult immigrant ESL learners, this monitoring ability is compromised under anxiety and in turn, it hampers successful language learning.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) showed that there is significant foreign language anxiety in response to at least some aspects of foreign language learning in classroom settings. However, it seems that in real life situations outside of classrooms, anxiety is intensified. In addition, some scholars believed that anxiety is an affective filter that blocks the capacity to learn, and that it endangers academic achievement (Krashen, 2003; Gower, 2004). On the other hand, some other scholars (e.g. Bailey, 1983) argued that a certain amount of anxiety facilitates the learning process and is a positive factor. In other words, [the] "anxiety construct is inherently ambiguous, it helps, hinders or both helps and hinders learning" (Ganschow & Sparks, 1996, p. 208). In immigrant cases, it seems that this anxiety has negative effects on health because it is not only due to confrontation with the second language and manifests itself as language anxiety, but it is also due to close contact with a new society in which the immigrant has to prove herself as a competent member.

The behavioural dimension of ESL anxiety is similar to other types of anxieties. It includes reactions such as increases in sympathetic nervous system arousal, inhibited actions, and attempts to escape the situation (Levitt, 1980, cited in MacIntyre, 1995a). For acceptable performance in language learning, enough anxiety is needed to arouse the sympathetic and parasympathetic components of the autonomic nervous system. However, too much anxiety is debilitating and motivates the learner to avoid the new learning task (Scovel, 1976) and not only jeopardizes physical and mental health of the learner but also inhibits learning.

On the basis of Spielberger's (1983) classification for state-trait anxiety, ESL anxiety could be regarded as a state anxiety that arises in response to a second language experience. Although it is a transitory emotional experience, it should not be underestimated because it predisposes the ESL learner to anxious states during diverse social encounters and if not dealt properly will never leave these sufferers alone.

Anxiety can also interfere in information processing, task performance and attention. ESL anxious learners must focus on the task at hand and react to it at the same time. On the other hand, non-anxious ESL learners must focus on their learning English and their capacities are geared toward it. But, in anxious ESL learners, anxiety competes with learning capacity, and as a result, they do not learn English as quickly as non-anxious ESL learners. Even in cases in which ESL learners hold linguistic knowledge of English, because of their anxious state they cannot use their English knowledge appropriately and in a timely fashion.

According to Tobias (1986), anxiety interferes with learning at three stages: input, processing, and output. During the input phase, anxiety causes attention deficit and poor initial processing. In the processing phase, rehearsal of new information is affected. And in the output phase, the retrieval of previously learned information is hampered (MacIntyre, & Gardner, 1986). Once more, this general theoretical foundation is closely related to language learning and could be applied in ESL learning environments.

Horwitz et al. (1986) have defined foreign language anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to

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classroom language arising from the uniqueness of the language learning processes. They believe that communication apprehension (fear or anxiety of communication with other person or persons), test anxiety (to view oneself as an inadequate in an evaluative situation), and fear of negative evaluation (fear of others' evaluation) are related to foreign language anxiety (Aida, 1994; Horwitz, et al., 1986; Saito, Garza, & Horwitz, 1999). Horwitz et al. (1986) pointed out:

> "Adult language learners' self-perceptions of genuineness in presenting themselves to others may be threatened by the limited range of meaning and affect that can be deliberately communicated…. Probably no other field of study implicates self-concept and self-expression to the degree that language study does" (p. 128).

Others believe that in the case of immigrants, this communication apprehension and negative evaluation and themselves are major factors that aggravate their anxious states. Anxious ESL learners do not recognize themselves and at the same time, others do not recognize them as they are. Recognition as an act of affirming and confirming another person (Bingham, 2001) or affirming and confirming one's self does not take place for anxious ESL learners. Recognition is "the act of recognizing or condition of being recognized; an awareness that something perceived has been perceived before; an acceptance as true or valid, as of a claim; attention or favourable notice" (Berube et al., 1997). Anxious immigrant ESL learners do not receive proper recognition since "to recognize is to affirm, validate, acknowledge, know, accept, understand, empathize, take in, tolerate, appreciate, see, identify with, find familiar…love" (Benjamin, 1988, p.16). This conflicts with their previous life experiences in which they had an image of themselves as capable and reliable persons.

Being recognized and acknowledged by others contributes to one's sense of self and affirms one's dignity. In non-recognition state (Bingham, 2001) ESL learners may find no affirmation, and therefore do not find themselves during the encounter with native speakers of the second language. And sometimes this ESL learner is mal-recognized; in other words, she is acknowledged in a way that disrespects her dignity and distorts her own self-image. ESL learners' voices are often not heard by other members of the society, they are ignored or mal-treated because of their silence and unheard voice. Also, non-recognition and mal-recognition are common phenomena among new ESL immigrants because, during the first years of immigration, others in the host country do not recognize ESL immigrants as capable adults. This is mostly the result of the linguistic incompetence and language barriers that hamper their efficient communication. These language barriers do not let them show their abilities in the new situation.

In this regard, I want to add to Bingham's (2001) typology that non-recognition and mal-recognition are not just the result of others' reflections as an external mirror (inter mirror). I believe that ESL immigrants' recognition of their selves becomes misshapen. Their internal recognition mirror (intra mirror) reflects a vague, distorted image of themselves. These new images are contradictory to their previous images of themselves (opposite conflicting images). The inability to present oneself in a way consistent with one's previously shaped self-image could lead to negative self-perceptions and negative evaluation of one's self. These in turn lead to ESL learners' lowered self-esteem and jeopardize their self-integrity. This vicious cycle worsens ESL immigrants'

anxiety experience. And, in turn, it results in psychosomatic[16] consequences of anxious states.

Another major reason for second language learners' language anxiety is power relations between speakers of a language that affect the effectiveness of second language learning and second language learners. Dominant groups of the societies can exert more power than subordinate groups, at least partly because of their language competencies. Second language learners can become more isolated from their second language social milieu (Norton, 2000). Since native speakers enjoy powerful positions because of their English language competencies, their language dominance exerts a power that creates an imbalance in the relationship between native speakers and second language learners in favor of native speakers. This shift of power greatly influences second language learners' affective states and creates a considerable amount of anxiety.

Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) stress the influence of cultural knowledge and rhetorical structure in success and failure in second language. They believe that insufficient knowledge about cultural material underlying a text is anxiety provoking. Also, they believe that an unfamiliar writing system and unfamiliar [socio] cultural material are other sources of anxiety for ESL learners. Furthermore, they consider the relationship between previous language learning experiences, motivations, and self-concepts about language learning as essential factors related to language learning anxiety (Saito et al., 1999).

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[16] Related to soul and body

Young (1991) proposed another classification for factors affecting language anxiety. She presented six potential sources of language anxiety that are associated with the learner, instructor, and instructional practice. These are: 1) personal and interpersonal anxieties, 2) learner's beliefs about language learning, 3) instructor's beliefs about language learning, 4) instructor-learner interaction, 5) classroom procedures, and 6) language setting. Sources of personal and interpersonal anxieties are low self-esteem, self-perceived low ability, communication apprehension, social anxiety, learner's belief, and language learning-specific anxiety (Young, 1991).

Another important factor that plays a critical role in language learning phenomenon is the social context. It includes classroom interaction with teachers and other students, the degree of exposure to language in the community, ethno-linguistic vitality, motivation, attitudes, intergroup relations and contact with the target language community and should not be overlooked (MacIntyre, 1995 b).

ESL anxiety could be considered as a kind of social anxiety (MacIntyre, 1995a). Social relations in the new society greatly affect immigrant ESL learners, but these learners are simultaneously under the influence of the social relations of their primary society. Regarding societal influences, ESL immigrants sometimes feel detached in the new society and experience displacement, dislocation, or detachment that is anxiety-provoking per se. Mostly, ESL immigrants leave their extended or expanded families, their job, and their assets, and most of them have to start from a scratch. They lack support systems, and language deficiency puts more burdens on them. They feel "alien" among "non-

significant others", especially in the early years of settlement. So, it could be said that ESL immigrants' language deficiency is aggravated and in turn aggravates their social situation.

I believe that second language learners suffer from confronting a new environment in which they do not feel safe and secure. As Maslow (1971) suggested in his hierarchy of needs, the need for safety and security is needed for self-actualisation and human beings need to meet their basic needs to achieve their higher needs. In ESL anxious immigrants, because of the lack of safety and security, achieving higher needs is at risk.

Immigrants suffer from reality anxiety and at the same time, their language incompetence threatens their self. From a Freudian perspective, immigration could be seen as birth-death-rebirth experience for ESL learners. The fear of birth, death, and rebirth are other major anxiety provoking experiences of ESL immigrants. Therefore, in the process of immigration, ESL immigrants at least experience a trilateral anxiety that I want to call the birth-death-rebirth anxiety triangle. "Birth anxiety" occurs in the original society when the ESL immigrant find out that they are going to start a new life in a new society. Expecting the new birth is anxiety provoking. "Death anxiety" happens in the original society when one finds that it is time to leave the homeland, and it continues in the host society. "Rebirth anxiety" starts in the new host society where the immigrant starts her new life, and her language incompetence aggravates it. Immigration is a novel, immense life experience, a "birth-death-rebirth" cycle or a remarkable "resurrection- reincarnation" experience that considerably affects ESL

immigrants, and I strongly believe that favourable language competence and performance could greatly shift this process in favour of ESL learners and the host society.

When ESL immigrants find that they have the opportunity to start a new life in a new society, they consider this new era in their life" second birth". At the same time, their life experience in their original country is somehow finished or has reached an end. I have heard from some ESL immigrants that by immigration they really experienced their terminal stages of life, the same as a terminally ill patient who knows that her death will happen soon. They felt that they are powerless. They hope for a miracle in the new society, which saves their lives, and brings them happiness, success and a rebirth. They look for other opportunities to continue their lives and all these opportunities are affected by their second language proficiency.

Summary

In multicultural societies that are host to immigrants, learning a new language is usually a necessary, if not a sufficient, condition of immigrant settlement. "Foreign language anxiety" has been identified, research on ESL anxiety is becoming increasingly elaborated, and previous research has investigated learners in second language classrooms and involved learners from western and non-western languages (Aida, 1994; Bailey et al., 2000; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Horwitz et al., 1986; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; Phillips, 1992; Woodrow, 2006; Young, 1991; Zhang, 2001).

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The physiological and psychological foundations of general anxiety are applicable to ESL anxiety. ESL anxiety, like general anxiety, is under the control of the limbic system of the brain. As I mentioned in chapter two, the limbic system is concerned with emotions and the regulation of the autonomic and endocrine functions (Kelly, 1980), motivation, and learning (Carlson, 2002). ESL anxiety impairs the limbic system and signs and symptoms of anxiety, such as an increase in heart rate, bundle of His conductivity, and contraction of heart muscle that leads to high blood pressure and muscle blood flow, hyperventilation, shallow breathing, disorganized respiratory rhythms, and breathlessness (Kelly, 1980), may also appear.

In sum, this study examines learners' experiences, not only in classrooms but also in their families and communities, and assesses the experiences of Iranian women, a group not previously been studied. The chapter that follows provides a summary of the qualitative research methods employed and the rationale and purpose of this study.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of qualitative research methods with specific focus on three educational research methodology paradigms: the case study, ethnography, and phenomenology. To design this exploratory study, I employed these paradigms based on the preliminary assumptions, concepts, and values with which I went into the research. Finally, according to the findings of this research, I generated a theory (grounded theory) to explain different dimensions of the ESL anxiety phenomenon.

This non-experimental, ethno-phenomenological, exploratory case study aims at understanding different dimensions of the ESL anxiety phenomenon among Iranian immigrant women, I incorporated distinct characteristics of case study, ethnography, and phenomenology and finally grounded theory that I will discuss here in more depth.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research history goes back to early 20th century in sociology and anthropology (Davies, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). As Dobbs (1982) indicated the notion of quality is critical to the nature of things and refers to the "what, how, when, and where of a thing" (Berg, 2004, p. 2). Therefore, qualitative research refers to the "meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things…[and] tends to assess quality of

things using words, images, and descriptions" (Berg, 2004, p. 3). Qualitative researchers assess various social settings and people in these settings to find out how these people interact with their surroundings through different means of communication. Moreover, it tries to share understandings and perceptions of people's lived experience and to explore how they make sense of different phenomena and their experiences (Berg, 2004).

The qualitative, interpretive, or naturalistic research paradigm defines the methods, techniques and procedures that are most suitable for collecting and analysing data, and its philosophical roots go back to phenomenology and symbolic interaction or the extent to which people share a symbolic view of each other and the world around them through verbal or non-verbal communication (Davies, 2007; Merriam, 1998). Other terms used interchangeably are naturalistic inquiry, interpretive research, field study, participant observation, and inductive research (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998). All types of qualitative research are based on the conviction that " reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (Merriam, 1998 p. 6).

Qualitative methods are systematic and could be replicated by other researchers in various times and settings to examine phenomena of interest through similar or different methods (Berg, 2004). In cases in which little is known about an issue, qualitative research is suggested, as it attempts to explore different factors influencing the situation from the participants' perspectives. Participants' perspectives are referred to as an emic or insider's view or interpretation of the phenomenon of interest as opposed to etic, an outsider's or

researcher's point of view (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 1988; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). It is noteworthy that the researcher plays the major role in data gathering and analysis. In observing behaviour in natural settings, the researcher has to refer to participants or go to the field of study.

Qualitative research is holistic and views phenomena broadly. The qualitative researcher employs inductive strategies to build abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories to explain the phenomenon of interest. The researcher describes the findings of the study (Merriam, 1988) and examines how people view themselves, others, and different phenomena.

Qualitative research takes place in natural settings and provides the researcher a broad understanding about the participants involved and their actual experiences. The researcher goes to the site (participant's home, office, etc.) and gathers in-depth information about people. Data collection methods include field notes, interviews, conversations, open-ended observations and documents, sounds, e-mails, scrapbooks, photographs, recordings and memos to the self, and data is in the form of text (word) or image (picture) Multiple methods to carry on this kind of research are interactive, dynamic and humanistic (Creswell, 2003; Davies, 2007).

Qualitative research is iterative: for example, research questions may change or be refined, the data collection method might change, and a theory might emerge. Qualitative research is interpretive: that is, the researcher describes participants consulted at different stages of data gathering or in different settings, systematically analyses data for themes or categories, and

finally draws conclusions. The qualitative researcher uses different processes of inquiry for the procedures of her study (Creswell, 2003; Davies, 2007), and "is interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed " (Merriam, 1988, p. 6). The researcher heavily influences qualitative research because the researcher is the primary source of data collection, and she may apply her personal values, assumptions, and biases (Creswell, 2003).

Qualitative methodologies are essential means to listen to the voices of lived experiences of women (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Qualitative research could be done on a smaller scale, it is more manageable than quantitative research in a limited time frame, and there is no need to apply statistics (Davies, 2007).

Case Study

'Case study' as a qualitative research method is conducted to focus on a detailed account of one or several cases (Creswell, 2003; Davies, 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Freebody, 2003; Mertens, 2005). Case study is a form of interpretive research that involves extensive detailed study of cases (e.g., an individual, a group), an event (e.g., ceremony), an activity (e.g., learning a new language), a program or an ongoing process (e.g., teaching) through observation, self-reports, and interviews (Creswell, 2003; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Mertens, 2005). In this methodology, varied data are collected and used to formulate the characteristics of the single individual or group, and it is hoped that valuable insights are gained to provide generalizations in the future (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

There are three kinds of case studies: intrinsic case study, instrumental case study, and multiple or collective case study. In intrinsic case study, the researcher is primarily interested in understanding a specific individual, group, event, organization, or situation, and in describing particularities of the case in depth rather than examining or creating general theories or generalizing research findings. In exploratory research when there is not enough information about the phenomenon of interest, researchers often perform an in-depth intrinsic case study (Brewer, 2000; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

In instrumental case study research, the researcher is interested in studying a particular case in all its parts to better understand the theoretical foundations of a particular issue in order to draw conclusions and generalize them to a greater group and to shed some light on the process because it facilitates understanding of a theoretical debate or a social problem (Brewer, 2000; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

In multiple or collective case study research, the researcher studies multiple cases or several instances of the same phenomenon to identify common characteristics at the same time as a part of an overall study. Multiple case studies seem more valid for generalization but they require extensive resources (e.g., time, money, researchers) (Brewer, 2000; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

Ethnography

'Ethnography' is a style of research that involves close association with and often participation in a specific field to understand the social meanings and

activities of people in that particular field (Brewer, 2000). As another form of qualitative methodology, ethnography is traditionally associated with sociology and anthropology. Ethnographic research focuses on describing and analysing the shared attitudes, values, norms, practices, beliefs, and language, in other words, the culture of a particular group. It takes place in natural settings and mostly is based on a variety of approaches such as ongoing observation and in-depth interviewing to obtain a holistic view of a particular group, institution, situation, setting or society (Creswell, 2003; Davies, 2007; Fraenkel &Wallen, 2006; Freebody, 2003; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Interviewing is an important tool for ethnographers and they have many forms, such as structured, semi-structured, informal (the most common) and retrospective; other tools are participant observation, personal documents, and discourse analysis (Brewer, 2000; Creswell, 2003; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Freebody, 2003).

Ethnographic research focuses on the study of culture (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Merriam, 1998) and its purpose is to obtain a holistic view of the participants of the study on the basis of their actions and real life experiences (Brewer, 2000; Creswell, 2003; Fraenkel &Wallen, 2006; Freebody, 2003). As Hancock, and Algozzine (2006, p. 9) state, the purpose of ethnography is " to find and describe beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behaviour, language, and interactions of the group". Wolcott (1966) has pointed out three characteristics of ethnographic research: "a detailed description of the culture-sharing group being studied, an analysis of this group in terms of perceived

themes to perspectives, and then some interpretation of the group by the researcher as to meanings and generalizations about the social life of human beings in general" (cited in Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 512).

Ethnography has a reflexive character; it means that the researcher is part of the research and the social world that she wants to describe (Berg, 2004) and the research process is flexible and evolves in response to natural settings (Creswell, 2003). Ethnographers must, therefore, insofar as possible, keep reflecting on their own effects on the phenomena studied.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a product of twentieth-century sociological theory in which the subjective experience of a phenomenon from the point of view of participants and their interpretation of it are at the center of the study, and the researcher attempts to understand how one or more individuals experience a phenomenon (their subjective lived experience). In addition, the researcher attempts to explore and explain the essence of the experience from the participants' experience. Understanding the lived experience of the participants makes phenomenology a philosophy and a method (Creswell, 2003; Davies, 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Freebody, 2003; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Mertens, 2005).

"Phenomenologists argue that the detached "objectivity" of experimental research cannot adequately explain the complexity of social life" (Fine & Gordon, 1992, cited in Mertens, 2005, p. 118). Therefore, in phenomenological study, the researcher investigates various reactions to and perceptions of a particular

phenomenon in real life situations to gain some insight into how participants view that specific phenomenon and describe their perceptions and reactions to it. In this kind of study, data is gathered through in-depth interviewing, and conversations (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Tashakkori& Teddlie, 2003). Phenomenologists generally believe that there are some commonalities (the "essence" or the special characteristics of the experience) or an essential structure of a single phenomenon in human beings' perceptions and reactions to similar experiences; they want to identify, understand, and describe the essential structure of a phenomenon and these commonalities. In phenomenological studies, the researcher must ask participants to refer to their memories about the experiences that they have had. Often tape-recorded interview sessions are necessary and the researcher has to search participants' statements to find relevant claims in regard to the experience related to the phenomenon of interest and then cluster these statements into common themes. After this, the researcher integrates the essential characteristics or the themes of the experience that have been described by the participants of the study into a narrative description of the phenomenon (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Merriam, 1998).

Grounded Theory

Sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed grounded theory as a method of theory building (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Mertens, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Later, Strauss and Corbin (1994) defined it as "a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in

data systematically gathered and analysed" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 709). In this method, theory emerges from the data (Davies, 2007) and the researcher derives a general abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction that is grounded in participants' point of views. The data gathered through one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, and participant observation are constantly compared with emerging categories and theoretical propositions that are not stated at the beginning of the study and not prior to study, data collection, and data analysis; rather, they emerge out of the data and the major emphasis is on theory development (Creswell, 2003; Davies, 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Mertens, 2005). Since the emerging theory is always tested against systematically collected data, this approach is called the constant comparative method. It is the researcher's responsibility to interpret the data and apply them to generate a theory. It does not start from a theory and then prove it; rather the theory emerges from an area of study (Creswell, 2003; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Mertens, 2005). In this ongoing method, "data are collected and analysed; a theory is suggested; more data are collected; the theory is revised; then more data are collected; the theory is further developed, clarified, revised; and the process continues" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 437).

This Study

In this study various reactions and perceptions of Iranian immigrant women to ESL anxiety were investigated, and the collected data were analysed to generate and develop a theory to explain the ESL anxiety phenomenon in this

group, and finally to propose and develop a triune model of ESL anxiety reduction for learning.

The reason that I chose phenomeno-ethnographic case-study research methodology for this study is that I wanted to gain a holistic view of the phenomenon of ESL anxiety amongst Iranian immigrant women. I wanted to understand the phenomenon of ESL anxiety that I have experienced personally. In other words, I went through different processes of data gathering, data reduction (selection of units of data), data display (data presentation in a specific format), and data interpretation (conclusion drawing)(Brewer, 2000).

When designing this exploratory research methodology, I considered the most suitable data collection method for the type of data that I wanted to collect. To get a better understanding of the context in which ESL anxiety shows up, I incorporated the available methodologies to discover the existing discourses of anxiety amongst these participants. I hoped that the collected data could be most appropriately combined and integrated, and that combination would have complementary strengths. I decided to conduct an in-depth interview to see how participants of the study experienced ESL anxiety. Thus, I started with data gathering, I analysed the data, I looked for comprehensive existing discourses of ESL anxiety, and finally on the basis of the gathered data, I generated an *a posteriori* grounded theory.

Research Objectives

General

-To understand the phenomenon of ESL anxiety.

Specific Objectives

-To determine common dimensions of ESL anxiety phenomenon in Iranian immigrant women.

-To present a model that describes this phenomenon among this group.

To look for sufficient evidence about the phenomenon of ESL anxiety and to justify my findings, I contacted participants who were directly involved in the learning of English as a second language, and I considered situations and events from the point of view of the participants. Before conducting this research, I had the assumption that several spheres would be at work in ESL environments. I believed in three assumptions about Iranian immigrant women's ESL anxiety:

1. Some Iranian immigrant women suffer from ESL anxiety.

2. ESL anxiety among Iranian immigrant women follows a specific common pattern.

3. Different aspects of mind, body, and soul are involved in the emergence of this phenomenon.

To assess my assumptions, I decided to conduct this research for which I employed my personal experience as an ESL learner, my teaching experiences as an English for specific purposes (ESP) teacher; and my contact experiences

with the target population of the study. These foundations all together informed the assumptions and questions of this study.

Research Components

Ethical Approval

To do research on human beings according to the rules and regulations of Simon Fraser University, securing informed consent is necessary. Hence, to secure informed consent, I took all ethical concerns into account. I assured the ethics board that I would keep participants' identities confidential, and I ensured them that the gathered data by no means would be used to harm or embarrass research participants or anyone else. I assured them that I would treat participants with respect, and gave them confidence that the research would be of minimal risk and during data gathering or any other phase of the study, I anticipated no physical or mental harm to threaten participants' health. Therefore, on September 2006, prior to beginning this study, I applied for ethical approval of the study and it was categorized as minimal risk research (Appendix 1).

Target Population

The target population was Iranian immigrant women who lived in Vancouver, BC, Canada for a few months to 6 years, and who suffered from the consequences of being English language learners.

Inclusion Criteria

The minimum requirement for sample selection was that participants be from the Iranian immigrant female population, residing in Vancouver, B.C. for few months to several years, and that they volunteered to take part in the study.

Sample Selection

To choose the appropriate sample, on September 2006 I contacted a number of immigrant associations (e.g., Mosaic, North Shore Multicultural, and North Shore Women's Center) who were involved in Iranian immigrants' issues in Vancouver, Canada. I explained my research topic and the reasons that I was interested in performing this study to authorities of the above-mentioned associations. However, they did not show any interest in introducing me to the target population of the study nor in supporting me as a researcher to conduct this research. In addition, responsible authorities mentioned that no research facility was available for me as a researcher and that I would have to find suitable participants by advertising or on the basis of my communication with the target community. Hence, I decided to rely on my relationship with the Iranian immigrant women community residing in Vancouver, B.C. to choose an appropriate sample for the study.

Participants

The target population of the study was Iranian immigrant women who had immigrated to Canada, were ESL learners, and had unwanted and undesirable language experiences. The accessible population (sample) of the study was

seven Iranian immigrant women with different duration of stay (recently arrived in Canada or residing in Canada for up to 6 years). Participants were available and appropriate for the purposes of the study, they took part in the study voluntarily, and they were selected because they showed characteristics of the study interest population. The participants fell into different categories: married or single, having children or no children, employed or unemployed. All participants in the study were of Iranian heritage, and the same Fars ethnic minority (there are different ethnic minorities in Iran, e.g., Fars, Kurd, Turk, Baluch, etc.). They were born and raised in Iran; they were all university graduates in their homeland. For all but one participant, Farsi was their mother tongue. The mother tongue of the exceptional participant was Azari. For all but one (whose second language was Azari), English was their second language. They were from the middle class of the Iranian society (they had nearly the same annual average family income in Iran or Canada).

Participants of the study knew Farsi (Persian), and they communicated through Farsi in their homes and in the society. They were socially active in their homeland and they were all educators at public or private schools, high schools or universities, except one who was a school counsellor. They had similar educational experiences in Iran and believed that English language instruction in Iran was not effective. English was their major foreign language that had been learnt at middle school, high school, and university levels, and they had learnt Arabic, the religious language of the society, at the same levels as well. All the participants, except one, had taken official English exams (IELTS or TOEFL)

before entering Canada. They had no history of psychiatric diseases and none of them claimed a history of anxiety disorders (e.g. pathologic anxiety, phobias). Their first language and their home language were Farsi and they had learned English as a foreign language in Iran

Research Questions

The interview schedule that was developed for the purposes of the study was used to guide the interview questions. This schedule was developed between Spring and Fall 2006. I reviewed different anxiety questionnaires amongst which Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) ESL anxiety questionnaire was the most widely used to assess the anxiety phenomenon. I designed a semi-structured verbal interview (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Freebody, 2003) to assess my entering assumptions (Appendix 2). To answer some of the questions, participants had to recall their memories and reconstruct their second language experiences retrospectively. To design my research interview, I tried to design questions that would elicit sufficient data regarding participants' language experiences during their stay in Canada. The existing data in regard to ESL research mostly evaluate learners in ESL classes and, to my knowledge; there are no data that consider immigrant ESL learners in real life situations (as a part of the real life encounters in a host society). In responding to research questions, they mostly went back to their experiences and in most cases, they became emotional when they remembered their linguistic experiences.

Phases of the study

Introductory Phase

In planning this study, first I clarified the minimum requirements of the project. I needed participants who would be willing to participate in interview sessions of the study and be willing to share their experiences as EFL learners in Iran and as ESL learners in Canada. I wanted to de-contextualize their stories and to find discourses of anxiety that were common amongst them to assess my assumptions about ESL anxiety in the above-mentioned population. This information would reject or confirm my preliminary assumptions about the phenomenon of ESL anxiety that I considered to be at work in ESL teaching and learning contexts.

Communicating with research participants was easy for me because I speak Farsi and because I knew the importance of the specific cultural and ethical concerns of this particular community, and I considered these issues cautiously. I took into account respect for the dignity and welfare of participants and designed the research in a way to ensure minimal risk for participants.

I have known the research population for several years and I have been in close contact with some of them since 2003. I had witnessed their sufferings as ESL learners and the influential impact of not knowing English on different aspects of their lives. Hence, I decided to assess this population and to select the research sample from amongst them. I announced to these women through e-mails, and personal contact that I would conduct this study. After the initial announcement, I arranged individual meetings with each volunteer to explain the

format of the research and to conduct the interview. I tried to consider the best available time and place for the interviews and I told research participants that they had the freedom to choose the place of the interview. The participants preferred to be interviewed in private places rather than public ones. Therefore, I conducted the interviews in their homes or in my home. Hoping that choosing a private sphere was more convenient and that it gave them opportunities to express themselves, I believed that, according to their sociocultural background, participants would prefer to be interviewed on an individual private basis. I knew the language and culture of the participants and I knew how to conduct the interview in a way that promotes intimacy required for sharing their personal experiences. I discussed these issues with the participants; therefore, they could attend the interview session with ease. In addition, I told them that in the individual interview session I would like to ask them some open-ended questions about their personal experiences regarding their English language competence and performance in Iran and in Canada to give them a chance to explain their experiences and concerns freely. The interview would take at most 45 minutes. I informed them that to gather data I would interview them in their mother tongue (Farsi). I invited participants to reflect on their language experiences in Farsi because I believed that feelings, emotions, thoughts, and attitudes at this level of second language proficiency are described better in the mother tongue rather in the second language, and participants would not be able to reflect their sincere concerns if they were going to present them in English rather than Farsi. The mother tongue permits more freedom of expression; in addition, I believed it

would facilitate the relationship between the researcher and participants. However, I informed them that for the purposes of the study all the findings would be translated into English.

Interviews

One of the major means of data collection in qualitative research is the interview (Frankael & Wallen, 2006). In this ethno-phenomenological, case-study research, which considers the commonalities of human perceptions in interpreting similar life experiences, I conducted in-depth interviews to identify, understand, and describe the essential characteristics of ESL anxiety among the research population. Accordingly, I studied multiple perceptions of, and reactions to this phenomenon as experienced by my research participants. Then I tried to determine the commonalities of their perceptions and reactions.

Interview Sessions

During the planning phase, I designed the interview for the study and the procedures and conditions under which I wanted to interview informants. I knew that before data collection it is necessary to decide the location, time, frequency, and administration of the interview. Therefore, I tried to answer what, where, when, how, and who questions about the study. I wanted to assess the ESL anxiety phenomenon in Iranian immigrant women, and to collect data in a place where participants of the study preferred. In addition, I tried to manage the data collection time so that all interviews took place nearly in a similar time and weather conditions to prevent differential effects on participants of the study.

Another important question was about frequency of data collection; I decided to arrange a preliminary meeting with participants and discuss my concerns for them, and then arrange the interview session to gather data in one session, and finally to review the data and ask the participants complementary questions in cases where I was in doubt about the answers. Since the interview was going to be used for data gathering purposes and I wanted to make inferences about the gathered data, I needed to have confidence in my interview questions. For this reason, content-related validity of the instrument was obtained by asking those who could render professional judgment (professors, educators, colleagues, etc.) about the appropriateness, correctness, and comprehensiveness of the designed interview questions to assess ESL anxiety. Also, as a researcher I wanted to gather data by myself.

At a preliminary session, the format of the individual interview session was explained to participants in detail and all their questions and concerns were considered as much as possible. I informed participants of all aspects of the research that might influence their willingness to participate in this study and clearly defined the reasons for my desire to collect data and to perform this study in detail, as well as my obligations and responsibilities. I explained the research steps and expectations for participants, and answered their questions honestly. I provided all participants with information about the nature of the study, confidentiality of the obtained data, and the harmless procedures that would be employed to gather data. I showed respects for participants' rights to withdraw from the study or to refuse to continue it at any time. I explained to them that they

had the chance to select a pseudonym for themselves which would be used during the course of the study, and that this name would appear on every data gathering sheet, and I assured them that to keep the information confidential their names would not be disclosed to anyone, and their anonymity would not be disclosed at any scientific gatherings.

I re-emphasized that the interview would be tape-recorded for later transcription, translation into English, and analysis. I told them that in addition to tape-recording, I would take notes during interview to formulate new questions as the interview moves on, and that note-taking would facilitate later data analysis. Finally, I re-emphasized that any information obtained in connection with the study would remain confidential and would be used only for research purposes anonymously. I assured them that the research would render no risk, whether physical or mental to the participants, and findings would, I hoped; promote improvements in existing ESL teaching and learning contexts and ESL teacher education programs. I respected the participants' attendance at the interview sessions and I expressed my gratitude and appreciation to them for sharing their experience with me as a researcher.

Thereafter, in interview sessions, I asked each participant to read the "Participant Information Statement" for the project in order to get a wider view of the research and their rights as participants of the study. Also, I answered their questions completely and ensured their understanding of the reasons for conducting this research. Then, after receiving their oral permission and confirming their willingness to take part in the study, I asked them to read the

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"Consent Form" (Appendix 1), sign it, give their demographic and personal contact information, and choose a pseudonym to keep their identity anonymous.

Interviews were conducted orally, and participants' responses were tape-recorded in Farsi. I tried to clarify any questions that were unclear or ambiguous, and in some cases, I asked participants to expand on their responses to give a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Interviews mostly took part in my home, and the rest of them took part in participants' home.

In addition, I tried to secure information about the participants' demographic background (e.g., marital status, age, educational background, duration of stay in Canada, their linguistic experiences in their homeland and in Canada, and their attitudes toward the influence of cultural differences on their ESL experience), about their previous language level and their English proficiency test results when they arrived in Canada provided that they had taken part in such a test, and their opinions or values, feelings, and sensory experiences (e.g., how they feel about their linguistic experiences and how they were physically and emotionally involved in this linguistic experience). I believed that all this information would help me understand the reasons (theoretical foundations) for their feelings and attitudes toward their ESL linguistic proficiency. By asking open-ended questions, I tried to give them opportunities to talk explicitly about their concerns with no limitation.

During interview sessions, I tried to establish a semi-formal situation in which my participants felt comfortable; however, some of the participants in recalling their experiences became extremely emotional. In addition, I tried to act

friendly so that they would feel free to express their experiences and concerns. Moreover, I tried to ask the same questions with different wordings during the interview to confirm my understanding of what participants said. Also, by taking notes during the interview with all participants, in cases that I had doubt about my understandings, I asked them to repeat their response or to express their meanings in detail, and in cases in which I had doubt about any answer, I checked my understandings with them to reduce risks of misunderstandings. I tried to ask them open-ended questions in a way that was not leading.

During in-depth interviewing, I found that these women utilized a variety of discourses to explain their ESL anxiety, and I employed this collected data to identify discourses of ESL anxiety among them. As a crucial step, tape-recording provides a reasonable accurate record in order to prevent memory recall effects of mine on the gathered data, and to have a chance to re-examine the interviews, the interviews were tape-recorded for transcription and later analysis.

After individual interview sessions, I transcribed and translated the interviews into English to provide more detailed information about the participants, their concerns, perceptions, and lived experiences of ESL anxiety. I transcribed the responses in full, and, depending on the patterns and themes that emerged, I looked for specific elicited answers from the research participants that I wanted to analyse. Through transcriptions, checking the data and making refinements became possible. Finally, I interpreted the data, and developed a theoretical model from the data that I hope may be applicable to similar cases. This model will be presented at the end of Chapter 7(Conclusion).

Summary

In this chapter, first, I reviewed important features of qualitative research as a holistic, reflective process of inquiry that takes place in natural settings, employs different methods of data collection, emerges on the basis of data collection, is based on the interpretations of the researcher, and mostly deals with inductive reasoning with a specific focus on the definition, interpretation and meaning of this type of research. Then, I discussed the essential characteristics of common underpinning methods related to qualitative research, such as case study, phenomenology, ethnography, and grounded theory. And, finally, I presented the qualitative research methods, techniques, and processes that I used during the course of this study.

In the next chapter, I will present the gathered data, data analysis, and the emerged major and common themes that indicate discourses of ESL anxiety in experiences of Iranian women, not only in classrooms but also in their families and communities.

CHAPTER 5: DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I present the data gathered in this study, and I analyse it to provide a comprehensive review of the issue of ESL anxiety in Iranian immigrant women. Different types of information that were obtained during the data-gathering phase were 1) demographic data (e.g. age, marital status, educational background, 1st and 2nd language, socio-economic status), 2) responses to the interview questions, and 3) my field notes. I began the interview by eliciting demographic data and then went on to ask questions about English language use.

In the next sections of this chapter, I present a summary of each participant's interview. Appendix 2 contains the full transcripts of each interview. I begin with Safar.

Safar

Safar is a 43-year-old single woman who lives by herself in Vancouver. She came to Canada 4.5 years ago. She has a university degree (Master of Science) from Iran and was considered a member of the educated elite in Iran. She was socially active in Iran and before leaving for Canada, and she was teaching at the university level. Her home and social language of communication was Farsi (Persian). She had achieved the overall band score 6/9 on the IELTS exam before coming to Canada. Band 6 is classified as "a competent user of

English" according to this international exam measurement, meaning that the test-taker "has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations" (ielts. org, 2007).

Safar had studied English from Grade 1-12, and at university, and she credited private English institutes for most of her English learning. Despite this effort to learn English, and despite her achieving the second highest acceptable score to pass immigration standards on the IELTS exam, she felt she was unable to communicate and express herself in English when she first came to Canada. As she put it:

> When I came to Canada my English was very inefficient. I was unable to communicate and express myself. At that time I was unwilling to communicate. I preferred just to answer questions. When I wanted to ask a question, I tried to think about it in advance, I preferred not to give my comments and just answer questions... I did not take part in communications as much as possible. I just made myself ready to answer questions. I was afraid of taking part in communications. I just replied to questions, and I was unable to follow discussions or arguments.

She felt infantilised in English ("I felt like a grown up person who has transferred to her childhood") and described physiological symptoms of anxiety ("During communication I felt my heart pounding and excessive warmth in my body") when forced to communicate in English. She attributed her learning problems to her learning style, and believed that because she did not have a good memory,

she had learning difficulties in learning English. She felt there had been many losses associated with her immigration:

> Since I came here many things have changed in my life. I had a sense of humour in my country but here I lost it because I did not know the applied meaning of humour in this new society. I did not know how to apply it appropriately. I consider it a change in my identity. There [in Iran], I was hospitable and I was interested in having relationships with others but here I limited my relationships. This was another great change; I tried to achieve what I had lost. This captured my energy and wasted my time. All the time I was in search of what I had lost. I have not got used to it yet.

This sense of loss of self was also mirrored in her professional identity:

> In my country I was a professional. I was an authority and I was quite able to take part in communications and present myself. I had the ability to express my own ideas and show off myself. Suddenly, I became nobody, unable to express my ideas.

Another issue of major importance to her was her sense of safety and security that she felt was jeopardized because of her inability to use English properly:

> I changed, personally I felt so unsafe and insecure because I was always worried about making mistakes. I preferred not to talk; this way I avoid others' evaluations and judgments.

Meanwhile, others think that I have no ideas to express, but to me it was just to keep on the safe side.

Safar thought her insecurity has persisted until now:

Still I do not think that I could communicate with others as well as possible. Whenever I speak, I am conscious of my mistakes. Still, if I do not feel safe and secure, I prefer to avoid unnecessary communications.

Safar described her experience as "suffering" and said that she felt that surviving this suffering made her able to cope with anything:

I think I can learn from these sufferings. I feel anywhere in the world that I go I will have no other problem: I learnt how to stay alive, I learnt the secret of survival, I am not terrified of any other experience, because I know the meaning of difficulty and suffering and how to endure them. I did not know this much before I came here. ...

In my country I did not achieve anything this difficult. I was used to trying ten times less and I achieved ten times more. I did not have to prove myself to other people, and then communicate with them, but here in any relationship at first you need to prove yourself, take others' confidence and then continue your relationship. ...I think I can learn from these sufferings.

Setareh

Setareh is a 37-year-old single woman who lives by herself in Vancouver. At the time of the interview she had been in Canada for 6 years. She has a university degree (Bachelor of Science) from Iran. She was socially active in Iran and before leaving for Canada, she was teaching at a private language institute as an EFL teacher. Her home and social language of communication was Farsi (Persian). She received a total score of 230/300 on the TOEFL exam before coming to Canada.

Setareh had studied English from grades 1-12. In grades 1 and 2 she had English native-speaking teachers. While in high school, she studied English in private English institutes for 2 years. Then she studied English at university as an "English Translation " student for four years. She started to teach English during her sophomore year of study at the university, which she felt helped her to promote her language status, especially her speaking abilities. Despite her good score on the TOEFL and her belief about her language competence and performance, she felt she was unable to communicate and express herself in English when she first came to Canada

> When I came to Canada, I thought that my English competence and performance were very good and if I had a chance to stay 6 months in an English context, I would improve as fast as possible, but it was not this way...I had higher expectations of myself; I was not t fast enough to understand others. I was unable to express myself and give comments; I was not fast in my reactions. I was unable to understand others' speech. I was

unable to give comments and ideas about different issues...Even thinking about those feelings is terrible!

Setareh was eloquent about how her difficulties with English had emotional effects on her:

> You know, you are among people who can express themselves in their own language, but you feel you do not belong to them because you do not know the language of communication. I lacked a sense of belonging. I felt that the community did not accept me. I did not feel confident and peaceful. However, I tried to be sociable, but I did not receive response. ... I always had this idea in my mind that I was incapable, and I always repeat to others and myself that I was incapable. I had a close friend here and I preferred that he do everything for me because I was not fine with myself and of course my linguistic knowledge. I did not let myself make mistakes. I did not feel safe and secure. I evaluated myself less than my real self. I felt vulnerable. You feel that you are inferior others; you are not a good match for this society. You know I was an accepted person in my homeland among my relatives, friends, and colleagues but here I experience how others rejected me. I think they did not recognize me as a human being.

She explained her initial anxieties and ascribed them to listening and speaking aspects of English and what she judged as insufficient vocabulary that led to her lack of confidence, and she described physiological symptoms of anxiety:

> At the very beginning I felt anxious because I knew that I had to listen and speak in another language and I did not feel confident. I felt my heart pounding badly, my hands became cold and clammy, and while speaking I felt I could not breathe. It was disgusting.

Setareh believed that differences between the two socio-cultural systems of Iran and Canada posed problems for her:

> I learnt that cultural differences made my situation worst. There were too many unknowns about this new culture, and I had to adjust to all of them. Shopping, transportation, and bank issues...everything was different.

Setareh commented on the prevalence of services being offered by computer in Canada and the difficulties these presented for her:

> Everywhere there is a machine that does not understand your feelings and the amount of distress that you feel when you do not know what to do. There is no one to answer your questions and help you. I think if I knew English better, these instructions would not make me anxious. I think that designers [of technological service providers] did not consider human emotions.

In retrospect, Setareh felt she had not realized the extent to which her experiences in Canada had affected her at the time (and still affect her):

You know, when you are in that condition because your mind is busy with different issues, you don't have time to think about the pressure that you experience. But, now, when I think about those days, I feel pity for myself. What a huge amount of pressure it was! Since it was repeated regularly in those days, I always expect the same conditions. It becomes part of one's very existence. I mean, even if the environment does not give you the same signal you expect the same, and all these are due to language deficiency. If I knew English well, I would not have endured these problems.

Nazanin

Nazanin is a 33-year-old single woman who lives by herself in Vancouver. She has been in Canada for 4 years. She has a university degree (Master of Science) from Iran and was considered an educational elite there. She was socially active in Iran, and before leaving for Canada, she was teaching at the university level. Her home and social language of communication was Farsi (Persian). She received a total score of 567/677 on the paper-based TOEFL exam before coming to Canada. Her home and social language of communication was Farsi.

Nazanin spent one year in the United States while she was a pre-school student. She then studied English in Iran from grades 1-12, and continued to study English at the university level. She credited private English institutes and tutors for most of her learning. Despite this effort to learn English and her high score on the TOEFL, she felt ashamed to communicate and express herself in

English when she first came to Canada. She was afraid of and avoided communicating in English and being judged by others:

> When I came to Canada, I was ashamed of my English. I did not feel good talking to others especially in front of Iranians. I do not know the reason but I did not want to be evaluated by them. Sometimes I forgot words and it seemed that my memory did not work. Even now in front of others I have long pauses, and I forget even simple words. At the very beginning I did not understand different English accents. I preferred not to take part in conversations and communications. If I had to communicate, I asked people several times to repeat their sentences. It was really embarrassing.

Like other learners, Nazanin reported rehearsing sentences before performing them as a way to alleviate her anxiety:

> You know, even now, before each communication I try to imagine the probable scenario and to predict dialogues. I think in Farsi and then I translate my sentences into English.

Despite all her efforts, she felt her reading and writing abilities, and reading comprehension were weak even now:

> I have learnt more words, my listening is improved but still my writing is not that much better than before. Still my reading is slow, and I have problems in comprehension.

In addition, she believed that differences between the cultural systems of Canada and Iran were responsible for her problems as well:

> I was afraid of my language competence and the new culture. I did not know what are the expectations of the new culture.

She attributed her language difficulties to her memory incapability, her absent-mindedness, her listening problems, and cultural differences between two societies. However, I did not ask her about her ESL anxiety explicitly because it seemed to me that she was uncomfortable in the interview setting and was unwilling to expose herself more.

Parinaz

Parinaz was a 47-year-old married woman who lived with her husband and two children in Vancouver. She had lived in Canada for 1. 5 years at the time of the interview. She has a university degree (Bachelor of Science) from Iran and was socially active there. Before leaving for Canada, she was teaching at the high school level. Her home and social language of communication was Farsi. She had not taken any official language exam before coming to Canada.

Parinaz studied English from grades 1-12, and afterwards studied it at university level and finally credited intensive private English courses with a private tutor before coming to Canada for her English language learning. Despite her effort to learn English when she first came to Canada she felt that she was behind in her English language communicative skills (listening and speaking) but

she acknowledged her grammatical knowledge and vocabulary range. She asserted that:

> I was a very sociable person in my country and I expressed my thoughts and ideas simply and easily. But I am not that person here. There, I was proud of my capabilities, and myself. Here I am nothing, this makes me feel incompetent and embarrassed.

She blamed her language inefficiency and lack of improvement on her dependency on her husband:

> Sometimes I think the reason is that I count on my husband for everything. So he has improved because he is responsible for family issues and I delegated everything to him. Men are more active than women and they reach their goals actively. I think if I were here by my own I would be much more successful than now because I viewed language as a main instrument to settle in this society, but now I do not look at it in that sense.

Parinaz was neither comfortable with communicating in English nor expressing herself freely. She was afraid of and avoided communicating in English:

> You know, not knowing sufficient English led to my isolation and I do not want to live this way. Imagine my situation! A sociable person with this much contact has no relationship with anyone. I cannot communicate with others. I am always anxious communicating with others. I cannot communicate with them easily. In face-to-face communication I am afraid of others

making fun of me. When I am on the phone, I forget what I want to talk about. I cannot even remember the simplest sentences and words. I prefer not to take part in any communication in English to avoid encountering any problem during the communication. I am afraid of being ridiculed by others.

She felt anxious and described physiological symptoms of anxiety when forced to communicate in English:

I perspire. I feel that I am empty. With people who are patient and understand my situation I feel better and I can overcome my anxiety; in other cases, I feel warmth in my body and face; I forget everything.

Parinaz asserted that she has confronted too many changes in her life since her arrival in Canada, most of which were related to family issues and her previous position as an authoritative, powerful mother who lost her power in the family and is not depended on by her children:

You know, before coming here I knew how to answer their questions; they relied on me. They were younger and I knew how to make them feel safe and secure, but now I do not know even how to help myself. I want to make home a secure place for them. I want them to consult me. I want to be able to give them confidence and peace of mind. But they think I do not know how to respond to their needs. They do not ask for my advice any more. I feel that I am behind; I feel bad....

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It hurts me because I do not even understand what my kids are talking about. It makes me sad. I feel it separates me from them. My kids try to convince me that using English at home is more necessary for me than for them, but I resist because I feel humiliated.

To lessen the pressure that she experienced from her language inefficiency Parinaz employed different defense mechanisms such as: rationalization, and showing a defensive behaviour towards the English language by eliminating it from her living environment:

I try to convince myself that knowing English is not that necessary to live in this country and I can survive without this language. I asked my kids not to talk in English at home. I have forbidden English in my home! My kids are not allowed to talk in English, to listen to English radio or TV channels.

Adeleh

Adeleh was a 41-year-old single woman who had lived by herself in Vancouver for three years. She has a university degree (Master of Arts) from Iran and was considered an educated elite in her homeland. She was socially active in Iran and before leaving for Canada she taught English for several years. Her home and social language of communication was Farsi. She achieved an overall band score 8/9 on the International English Language Test System (IELTS) before coming to Canada. That is the 2nd highest score on this exam and shows that as a "very good user " she had "fully operational command of the language

with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well" (ielts. org, 2007).

Adeleh had studied English from grades 1-12 and at university and credited her formal studies for most of her learning. Despite her effort to learn English and despite her high score on the IELTS, she felt she was unable to communicate and express herself in English when she first came to Canada and she was afraid of and avoided communicating in English:

> I had a high self-esteem about my English linguistic knowledge. But here I felt just the opposite. I did not feel myself a good match with society's expectations and in fact with my expectations of myself. In Canada I was unable to speak English well. I preferred to keep silent as much as possible because I thought I was always being judged by others. I had the very bad feeling that I did not know English at all. I was unable to understand different English accents and dialects.

She felt unhappy, upset, and miserable, grief-stricken, anxious, and lacking in confidence. She evaluated herself negatively, and was worried about others' evaluation of her. She experienced a distorted self-image and described physiological symptoms of anxiety when forced to communicate in English:

> During communications my heart pounded badly. I felt an acute pain in my abdomen, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, low blood pressure, fainting…. Some times I had this urgency to go to the washroom as soon as possible. I felt my bad feelings in all

my cells. I was unable to sleep at night. Even when I went to sleep I woke up very early and I had difficulty going back to sleep. To get rid of this fear and pain I'd cry.

She was critical of the lack of governmental support systems, suitable ESL programs, and technological advances, which are a major gap between her society and the host society.

Mahsa

Mahsa was a 49-year-old married woman who had lived with her husband and children in Vancouver for 5. 5 years. She had a university degree (Master of Science) from Iran and was considered an educated elite in her homeland. She was socially active in Iran and before leaving for Canada she taught at the university level. Her home and social languages of communication were Farsi and Azari. She had several unsuccessful attempts at IELTS exam (under 6) in Canada.

Mahsa had studied English from grades 8-12 and at university level, and she credited private English tutors in Iran for most of her learning before entering Canada. Despite her efforts to improve her English proficiency in Canada, she was not successful in passing IELTS exam, which in her opinion, was the only way that she could find to continue her studies, to find a job, to be successful in Canadian society, and to enjoy a happy family life:

You know everything needs language proficiency.... I think not knowing the language is similar to a torture. You have no way to do anything. One becomes powerless and frustrated. I believe

more than 80 per cent of my family problems were due to language deficiency.

Although she was a professional in Iran, she felt she was unable to understand others and communicate and express herself in English when she first came to Canada:

> Before coming to Canada I thought that I knew English, but here I found that I know nothing about this language. At first I did not understand what others said and I was unable to communicate.

She was afraid of and avoided communicating in English. It seemed that she chose keeping silent as her defense mechanism against being judged and ridiculed by others. In addition, she was emotionally deeply distressed, humiliated and ashamed because of her language abilities:

> I suffered a lot during my stay here...[and my] undesirable situation lead to my increased depression over time.... The great stressor in this society was language for me; it is the base of all my problems.

Mahsa described physiological symptoms of anxiety in herself and her kids when forced to communicate in English:

> My younger one always had a fever at nights. All the time my kid had nightmares about English language and talked in her dreams and said, "I don't know English". It is very difficult for a mother to witness her kids' torture.

She was dissatisfied with the way that the Canadian school teachers treated her children and believed that the teachers did not have enough understanding of English proficiency-related problems and immigrant children's issues; they only punished her children and worsened their situation but also put her under more pressure:

> I remember that I was in contact with her teacher; I got course materials from her teacher and translated for my kid. At the exam time, I was always with her. Her teacher gave me the questions, I read them for her, asked for the responses, translated them into English till she learnt how to read and write. I did my best to help my family. I witnessed how the teacher punished my kid because she did not know how to do her assignments. The teacher did not understand how difficult it was for an immigrant kid to get used to the new language and to use it properly. I witnessed my kids sobbing.

As a consequence of her lived experience and her suffering she explained her situation:

> I am the same as a feather who has gone with the wind. I have no energy.

> Lack of language proficiency severely damaged my family relationships. I see that my relationship with my husband and my kids are damaged. My parenting role is changed, and this new invalid distorted parenting image has put me in conflict. Before coming to Canada, I was capable of managing my family

financially and spiritually. From all the aspects that you could imagine, but since we moved here my role is upside down and this bothers me a lot. I know that I am not a good model anymore for my kids. They had me as a powerful model in their minds, but I am not powerful anymore. Each time that I go out and my kids talk instead of me, I feel more shattered. I think this language "killed" me! You know how painful was this experience. It influenced me overall. Mentally, it shattered my role as a wife, and as a mother, my emotional and social roles are changed. My inside is destroyed and it killed me totally.

She was critical of Canadian government policies regarding immigrant issues, especially ESL programs for adults and job finding issues:

I think the Canadian government accepts immigrants, but they do not have any specific planning to help them overcome their language barriers. Immigrants are from different English levels, so a diverse curriculum and ESL syllabus is required for them. I, myself, went to [a local] college for a while but I am sure others my age cannot do that. I got used to studying and being in educational settings. I had close contact with youngsters because of the nature of my job in my home country, but I assure you that for others my age it is impossible. Attending these classes hurt me a lot because I did not feel homogeneous with my classmates. I was reluctant to speak because I was their mothers' age. I did not feel good because of the class atmosphere. They were not suitable

classmates for me. I always was in the position of being a teacher to this age group but as their classmate I was unable to tolerate how they made fun of my speech and language proficiency…I think the government has no suitable ESL plan for adults and Iranians. Even with job finding, the government has no specific plan; because of my language deficiency I did not even find a volunteer job anywhere.

She also believes that unskilled workers are more successful in Canada than professionals. In addition, she ascribes success in Canadian society to gender issues and believes that women suffer more than men:

I think those people who are from lower classes of society or those who have fewer degrees feel better here and are more successful. Those with higher education and high-ranking positions in their homeland suffer more. It seems to me that Canadian society is planned for those who are from low ranking jobs and lower education… I mean for those who see themselves as capable, these ESL programs do not work at all! [Also] I think men are more successful than women here because they are more flexible and they meet challenges better. For example, I think my husband employs defense and coping mechanisms that are different from mine. He moves step by step, but I keep silent and isolated myself.

She felt humiliated and ashamed because of others' reactions to her English communication, and "frustrated and unacceptable" according to her standards.

Finally, she felt incapable and invalid and this was against her dominant personality:

> I was unable to tolerate how they made fun of my speech and language proficiency. I felt humiliated and ashamed because of their reactions. I got used to communication in my home country, but here I was forced to reduce my communications. This language deficiency made a weak person of me. I was very strong and powerful there [in Iran]. I had a very reliable personality but here I felt broken....

> The great stressor for me in this society was language; it is the base of all my problems. It damaged my identity. I always saw myself as a capable, reliable person, with high self-esteem. I had an image of myself as a successful person, but since I came here I feel weak and incapable. I feel that I have become nothing, and I have no energy. I cannot accept my new self. I am frustrated and unacceptable according to my standards. I do not know how to find myself. I have no influence over my life.

Mahsa finally asserted that:

> Those who want to come here, as immigrants must consider different aspects of this decision before making it. The government is responsible for letting them know the consequences of this decision. ESL planning is extremely important.... It doesn't have any constructive side; to me, all was destructive. The destructive part was very inhibiting and

turned me to zero. I had to start from the very beginning and I had to start again and I was not able to start from nothing. [There was an imbalance and] the destructive effect of language was more progressive than my success rate. I was unable to balance my previous status and the new one. I think this imbalance was very unfair. I did not deserve this much trouble and suffering.

Tabassom

Tabassom was a 43-year-old single woman who had lived by herself in Vancouver for 9 months. She has a university degree (Bachelor of Science) from Iran. She was socially active in Iran and before leaving for Canada she was a school counselor. Her home and social language of communication was Farsi. Tabassom had studied English from grades 6-12, at university, and as well privately. Despite her effort to learn English, she reported that she felt afraid of and unhappy with English from the very beginning that she learnt this language:

I was always afraid of English. Because of my fear of this language, I never studied it seriously. I had studied English 7 years at school and at university I passed 3 English courses. ...But I never felt good with this language.

She was unable to communicate and express herself in English when she first came to Canada and explained her language experiences in this way:

I prefer to escape this language. I am afraid of confrontation. Since I came to Canada, I tried to hide behind my friend and

ask him to communicate instead of me. It is very difficult and embarrassing. Reading and writing do not bother me that much, but when in my English class I see that I have not made any progress, it makes me dissatisfied and sad. When someone is speaking, I cannot communicate, and I feel terribly bad because I do not understand what they say. I feel my body's warmth and my red face, and others recognize my feelings and stress. It makes me very upset. Here, at the very beginning it seemed to me that everyone was shouting at me, and was violent, because they talked loud. When someone complains, I think they mean something about my actions and me. I do not recognize sentences. Even in my apartment I do not feel safe and secure; any time that someone passes in the corridor, I become terrified, because I think they want to come to my place and talk to me. Whenever I think building manager or one of the neighbours wants to talk to me, I become absolutely irritated and frightened; it bothers me severely. Communicating in English is very difficult for me. Even in my English class I do not feel safe and secure. Sometimes I prefer to be absent from class. I feel I am less capable than others, the weakest student in the class. Being evaluated by others hurts me I always blame myself because I had the chance to improve my English in my country, but I did not do that.

She was afraid of being judged by others because of her linguistic abilities and described physiological symptoms of anxiety when forced to communicate in

English. Like other women in this study, she mostly suffered from the communicative aspects of using English (listening and speaking). In addition, she introjected others' maltreatment to her own behaviour, and she blamed herself for wasting her opportunities to learn English in her homeland. She described feeling guilty, humiliated, and ashamed, and under a huge amount of stress. She believed that language deficiency is the root of all her sufferings in Canada. She blamed her backwardness on not having a chance to be in contact with native speakers in Canada. I interviewed Tabassom five months after the initial interview for the second time. She believed that because of the nature of her job, her listening has improved, but she reported she still suffers from and avoids communications. However, she knows that her avoidance behaviour may lead to loss of her job:

> [Still] My speaking is weak and I avoid communication. I flee from communication. It is nearly 4 months that I have been working in a store. I have to communicate with different people. I have to understand them and respond properly. My listening has improved. But, unfortunately I cannot speak. Maybe it is due to my fear of this language. I think I have lost my self-esteem in this regard. I could not even make a simple sentence. And when I want to communicate with my manager I really freeze. I think it is due to my uncontrollable distress and anxiety.... I want to avoid communication in order to feel safe and secure, and this avoidance jeopardizes my job.

In all the sentences that she used to explain her English abilities, she used negative sentence structures. She was aware of her linguistic errors and accepted her responsibility in this regard. At the same time she introjected her problems to thinking in Farsi and translating her thoughts into English.

She experienced a lot of intolerable pressure, which in her opinion, more or less, was a common problem among ESL learners with whom she was in contact. She evaluated the effects of her language experiences as negative and believed that they lead to her low self-esteem, communication avoidance, inability to make even simple sentences, feelings of sadness, feelings of distress, anxiety, dumbness, inability to convey messages and ideas, freezing, and paralysis. Also, she described physiological symptoms of warmth feeling and red face, loss of concentration, light headedness, being confused, not remembering even simple English words, blank brain while under stress that worsened her communication in English.

She believed that working in an environment where she must use English has increased her problems and has led to her constant fear and anxiety:

> Since I found this job, the pressure is more intensified than
> before. I have to be at work 4-8 hours per day. I am anxious
> and terrified all the time. If it was in Farsi, I was fine. I mean I
> am fine with the work but not the language.

At this time, she projected her non-improvement and speaking difficulties to the teaching method that her private teacher employed in Iran:

[E]ven with my private tutor I did not have the experience of routine conversations. I thought about a topic in advance and I prepared myself. It was not conversation. I did not learn how to apply structures. She prepared me for the immigration interview. I memorized all the responses to different questions.

She defined her new language experiences as embarrassing and remarked:

I advise others to learn colloquial English at first. I tell them not to go for academic English or to pass IELTS or other standard tests. The most problematic part is colloquial English. I think academic English is not required at the very beginning. To live in a society to be successful in oral communication is a must. Learning grammatical rules and different techniques to pass a standard test do not suffice. We need practical English…. I believe good colloquial English will help everyone to progress fast and everything goes well. If you do not have this good command of English communicative skills, you cannot communicate with anyone, whether a low worker or a professor.

Finally she defined her feelings as:

It is much more than physiological changes. It is very deep. The sense of being not valued is very deep and frustrating. It is very bad. I believe I have physiological changes, but at the same time the pressure is too much for me to remember anything.

Discussion

Since the interviews were being conducted in Farsi, after the interview sessions I transcribed the tape-recorded data into Farsi. I analysed the Farsi data and then translated the Farsi analysed scripts into English. I made separate files for each participant and I organized the data to answer the research questions:

(1) What is the lived experience of English as a second language like for Iranian immigrant women?

(2) How can an improved understanding of the existing dimensions of this lived experience help promote English as a second language curriculum design for this group?

I noted cross-references among participants' expressed data and I looked for the data that would help me find the specific discourses characteristic of this group as being "Iranian", "immigrant", and "woman". I searched through subjects' statements (in Farsi) and I decided to focus my analysis on the transcribed data to find discourses of anxiety in their explanations of their ESL experience. I extracted the relevant statements from their responses and then I clustered these themes or discourses of anxiety on the basis of their commonalities. I used the paradigms of psychology, physiology and philosophy to explain these discourses (Fig. 5.1).

Most of the interviewees (6 out of 7) expressed themselves freely, presented details about their linguistic experiences, and explained all the details of their experiences. Just one interviewee (Nazanin) did not seem willing to share

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her thoughts, feelings, and experiences, and my observation was that she was not comfortable with the interview.

There are major similarities (common themes) in these women's understandings and beliefs; most importantly, there is a huge conflict between these women's expectations and the realities that they encountered when they arrived in Canada. However, they have great expectations of themselves because of their previous life experiences and their expectations of the host country as a first world country, but they were disappointed. These women mostly place a high value on their capabilities and previous successes as indicator of their mental capacities and their previous major roles in their society of origin that did not work for them in their new life experience.

I classified some of the major and common themes of the interviews as common categories and clusters of psychological, physiological, and sociocultural discourses of ESL anxiety that are presented in the following tables:

Table 5.1   Discourses of ESL anxiety among Iranian immigrant women

Physiological	Psychological	Sociocultural
Heart pounding, Excessive warmth in body and face, Low energy level, Cold and clammy hands, Difficult breathing, Feeling hot, Perspiration, Abdominal pain, Rapid pulse, Dry mouth, Nausea, Vomiting, Low blood pressure, Fainting, Inability to sleep, Inability to go back into sleep, Crying, Fever, Nightmares, Lack of energy, Face flushing, Unable to move (feeling freezed), Lack of concentration, Empty-headedness, Forgetfulness, Busy mind, Feeling Dumb, Feeling paralysed, Urgency	Communication anxiety, Identity change, Feeling unsafe and insecure, Inability to express one's self, Feeling worry, Self-control, Behavioural changes, Consciousness about making mistakes, Low self-esteem, Self-conflict, Self-vulnerability, Self-deficiency, Depression, Isolation, Sense of guilt, Sadness, Memory deficit, Feeling upset, Distorted self-image, Fear, Sense of inferiority -in relation to successful family members -in relation to native speakers of English Personality differences Underestimation of one's potentialities Emotional disturbances Feeling incapable, Personality changes, Active blaming systems	To keep silent, Avoidance of judgments, Fear and avoidance of communications, Feeling uncomfortable in communications, Lack of confidence, Being conditioned, Being ashamed, Compromising, Being proud, Thinking in the 1st language, Lack of agency, Cultural shock, Technological shock, Rules of survival, Lack of cultural language, Lack of sense of belonging, Lack of self-confidence, Gender differences, Lack of agency

Table 5.2   Psychological changes due to ESL anxiety

Identity Shifts	Self-silence, Self-control (high), Self-esteem (low), Self-conflict (high), Self-inferiority, Self-underestimation, Self-blame (guilt), Self-image (distorted), Self-shame, Self- insufficiency, Self-vulnerability, Self-confidence (low), etc.
Emotional Disturbances	Worry, depression, sadness, feeling upset, Fear, anxiety, etc.
Behavioural Changes	Isolation, keeping silence, avoidance of communication, etc.

Table 5.3   Physiological systems involved in ESL anxiety

No.	Physiological systems
1	Circulatory system (e.g., heart pounding, rapid pulse)
2	Gastrointestinal system (e.g., nausea, vomiting)
3	Musculo-skeletal system (e.g., bodily movement)
4	Nervous system (e.g., memory, thermo- regulation, sleep)
5	Respiratory system (e.g., difficulty breathing)
6	Salivation (e.g., dry mouth)
7	Skin system (e.g., perspiration, heat)
8	Urinary system (e.g., urgency)

According to the major and common themes and expressions found in the data, subjects felt intensely disempowered when they came to Canada and found their English proficiency inadequate to meet the challenges of daily living in a new country. For some, because of their long periods of previous English learning, this experience was discouraging, as they had not expected such difficulty. Two of the participants (Parinaz and Mahsa) described family disturbances because with respect to their roles as wives and mothers, they were not as proficient as their husbands and children in English competence and performance. Their incompetence led to their lack of power and authority as

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wives and mothers and jeopardized their ability to provide modelling for their children.

All participants described their avoidance of communication with English speakers. Some recognized their reliance on others to communicate for them, and felt shameful because of their dependency behaviours. Also, as a result of their silences, they felt positioned as stupid, dumb, inadequate, incapable, invalid, disabled, unreliable, and infantilised. They feel they are not the same as before, and likened this to "personality changes". These feelings were in direct conflict with their previous confidence in themselves as proficient, educated, capable and reliable. They feel isolated and unsafe.

Their perceptions are based on their English as a Foreign Language (EFL) experiences and how they learned and practiced English language in their homeland and during their stay in Canada. In some cases (e.g., Nazanin, Mahsa, Tabassom), the greater opportunity for communication did not solve their problems and sometimes even made their situation worse.

These women's problems are partly due to the education system common to many Eastern countries (Roessingh, 2006). The Iranian model of English language instruction emphasizes memorization more than application of understandings in real life situations. In other words, its major concern is the banking concept of Education (Freire, 2004). It is test-driven and the main emphasis in this system is on the scores obtained. Learning English is mostly for the purpose of passing university entrance exams and passing courses at university. English is taught in a decontextualized context on a basis of specified

textbooks, and greater emphasis is on vocabulary and grammar than on the communicative aspects of English.

Despite their exposure to the English language for many years, but because of several instructional insufficiencies of education system (e.g., crowded classes, inefficient language teachers, lack of interaction in this language, more emphasis on grammatical rules and rote learning) participants felt that they were incompetent language users in an English environment. However, rather than locating all problems in the women's individual lack of proficiency in English, it is necessary to look to the environment in which they were using English and feeling so unsafe and disempowered.

Learning a second language is a gradual, new life experience that, to be achieved, requires time, practice and peace of mind. At the very beginning, these women found their English language proficiency inadequate for communicating with native speakers in Canada. Because of their high self-esteem and their high expectations of themselves due to their previous life experiences and successes in their homeland, this was a profoundly uncomfortable feeling for them. However, rather than gradually appropriating the English they need, they become depressed, developed low self-esteem, their identity changed, and they experience anxiety. These aversive unwanted mental, emotional, and physiological and psychological experiences moved them from a paradigm of success to a paradigm of "nothingness" in the new society, which in their own words is described as grief, pain, and torture, suffering; simultaneously, they describe bodily symptoms of anxiety due to their lived experiences.

These women all expressed dissatisfaction with ESL programming for adult immigrants in Canada and they supported the idea of appropriate ESL programming in favour of all four language skills, especially oral language skills, taking into account individual differences.

Summary

The study population consists of Iranian women who have learned English in their homeland as a foreign language and also have experienced English in their homeland workplaces. These women have high values and expect the same success that they achieved in their countries. They believe that they deserve their previous respect and dignity; however, they have not reached the communicative competence that is the most crucial means of helping them reach the successful expected end that they desire. Lack of English language proficiency is the most crucial barrier against their success and achievement in the host society. It is obvious that the basic interpersonal communication skills in English rather than cognitive academic language proficiency is their immediate need. They lack understanding of the cultural issues of the host society. They criticize Canadian government policies regarding professional immigrants and the lack of sufficient social and emotional support systems in Canada for these people.

PART THREE:

A PHILOSOPHICAL INTERVENTION

CHAPTER 6:
PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO
UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING WITH ANXIETY

Introduction

In this chapter, I will approach understanding anxiety from a philosophical point of view, which is an unusual approach to the topic, but one that I believe holds great promise for addressing ESL anxiety. In my work, I will use the term 'philosophy' to mainly mean the practice of investigating and coming to the realization of the way we conceptualize and understand the world and the self. The fruit of philosophy is awareness about the way our beliefs and values condition who we are and how we experience the world: what we perceive, think of, interpret, and understand, and how we value something. Beliefs and values are philosophical objects by way of which we come to understand and value the world in particular ways. In this chapter, I am interested to find out the connection between certain beliefs and values and the experience of anxiety. I want to investigate if certain ways we view the world and ourselves would more readily dispose us to anxiety.

I have organized the chapter in terms of three complementary philosophical perspectives that I believe are illuminating for understanding anxiety: existentialism, phenomenology, and Buddhism. In this work, Buddhism is not to be understood as a religion or even spirituality, but as a form of existential philosophy with a particular view or understanding of what human beings are. I

enlist these three perspectives to show that anxiety is intimately connected to the kinds of understanding or view we have of what human beings are and how we value and live our lives.

Existentialism and Anxiety

Existentialism or the philosophy of existence is a school of thought that is based on rejection of all abstract thinking, reasoning, and pure logical or scientific philosophy. It believes that philosophy should be connected to the individual's own life and experience, and that it is a way of life. For existential philosophers, the real personal experience that starts from inner knowledge and experience is of major importance (Roubiczek, 1964). The word 'existence' has its roots in the Latin *existere*, which means to come forth, manifest [ex- (out) + sistere, to stand] stand out; anxiety (*angst*) comes from the Latin *angere*, which means to torment (Berube et al., 1997) Therefore, existential anxiety means an unwanted, undesirable feeling that comes from our very existence. This anxiety should be taken into account through existential philosophy and phenomenology that inquires into and explores what it means to be a human. To note, there are many different schools of existential philosophy, and in the course of this chapter, I shall be commenting on a few. But, first of all, I want to deal with the question 'what do existentialists agree on?'; and 'how could that be applied to understanding ESL anxiety?'

Some of the great philosophers of existence such as Jaspers (1931), Kierkegaard (1944), Buber (1958), Sartre (1958), Heidegger (1962), Marleau-Ponty (1968), Nietzsche (1968), and Husserl (1975) are followers of the

existential school of thought that greatly influenced some humanistic schools of psychology (Strasser, 1999). What matters is not their names, but how these great names view our being in the world. "Being is what concerns existentialists" (Appignanesi, 2006, p. 2), our existence in a particular time and place--in other words, our limitations, and boundaries. Existentialism encourages people to face the consequences of their being. Existentialists are concerned with crises of life but they want to reach a positive assertion of being (Appignanesi, 2006). " What matters to existentialists is the dissidence by which human beings respond to a negative fate" (Appignanesi, 2006, p. 5) and what gives meaning to their life. Meaning is an inescapable part of our being, and we need to search for it in our own being. That is, meaning is not inherent in things outside ourselves, but how *we* value things (the world) creates meaning for us. Hence, we employ different meanings for dissimilar or similar life situations, and these differences arise from our belief and value systems.

To recap, existentialism puts the sole or major responsibility of finding meaning and value in life on individual human beings and their capacity to create meaning. Life is not a given, but a project to be undertaken, as in a moral responsibility or even a work of art. All this may be very empowering to individuals, but at the same time, we can also see how self-responsibility would precipitate anxiety about survival and self-care.

Kierkegaard (1813-1855), known as the father of existentialism, identified ours as the "Age of Anxiety" (Appignanesi, 2006; Tillich, 1952), and explained that the concept of anxiety came from the doctrine of original sin and was related

to the religious self (Gardiner, 1988; Pattison, 2005). He considered anxiety, as "objectless states of mind that are recognizable at the level of ordinary experience related to something that is nothing" (Gardiner, 1988, p. 106). That is to say, no external object exists for anxious states, and they arise from internal sensations and feelings that a person has in her life encounters. This notion of anxiety as something without an external object shows that it is different from fear for which an external object is known. From this perspective, the anxiety that is seen in ESL learners is due to their life experiences with regard to their language proficiency. Making a distinction between fear of external objects for which there is an external counterpart in the external world, and ESL anxiety that arises from ESL learners' beliefs and value systems is an important tool in hands of ESL educators. It implies that teachers should pay close attention to the students' beliefs, attitudes, and general worldviews.

Another important concept that Kierkegaard addressed is 'dread'. Dread comes from anxiety, and sometimes it is so intense that it could paralyse a human's life. This dread may come from feeling alone (Appignanesi, 2006; Reynolds, 2006), and it happens in situations when a person does not gain acceptable recognition from her immediate internal (self) or external (others) environment, which leads to feeling isolated and separated. This sense of isolation is anxiety-provoking because our existence and engagement in this world is through our connections and relations with others and with ourselves. "Existentialists … are concerned with … specific practical situations in which human being recognizes itself" (Appignanesi, 2006, p. 108). This recognition

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happens through interaction with others (inter-relationships) and interaction with one's self (intra-relationship).

Existential philosophers after Kierkegaard, such as Buber (1958), Sartre (1958) and Heidegger (1962), were deeply influenced by his conception of anxiety (Gardiner, 1988). For Kierkegaard we need "to live and endure *with*, and not against the tension of a belief.... " (Reynolds, 2006, p. 6). The tensions that we experience are rooted in our beliefs, and what is needed is to learn how to live with them and accept them rather than standing against them and trying to eliminate them from our life. Without this understanding, we try to study anxiety as a problem to be solved and eliminated. Anxiety is not an illness that needs to be gotten rid of, as it is part of our existence, and therefore we need a different attitude and approach to anxiety, that is not to eliminate it but to manage it; this is an invaluable message from existentialism.

For existentialists, anxiety is ever-present, and what is needed is to change our view about it rather than eliminating it because it is an inseparable part of our existence that shows up some time during our life span. The existential tensions appear during encounters with different life situations and trigger different reactions in different individuals, or even in the same individual appear differently, depending on different life situations. Thus, learning to live with anxiety is a complex and challenging learning task for all of us. Of course, because of their greater degree of susceptibility, some individuals face greater challenges than others.

Existential philosophers point out that our being is limited, which means that there is an end for us but we cannot know where our end is to be. It is more about this unknowing than the fact that we have an end that seems to provoke profound anxiety. Anxiety is internally permeating and pervasive, and its effects are quite debilitating. The way we grow up (our sociocultural background, attitudes, beliefs, etc.) and how we experience life have shaped our identity and our existence, and anxiety is part of such identity construction. Hence, anxiety is best regarded as an essential element of our being.

Here is another corroborating voice, this time from the Buddhist scholar and existentialist David Loy, who stated that existential anxiety, is "something essential to the self not something we have but something we are" (Loy, 2000, p. 16). Regardless of the environments and our experiences, it is not a possession or burden that we can set aside for a while, we cannot get rid of it, and it is part of our existence and being in this world that is ever present. It is interwoven with our mind and body from the time that we come into existence, and it will never leave us till the last moment.

Existential psychologists such as Rank, Becker, and Freud, believed that we cannot eliminate anxiety completely even through therapeutic measures (Loy, 2000). Anxiety could be lessened but it is not possible to free human beings from it totally. The structure of human existence renders it; we cannot live without it. In fact, from the existential viewpoint, human life would be meaningless without the experience of anxiety since meaning and meaningfulness are about our struggles for and against significant life challenges and overcoming them. Removing

anxiety from human life (if such is possible at all) would be like removing bones from human body, which would result in the body collapsing into a shapeless heap.

Other existential psychologists such as Rolo May and Irwin Yalom view anxiety as a "guide that can point a way to a more authentic life; the aim of therapy, therefore, is to reduce it to a more manageable level " (Loy, 2000). Here, anxiety acts as a signal to open our mind to an important aspect of our being in the world. It leads to our self-awareness and broadens our understanding of our multiple dimensionalities. As human beings, we are made up of diverse interconnected dimensions. We have psychic, physical, and spiritual dimensions that are closely interwoven, inseparable and influential on our whole being. Awareness of our multiple dimensions, and the way they interact and show up through our significant life challenges at different times and places, arms us with the ability to impact them intentionally.

From another existential perspective, Strasser (1999), who derived the terms 'reflective' and 'unreflective' state from Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of emotions (1939), described emotions as follows. He believed that there is "an instantaneous, startling, non-aware primary expression" (p. 25) of emotion or unreflective state that may be followed by a reflective awareness state. As soon as we become aware of our emotional experience, we can contemplate, explore, explain, and evaluate our emotions, and they become reflective and get away from being uncontrollable. Transforming unreflective emotions into reflective ones changes emotional insecurity to security (Strasser, 1999). However, since

anxiety has the effect of making us reflect, even if painfully and too self-consciously on ourselves, we may see anxiety as having the positive and useful function of turning unreflective emotions into reflective emotions. While experiencing anxiety, we may end up thinking about what is troubling and scaring us, and explain its nature and characteristics, and evaluate it as to what we can do to deal with our challenges. As well, when we can discuss our concerns and worries with others, we are already stepping outside of what is troubling us, and are then able to view it from diverse perspectives, and gain greater insight and wisdom (Strasser, 1999). While not all experience of anxiety may lead to this kind of positive outcome, I am postulating that anxiety, if understood more positively, could be approached as an opportunity and "psychological tool" for greater reflective awareness. Along a similar line, Michael Lewis (1993) believes that individuals have to become aware of their emotions before they can experience, interpret and evaluate them (cited in Strasser, 1999). Self-awareness is key to dealing with existential anxiety.

This exploration of anxiety from an existential viewpoint should convince us that the usual understanding and approach to anxiety, namely that it is a social and personal evil that needs to be eliminated, is not only futile but also a serious waste of opportunity and possibility for learning important aspects of being a human being. I now turn briefly to what the field of phenomenology says about anxiety, and how this could help us to approach it.

Phenomenology and Anxiety

Phenomenon is the appearance of reality in consciousness (Bell, 1990; Lauer, 1965), and phenomenology is the study of human experience and how things are perceived by consciousness. Phenomenology has its roots in Greek words *phainomenon* (to appear) and *logos* (word, speech) (Earnshaw, 2006; Langdridge, 2007). Edmund Husserl refuted the Cartesian dichotomy between mind and body, and proposed phenomenology in the late nineteenth century as the science of mind and consciousness as we experience it. Phenomenology starts with description of conscious experience from the subjects' or agents' point of view. In Husserl's view human consciousness and the world are in close connection to each other (Earnshaw, 2006; Langdridge, 2007; Lauer, 1965; Loy, 2003; Molina, 1962; Smith, 2004).

Also, all that is accessible to our consciousness exists at the phenomenological level, that is, the level at which we feel our experiences and distinguish between them. Everything that we are aware of exists at this level. Moreover, phenomenology explains non-conscious structures underlying our conscious experiment (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

Phenomenology is a specific method of investigation that is used by existentialist philosophers (e.g. Husserl, Heidegger and their followers) to interpret life experiences and the nature of the world as experienced by common sense. The demeanour and disposition of our existence in the world depends on how we experience phenomena. In other words, our life is influenced by our

perception of the world and accompanying emotional responses, which is a moment-to-moment life-event as we encounter different life situations.

Phenomenology is not explanatory but descriptive (Langdridge, 2007; Lauer, 1965; Loy, 2003; Molina, 1962). That is, it does not analyse or explain the phenomenon but seeks to describe it. In phenomenological philosophy people's lived experience is of central importance. Its aim is to study experience and how people perceive the world. It understands that perception of the world and how people recognize it differs greatly among people, and even for one person in different contexts (Langdridge, 2007).

The major concepts of Husserlian phenomenology are "lebenswelt" (Bell, 1990; Langdridge, 2007; Smith, 2004), intentionality, and epoché (Earnshaw, 2006; Langdridge, 2007; Moran, 2005). 'Lebenswelt' is one of the most important notions of phenomenology and refers to the notion of 'life world', or human world. Husserl suggested that our everyday sense of the world makes a background world picture (Weltbild). The world life or the world as we experience and know it in everyday life and as it informs our everyday activity is highly contingent, is a product of human activity and cultural matters, and exists "in intentional activities from perception, thought, imagination, and emotion to action" (Smith, 2004, p. 161). For Husserl, this world picture (Weltbild) is a construct of intentional contents of consciousness or "noemata, noema", or that which is experienced supports our understanding of the world (Earnshaw, 2006; Langdridge, 2007; Smith, 2004). Noesis or the manner in which something is experienced (Langdridge, 2007) comprises the absolute foundation of all our

moral, social, cultural, psychological, scientific, philosophical, and everyday practice (Bell, 1990), and " [embraces] concepts, images, propositions, and volitions, modified by attitudes ("thetic characters") of perception, belief, emotions and the like" (Smith, 2004, p. 150).

Here, we have two concepts: the world around us, in which we live, has certain properties and is external to our consciousness; and the world picture (Weltbild) that is constructed out of the intentional contents or 'noemata'; these background ideas include our bodily, and intellectual skills as well human's values and beliefs and are products of human socio-cultural activity (Smith, 2004). Husserl believed that "there is not one single life-world, rather there is a set of intersecting or overlapping worlds, beginning from the world which is closest to us, the home world (Heimwelt), and extending to other worlds which are farther away, 'foreign' or 'alien worlds' the worlds of other cultures, and so on" (Moran, 2005, p. 9). Husserl recognized that culture; tradition, common practice, and especially history are crucial factors to determine the everyday life of each community and directly determine their life-world (Bell, 1990).

For immigrant ESL learners, many different life worlds are in complex interaction. They bring their previous life experiences, culture, traditions, and beliefs from their previous home world to the alien host world. Their task is multifaceted; they not only have to make themselves familiar with the new sociocultural expectations of the host society, but they also need to become equipped with the necessary tools without which this adaptation can not take place. As well, they suffer separation from the support systems they were used

to, which in turn affects not only what they experience but also how they experience the world, which increases their anxiety.

According to Husserl, we know the world through outer perception or experience of the physical world and inner perception, or the experience of our mental world or self- perception (Earnshaw, 2006). Therefore, it is not just the matter of two worlds (outer world and inner world) but also the matter of multiple worlds of outer worlds (e.g., home or alien) and inner worlds (e.g., diverse self perceptions, or inner worlds since the inner world as well is dynamic and in different life encounters at different societies and cultures diverse inner worlds emerge). All these worlds are in interaction, which intensifies the complexities of human beings.

How do we deal with complexity, especially the complexity, as above, that tends to provoke anxiety? While there is no simple magical solution to help individuals to deal with inordinate complexity, as in the Lebenswelt of immigrants who are acquiring a new language while trying to adapt to a new culture, one powerful tool we can use is a type of self-awareness called 'mindfulness' in Buddhism, also known as 'witness consciousness' in some other traditions. I will discuss mindfulness in the next section.

Other major concepts of Husserlian phenomenology are epoché and intentionality (Earnshaw, 2006; Langdridge, 2007; Moran, 2005). Intentionality refers to the fact that consciousness is always about something, or it is directed toward an object of consciousness. When we are conscious, most of the time we are aware that something exists "out there," like the trees we see and birds we

hear. But the objects of an individual's consciousness are the subjective experiences of how things appear to the individual's consciousness. Intentionality focuses "on what is experienced and the way it is experienced" (Langdridge, 2007, p. 21). This conceptual distinction between what must exist outside one's consciousness and the mental representations of these external objects is critically important for the student of phenomenology. For it is this distinction that enables the phenomenologist to reflect on the content of one's consciousness, that is, the mental objects, and undertake such mental operations like epoché.

Epoché is a decision produced by a free act of mind (Moran, 2005), the core of which is doubt about the natural attitude of experiencing the world (our everyday way of seeing the world), that is, thinking that what one experiences (the mental representation) is what is out there (external objects). According to Husserl, natural attitude characterizes human existence, and phenomenology helps us become aware of it. Once we become aware, we can then question our particular perceptions and attempt to get at the presuppositions that are at work in our personal lived experience (Langdridge, 2007).

The implications of these major phenomenological understandings are several for us who study anxiety. These phenomenological perspectives allow us: 1) to be careful observers of our own anxiety and how it plays out in our consciousness, 2) to be aware of our worldviews, beliefs, and attitudes that gives rise to our experience of anxiety, 3) to examine anxiety (ours and others) from different perspectives (for example, to focus on different internal states of mind and external states of sociocultural encounters that engender the ESL anxiety

experience), so as be able to describe its general features and to uncover its different layers, 4) to focus on anxiety as a human experience that needs immediate attention and relief, and 5) to recognize our authoritative role in being able to change ourselves and others' point of views to create a better living situation for all of us. The ability to observe and study our and others' anxious states is greatly helpful in living with anxiety, and to acquire phenomenological understanding of these states by focusing on our real experiences is the very first step to detect and manage anxiety to live a better life with the least sufferings from unwanted consequences of anxiety.

I believe that the phenomenological focus on ESL anxiety helps the ESL learner to move from purely personal experience of anxiety to investigating the underlying structures of consciousness. In other words, our learner who experiences anxiety turns his or her experience of anxiety into an object of investigation. This notion of phenomenologically studying, investigating, or researching one's experience brings me to exploring Buddhism. Buddhism is a school of thought that has not only some commonalities with existentialism and phenomenology to view life experiences especially anxiety, but also the very tool that phenomenology is advocating. The tool that Buddhism offers is mindfulness.

Buddhism and Anxiety

Buddhism as an illuminating school of thought emerged more than 2500 years ago. In the present work, Buddhism is treated, as both an existential philosophy that has particular views about what the self is, what human beings are, and what the world is like, and a very refined phenomenological study of

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experience. Buddhism, however, is not just a theoretical philosophy, but also a practice that transforms one's very understanding of the self and world. The main vehicle of practice, as mentioned, is 'mindfulness', alertness or being conscious of what has happened to the individual in the process of becoming. Before we go on to explore mindfulness practice, first let us take a look at Buddhism as an existential and phenomenological theory.

Buddhist Account of Mind, Body, and Self

From the perspective of Buddhist philosophy, mind (*nama*[17]) is the starting, focal, culminating point. In other words "Mind precedes things, dominates them, creates them" (Thera, 1969, p. 21). However, mind and body are not considered separate entities: they are interconnected and in constant interaction:

The so-called matter is 'contact with resistance' (patigha-samphassa) and what is called mind is 'contact with concepts' (adhivacanna- samphassa). In so doing, Buddha was reducing both mind and matter to contact (samphassa) and, therefore, processes of experience rather than any kind of material-stuff or mind-stuff (Kalupahana, 1987, p. 16).

Buddha reduced both body (tangibles) and mind (concepts) to contact or processes of experience. This focus on experience, leaving behind the usual philosophical questions about how the categorically separate mind and body interact, liberates us from the sophistry of philosophical body-mind problem, and moves us to concentrate our work on understanding and working with

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[17] All Buddhist words are from Sanskrit Language

experience. In other words, by shifting the focus to our internal experience and understanding the conditioned nature of experience, we could gain control over the normally reactive conditioning that governs our experience. This is how we can become agents of our own change.

Self in Buddhism

Buddha taught that human suffering is due to an ignorant belief that there is an unchanging entity called the 'self' or ego-self. This ego-self always says, "This is how I am; this is what I am like. " By insisting on its separate and unchanging identity, it alienates itself from the world, and brings about the difficulty of being receptive and responsive to changes in life and world. From the perspective of the ego-self, the world can never meet the expectations of the self. It always fails the self's wants and demands, leaving the self always vaguely or acutely discontent and anxious. In this context, Buddha's suggestion to decrease or even nullify what the self expects from the world is tantamount to dissolving the sense of ego-self (Kalupahana, 1987): the sense that makes them think and feel definite about who they are and what they are like. It is this sense of ego-self that makes us rather rigid and difficult about changing ourselves to meet the challenges of the constantly shifting and changing external environment. In other words, it is our sense of ego-self that puts us in conflict with the external world.

Buddha emphasized that the fundamental reality of consciousness is its instability or impermanence. First of all, consciousness is an emergent reality: consciousness is not an independently existing entity. Consciousness emerges from the in-the-moment 'contact' amongst the sense organ, the object of sense,

and the stream of consciousness that carries prior beliefs, impressions, likes and dislikes, and so on. The important idea here is that the psychophysical operations of consciousness are dynamic, and therefore, a more reasonable conception of what the self is like, based on experiential observations has to take into account that a sense of self contracts, expands, or adapts itself to its context.

In Buddhism the self is a dynamic, ever-changing process. In other words, self is not an independent, self-contained entity. In self-preservative mode, self acts as a discrete entity, and in a species-preservative mode, it acts as a process of interdependence and interconnectedness with respect to others (Gilbert, 2005). Self becomes self in relation to itself and to others outside of it. Thus Buddhism denies the sense of duality between self and world, and the consequent sense of existential lack that the self does not measure up to the world or vice versa. However, instead of confronting this sense of lack, our usual reaction is to attempt to remove this lack by reinforcing the self or trying to conform the world to the self. In other words, we see our self and the world outside as separate entities, and we try to overcome this duality by changing the world to suit the self's desires and needs. Anxiety and discontent have to do with the fact that we can never overcome this duality. To the ego-self, the world just seems to stubbornly refuse to conform to the self's desire. The world always fails to measure up to the self's demand.

Loy (2003) comments: "*[N] ow* does not offer security to the sense-of-self but requires us to confront the very insecurity we flee from because it threatens our sense-of-self" (P.41). By becoming aware of and confronting this

fundamental existential lack and how it originates from a mistaken notion (*dukkha*) that there is a permanent self and that the world is separate from the self, we can begin to bring about the change we want in the world. In other words, we ourselves have to become the change we want in the world. According to Buddhism, consciousness does not exist in isolation, and, to exist, consciousness needs a conscious mind, an external object, and the stream of consciousness that must be orchestrated to harmonize the self and the external world.

Mindfulness Practice

As indicated earlier, the most powerful aspect of Buddhism is the phenomenological practice called 'mindfulness', also known by various names like vipassana, concentration, insight, choiceless awareness, bare attention, self-remembering, or Buddhist meditation (Claxton, 1999; Claxton, 1990; Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986). Mindfulness practice is the heart of the Buddha's teaching. Through mindfulness we come to know the nature of our experience: how it came to be put together in the particular way that the self perceives, feels, and reacts. Only by seeing through this conditioned nature of our experience that we can re-shape the mind, and furthermore, shape our life (Thera, 1969).

Mindfulness is not a religious practice or something mysterious or unusual. Mindfulness is our natural capacity to be aware, but to be firmly established in this capacity, it requires perseverance of practice (Claxton, 1990; Thera, 1969). Mindfulness is "seeing through one's perceptual assumptions" (Claxton, 1999, p. 180), and the major part of it is the development of attention

(Thera, 1969) and concentration, known as samatha or one-pointedness that is adjunct to insight (Claxton, 1990). In this process the meditator is the observer of her succession of thoughts, feelings, and sensations without preference, comment, judgment, reflection or interpretation (Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986). It is a practice of introspection through which we find out about just how we come to experience the world and ourselves in the ways we do, and how we as powerful agents in our destiny can keep our lives in our hands and may make changes for better well being. The power of mindfulness is acting in the present. Mindfulness occurs just here and now, and attention is given to the vast present, regardless of past and un-coming future.

As Loy succinctly summarizes (2000): " [T] he Buddhist solution to the problem of *dukkha* is not to evade it but to become it and see what that does to us" (p. xiii). Again, what is absolutely necessary is clear awareness of what goes on in our body and mind, or 'mindbody'. Anxiety is one of these sufferings, and the Buddhist approach is not to avoid or even get rid of anxiety but to become thoroughly familiar with it, and come to know it from inside out. This helps us to view anxiety from different perspectives and to dissect it into its structural layers and undo them. Being able to examine and explore our experience in this manner affords us an opportunity to bring to light our beliefs, attitudes and biases and work with them. We suffer from anxiety when we anticipate something bad (uncomfortable, fearful, upsetting, and so on) happening but we have no way of knowing exactly what to expect, and we do not know how to handle it. When we come to know, not in a general and theoretical way, but in a concrete and

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particular way, what it is that our mind reacts to with anxiety, how we ended up with this reaction, and moreover, how to handle anxiety, this will greatly reduce anxiety. Working with anxiety is not a matter of getting rid of anxiety but knowing it so intimately that we know how to handle it.

Mindfulness is living in the present moment and experiencing the present life without thinking about the past memories or future anxieties, and it does not deal with problem-solving. It is free from evaluations and judgments. There is no purposeful thinking about how to change the situation (Claxton, 1999). Mindfulness practice is an unparalleled tool that can help us to get to know our experience of anxiety in the most intimate and substantial way, which is what is required for us to change our experience of anxiety.

Our minds' engagement with the past and preoccupation with the future, which is what anxiety is essentially about, leads to lack of awareness of the here and now experience, and blocks our energy flow. Mindfulness or meditation, while focusing on the here and now, will release this blocked energy. In the experience of anxiety, people usually see the worst-case scenario that is based on their biases about what is going to happen or based on their previous evaluations of their life experiences. For example, in ESL anxiety, sufferers do not see their potentials and focus only on their ineffective linguistic competence. Their conscious mind mostly deals with the problem that they perceive as crucial. Mindfulness helps them stop repetitive, self-reinforcing patterns of negative thinking and purposive mind control that is destructive. Through the cultivation of mindfulness, one becomes one's own counselor and meditator (Claxton, 1999).

Now, people usually think that mindfulness is sitting meditation. Mindfulness is the way we work with our states of consciousness, and is not limited to any particular activity or body posture. It is just that sitting quietly with one's back straight happens to be a very effective way to cultivate mindfulness, and is highly recommended as a practice. But the goal of mindfulness practice is to extend this state of mindful awareness to any time and everywhere in whatever we are doing. For this reason, people take up mindful walking, mindful eating, and mindful brush painting (as in *sumi*), to mention a few examples, as additional practices of mindfulness besides the sitting meditation. Possibilities are unlimited. For example, all rhythmic conscious activities, such as swimming, or looking at the water, tend to naturally encourage mindfulness, and are excellent way to attend to the perceptual world mindfully. Generally speaking, mindfulness decreases anxiety.

Summary

In this chapter I followed three schools of thought relevant to our study of anxiety: existentialism, phenomenalism, and Buddhism. I presented the major concerns of each of these philosophies to offer a helpful understanding of the experience of anxiety, self, the external world, and the interaction between the external world and self, which is anxiety-provoking. Finally, I described mindfulness as the cornerstone of Buddhism to reduce anxiety and its related symptoms to a manageable level.

In addition the world as it appears to ESL learners and their perception of anxiety that happens at a phenomenological level investigated. Moreover, the

correlation of how ESL anxiety appears in the real English environment of the host society and how ESL groups experience it were taken into account. The major concern was how these people understand ESL anxiety and the way that they perceive the multiple worlds in which they inhabit. What is important is understanding the way in which the ESL anxiety concept forms a phenomenological way of thinking about ESL learners and successful teaching, learning and living environments.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

[ESL] Existential anxiety is "something essential to the self not something we [immigrant ESL learners] have but something we [they] are…and the aim is to reduce it to a more manageable level"   *(Loy, 2000, p. 16).*

Introduction

This inquiry, by using an ethno-phenomenological case study methodology, investigates the perceptions of seven immigrant Iranian women regarding their lived experience learning English in Canada. When I started this research, I hoped that some distinct patterns would emerge that would show the commonalities of the ESL anxiety phenomenon among the research participants. The interview transcriptions provided rich possibilities for further analysis. In this thesis I have attempted to describe the fundamental features of these women's ESL lived experiences. After spending dozens of hours reviewing the gathered data, I created different categories and clusters using the "constant comparative method" (constant comparison of data) (Creswell, 2003) from which a 'grounded theory' emerged. Since data gathering, data analysis, and theory modification were ongoing, gradually I developed, clarified, and revised the suggested theory. In other words, I continuously reviewed the gathered data, and identified themes and checked these classifications with other researchers (my supervisor, committee members, conference participants) to complete the emerging theory so that it describes and to some extent explains Iranian immigrant women's

perception of ESL anxiety. Common among the research participants were physiological, psychological, and philosophical discourses of anxiety in the context of the sociocultural milieu.

ESL anxiety as distress (Chapter 3) is a state of mind (soul, psyche, psychology) and a state of body (physics/chemistry, physiology). It has philosophical (attitude, belief) aspects as well that influence all facets of ESL immigrants' lives. Such anxiety should be a critical concern in English environments and ESL educational settings. ESL anxiety is an inseparable part of ESL contexts of which immigrants are part and it has a negative influence on their very existence and being. It affects immigrant ESL learners and becomes their dominant nature if it is not prevented or resolved. ESL anxiety is experienced on the border between two linguistic systems and cultures, and it is at the intersection of diverse interconnected systems of physiology, psychology, and philosophy. It happens not only because transition from one linguistic system to another one is anxiety provoking, but also because the occurrence of this transition in an unknown sociocultural environment intensifies this anxiety.

ESL anxiety is an affective filter that blocks immigrants' capacity to live happy lives. Their language anxiety decreases their linguistic proficiency and ability to be successful in their linguistic challenges and, to complete the circle; their lack of proficiency increases their anxiety. Given this, policy makers', curriculum designers', and teachers' jobs should not be limited to delivering curriculum material and classroom management, but should also include paying attention to creating a teaching, learning and living environment that does not

invite anxiety, or that directly addresses the anxiety learners face. For them to take a holistic view and design curricula that encompass society, as an influential whole that affects all aspects of human beings, is the key to manage anxiety when it manifests itself.

Discussion

During our lives, we experience positive, negative and neutral feelings towards others, our different life situations, and ourselves. Sometimes a feeling is encouraging and helps promote our situation, and sometimes the same feeling impedes our success and is destructive. Most of the time, one of the feelings that greatly influence all aspects of immigrants' (or at least immigrant women's) lives in an English environment is ESL anxiety. It is an important mental health issue that needs prompt attention and management.

For some immigrant women, ESL anxiety is a constant state of mind, a state of being and an existential condition that exists in the English environment. ESL anxiety is a paradox: in some cases it acts as an incentive for the immigrant sufferer to move forward, but in many other cases (such as those we have read about in this thesis) it holds them back; the major point in this relationship is that in either case signs and symptoms of ESL anxiety are unfavourable and the pain from which the victims suffer is described by some as life threatening. Here, I want to make a circular relationship between what I (myself) resonated strongly with and what participants of the study are saying to inform ESL policymakers, ESL educators and immigrants: to recognize this anxiety as an inseparable part

of immigrants' life, and not to waste energy in fearing it, but rather handle it consciously and intentionally.

Furthermore, I believe that the sociocultural milieu, interpersonal and intrapersonal factors (e.g., keeping silence, emotional resonance, a sense of guilt, conditioning, and mental and physical health) greatly influence anxiety. Here, I briefly discuss these issues, which present more information about settings that these women encounter.

Keeping Silence

These women's silences are shouts against the existing system that ignores them as living persons in need of support and encouragement. They all avoid communication and sharing their beliefs and ideas in the English environment. This does not mean that they have nothing to share, but they see this identity reflected back to them by their social environment and they lack the appropriate means of communication to prove their existence as human beings in need of communication and finding a proper position that merits their being in the new society.

Many immigrant ESL learners are not recognized in English environment. Their voice is not heard, as it must be, and in cases where it is heard, it is misinterpreted or mal- interpreted; in other words, it is still not heard! She is not acknowledged or appreciated as she is, and she does not receive the empathetic energy that she needs to feel accepted and loved. These together provoke anxiety in immigrants, especially in the first months of their arrival in the new society. The vicious cycle of not receiving confirmation, acknowledgement,

appreciation and love aggravates their anxiety, and their increased anxiety leads them to keep more silent and to not be heard or to be heard less. A huge part of this vicious cycle happens because of the linguistic competence and performance of the immigrant ESL learner. And after a while, this person does not receive recognition of her *self* not only from the world around (public sphere) but also from the world inside her (private sphere); in other words, the way she is recognized outwardly and inwardly becomes distorted, and her *self* becomes more and more repressed and depressed.

Emotional Resonance

There is a multilateral emotional resonance between ESL anxious immigrants, their immediate family members, and the society in which they live. All these emotional states affect each other, and at the same time influence each individual involved and the whole society.

Sense of Guilt

There are two blaming systems in human beings to handle the sense of lack from which we all suffer. Our sense of lack seeks an object, and if that subject is found outside we react in anger; if directed inside us, our reaction is a sense of guilt. To feel guilty is better than being empty because it gives us a sense of responsibility (Loy, 2000). This blaming system is active in anxious immigrant ESL learners. Some of them feel a sense of guilt because they reprimand themselves for not trying hard enough to learn this language as well as possible, and in other times they feel anger and blame the education system

in their homeland or ESL classes in the host society, which in their view have not been conducted properly. They take responsibility for their failure on themselves or project it to an external system to reduce the guilt pressure on them.

Conditioning

It is noteworthy that in new life situations and in instances where one is conditioned to a similar unpleasant stimulus, the anxiety response is the same. Despite the fact that individual differences are great, the common universalities among human beings help ESL authorities act as preventers and healers of ESL anxiety, provided that they acknowledge it from different perspectives, especially from the point of immigrants' life experiences.

Through the lens of recognition, one needs to be affirmed by another person. At the same time one's affirmation, confirmation and belief about one's self is important. In other words, another essential aspect of recognition is personal self-image; the significance of one's evaluation of one's self that should not be ignored. In this sense, the lens of recognition is bifocal. Mutual and reflexive recognition is necessary for all human interactions, as well between immigrants and native speakers of the English language. Anxiety decreases this recognition and jeopardizes "self" and "identity" of immigrants, and may lead to severe damage to their mental and physical health.

In addition, there should be the recognition that ESL anxiety affects all ESL immigrants, not just those labelled as "anxious" and given special treatment. We need to know the fact that everything we do and do not do as ESL teachers and learners has an effect on anxiety production in everyone. Second, we need

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to allow and encourage ESL immigrants to work with their ESL anxiety, for which self-awareness training is critical. What this also means is not separating, excluding, devaluing, or marginalizing the emotional life, especially "negative" emotions, in the English environment. ESL immigrants should be shown ways to work with their emotions, and given the encouragement and means to become more self-aware. Third, we need to give ESL immigrants and teachers opportunities and tools to philosophically examine their worldviews, beliefs, and values, and the manifestations of these in the institutional structures, procedures, and practices.

The interaction of immigrants' self and ESL anxiety leads to self-disturbance, and different consequences (Table1, 2, and 3) would occur in these sufferers. However, over the passage of time, recovery may happen, but the life long impacts of ESL anxiety consequences will never leave immigrants' mind, soul, and body. In my assessment, the traditional English environment with its inattention to immigrants' experience of anxiety is the most counterproductive. ESL authorities need to understand the phenomenon of ESL anxiety thoroughly and be equipped to work with it.

Mental and Physical Health

Philosophically, humans are conceptual beings whose perception, understanding, and conduct are strongly influenced by their beliefs and values. Immigrants, the same as other human beings, are syntheses of physiological (physical, bodily), psychological (mental, spiritual) and philosophical (attitudinal) dimensions that are in continuous interaction with their sociocultural environment.

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As existential beings they are emotionally affected by the kind of beliefs and values about the world and self they carry and by the beliefs and values of others around them. A person who sees human life as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes, 1964, p. 85) will have a different basis of experience from another who sees life as full of grace and bliss, and might be more prone to anxiety than one who believes in grace and bliss. In general, beliefs and values that portray human beings and their existential life as atomistic individuals inherently disconnected from each other, from the earth, and from the larger (spiritual) dimensions of Being set them up to have experience of acute anxiety, since such individuals would be constantly exercised in fear of their individual survival and success. Thus, examination of individuals' beliefs and values to assess their susceptibility to anxiety is an important task in working with anxiety. In this context, worldviews or philosophies that emphasize the individual's intrinsic connectedness to "All-One" (whether understood *as God, Universe, Ultimate, Source,* and so on) are helpful resources that would provide us with perspectives and methods to examine our own beliefs and values, and see their contribution to our experience of anxiety. Thus, belief and value revision would become a powerful work in anxiety reduction (Bigdeli & Bai, 2007).

To interpret and evaluate ESL anxiety, immigrants have to become aware of how they experience ESL anxiety. To apply this insight, one might say that talking about ESL anxiety helps ESL immigrants to rediscover their potential and capacity. Through discourse about ESL anxiety, immigrants reveal their worldviews and the way that they consider others and themselves in this world.

When ESL immigrants talk about their anxieties, especially their second language anxiety, they change their insecurities to securities. This transformation is an effective tool in hands of ESL teachers who can bring about situations in which ESL immigrants find the chance to transform their linguistic insecurity to security by expressing their feelings and experiences of the ESL anxiety phenomenon. Therefore, self-awareness, self-expression, and self-understanding from ESL immigrants' part and other-self-awareness and other-self-understanding from the part of ESL educators are required for a successful ESL teaching, learning and living contexts.

Sensitivity to immigrants' states of mind helps ESL authorities to simulate internal models of actions and feelings that immigrants might be feeling or thinking (Gilbert, 2005). The ability to understand others, what is going on in their minds, their motivations, behaviours, values, understandings or misunderstandings and to know how to manage them, will help them. Sensitivity creates a sense of connectedness and mutual understanding that leads the emotional life in social contexts. There is an empathic resonance that helps us to simulate internal models of actions and feelings that others might be feeling or thinking. It is believed that understanding precedes compassion. In understanding how another person sees the world due to his or her unique life circumstances and experience, a sense of connectedness and mutual understanding arises. A sense of not being understood is certainly a provoker of anxiety (Gilbert, 2005). This sense is dominant in anxious immigrant ESL

learners. They feel that in real ESL contexts, others cannot understand them and because of this lack of understanding they feel humiliated.

ESL anxious states in the long term jeopardize mental and physical health and affect all different aspects of teaching, learning, and the whole life of ESL learners. Naïve contact with immigrant ESL learners and letting them express their selves during their life experiences in the host society is the key element of every ESL teaching, learning, and living context through which we can investigate it more precisely.

Limitations of the Study

I acknowledge that this study represents my interpretation of the phenomenon of ESL anxiety among immigrant Iranian women. It does not represent ESL teachers' interpretation of this phenomenon, nor Iranian men and children. I was aware that as a member of Iranian community I was afforded a degree of familiarity with the study participants, and I made a conscious effort to present myself as a researcher, and it should not be ignored that as a researcher I played and important role in interpretation of the data of this qualitative study.

I am aware that this collective case study was conducted over a relatively short period of time. I understand that interpretation of the data using psychological, physiological, and philosophical point of views may yield a different picture from those approaching the data from other perspectives.

Moreover, I am aware that increasing the number of participants; considering both sexes (adult and children), and ESL teachers; applying mixed research methods, using state-trait anxiety for selection of participants; and

applying an ESL anxiety, multiple choice questionnaire, specifically designed for this group may increase the validity and reliability of the findings of this study, and is suggested to be considered for any future study in this field.

Triune Model of ESL Anxiety Reduction

In this model, the study of ESL anxiety can benefit from a multidimensional approach that combines research findings from three currently disparate disciplines: psychology, physiology, philosophy that are interacting in sociocultural milieu. In the triune model of anxiety reduction for learning, the theoretical approaches characteristic of these disciplines are conceptualized as "consciousness, " "body, " and "mind, " respectively that interact in the sociocultural setting. Positing the thesis that there is no separation between mind and body, the relationship amongst the first three domains is conceptualized as mutually reflecting mirrors. The experience of embodiment is the result of their interaction. All together, these domains make an interconnected interactive system. Any pressure on one part of this interactive parallel processing system will be reflected (mirrored) in other parts. This model is at work in learning situations where students experience anxiety.

Traditionally, anxiety is studied singularly in separate domains, as if who we are can be reduced to one dimension of reality. But we are not just, or even predominantly, neurobiological beings, psychological beings, conceptual beings, or sociocultural beings. We are multidimensional beings, and the phenomenon of anxiety manifests itself inseparably and in all three dimensions in sociocultural milieu. What I am calling for is an inter-layered and cross-dimensional approach

to understanding and working with anxiety, especially as manifest in ESL learning environments.

The triune model of anxiety reduction for learning English as a second language is a re-conceptualized model of anxiety in terms of three inter-layered domains of neurophysiology (neuro-chemical states), psychology (intra-subjective, phenomenological awareness), and philosophy (conceptual models, such as beliefs and values) that are interacting within a sociocultural setting. The proposed model has the virtue of getting at anxiety from more than one perspective, thereby increasing effectiveness in addressing it in ESL learning environments. There are neurophysiological, psychological, philosophical, and sociocultural ways to work with ESL anxiety. Initiating changes in one domain affects changes in others; simultaneously, initiating positive changes in all four domains would result in maximal effects on anxiety reduction.

Because the three domains of physiology, psychology and philosophy are interlinked in a non-linear causal relationship (e.g., A, B, C, and so on are implicated in each other), initiating changes in each domain *nonlinearly* effects changes in another. Simultaneously initiating positive changes from all three domains would result in maximal and optimal effects on ESL anxiety reduction provided that the sociocultural context is also considered.

Ours is an age of pervasive anxiety, which seriously and negatively affects learning contexts, learners, and learning. Anxiety often seriously and negatively affects learning (Hertel & Hardin, 1990; Rathus, 1990) and teaching. Therefore,

awareness of these relationships will help teachers in general and ESL teachers in particular to act as managers or healers of students' anxiety.

The first task of this model aims at understanding the phenomenon of ESL anxiety from the above-mentioned multidimensional perspectives, and the second task is to suggest, based on this new understanding, how teacher education may help teachers to notice and work with ESL anxiety in learning environments. In this case, to be aware of physiology and psychology of ESL anxiety (Chapter 2) and philosophy of ESL anxiety (Chapter 6) are crucial points.

Taking cues from some psychology scholars (e.g., Freud, Sullivan, Horney, Fromm, Kardiner), I call for investigating how the specific elements (intrapersonal, interpersonal, material, structural) in learning environments precipitate anxiety. ESL anxiety is tightly bound up to a sense of self-worth (intrapersonal recognition), which in turn is bound to intrapersonal and interpersonal recognition—how we are and who we are, or are not, recognized by ourselves and each other. This model will reveal the links between physical, psychic and philosophical elements of ESL anxiety. This approach provides rapid access to anxiety underlying learning ESL, and will help interpret physical, psychic, and philosophical realities in a simple, rapid efficient manner. It provides opportunities for awareness and comprehension to ESL policy makers, teachers and learners.

Summary

In spite of wide-ranging differences among immigrant ESL learners, the ESL anxiety construct is common amongst them. Contemporary vocabulary

including labels such as, "math anxiety", "ESL anxiety", "performance anxiety, " and "test anxiety", amply reveal learning and living environments saturated with anxiety. As mentioned earlier in chapter 2, anxiety can interfere with attention control, information processing, memory recall and retention, and inductive reasoning (Ellis, 1990; Gower, 2004; Hedl, 1986).

The triune model of anxiety reduction for learning (Fig. 7.1) that I am proposing is an interactive parallel processing model that could be used for teacher education at different levels from pre-K-12 to post secondary and for different subject matters, as well as ESL. This model will increase the awareness and understanding of educators', and those involved in learning and teaching contexts of immigrants' disturbing anxious feeling states, which compromise or inhibit learning. With the eventual goal of building a comprehensive, multidimensional model of anxiety reduction, to propose this model, some of the findings on anxiety from different research fields are employed. It is hoped that this new model will complement previous theories in the area of anxiety. As ESL educators, if we know which physiological, psychological, philosophical, and sociocultural issues affect our ESL learners, we can influence ESL teaching and learning process and help ESL learners gain more success from this process.

The inclusion of the triune model of anxiety reduction model in ESL teacher education programs could be an effective method to ESL teacher training, and will increase awareness and improve ESL teaching and learning experience.

In sum, I argue that the traditional teacher education and curriculum content are not adequate in producing teachers who can handle the extent and level of anxiety in society in this age of postmodernity. ESL educators and policy makers need to understand thoroughly the nature of anxiety, and know how to handle it. In multicultural multilingual settings, traditional pedagogy and curriculum content may not be effective for all ESL learners. To present an effective ESL curriculum, which reduces ESL learners' anxiety, ESL teachers need a special understanding of the process of adjustment that immigrant ESL learners go through in the first few years after their arrival in the host society. With better understanding and awareness of immigrants ESL anxiety, at the least, teachers can avoid being a powerful source of anxiety, as they have been traditionally. Anxious teachers, though inadvertently, teach anxiety to students. This is the dimension of the hidden curriculum (Bigdeli & Bai, 2006).

Figure 7.1: Triune model of anxiety reduction for learning

Physiological	Sociocultural	Psychological

Involved Systems:

-Cardio-Pulmonary

-Cerebral

-Endocrine

-Gastro-Intestinal

-Immune

-Muscular

-Salivation

-Skin
-Temperature
-Sweating

-Lebenswelt
Life world, the world around us

- Weltbild
Background picture, everyday sense of the world
   -Values
   -Moral Norms
   -Conventions/Rules
   -Habits
   -Ranks
   -Hierarchies

Environments
   -Intrapersonal
   -Interpersonal
   -Material
   -Structural
   -Ecological

Experience
   -Emotion
   -Belonging
   -Self-esteem
   -Recognition
   -Empathy &
    Compassion
   -etc.

Pattern
   -Adaptation
   -Fight-or-
    Flight
   -Embodiment/
    Dissociation

ANXIETY

Philosophical Interventions
Existentialism, Phenomenology, Buddhism
Awareness

Learning
(e.g., ESL Learning)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Participant Information Statement

Participant Information Statement
<u>Title of the Project: English as a Second Language (ESL) Anxiety</u>
<u>in Iranian Immigrant Women</u>

Dear ----------,
You are invited to participate in this study that will be conducted by Shoaleh Bigdeli, PhD student, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University. You are selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an Iranian Female Immigrant. You can participate in this research in English or Farsi language. For the purpose of this research if you are interested you can present your comments and ideas in Farsi, and I will translate them into English.

During the data-gathering course of this research (Fall and Winter, 2006) you will be interviewed once. An interview session will probably take 45 minutes. The interview will be arranged according to your schedule and availability. All questions are open ended and related to your experience as an immigrant. You do not have to answer any question if you do not wish to.

I will tape record each interview or your responses will be recorded in form of notes. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. I will keep the research records safe and secure in a locked place. Only I have access to the records. You will be asked to select a pseudonym (imaginary name) under which your transcripts will be identified. In any publication, information will be provided under your pseudonym in such a way that you cannot be identified.

Participation in this research poses no risk, but there are some benefits for it. The research seeks to identify bases of ESL anxiety among Iranian immigrant women. Findings hopefully will help promote the existing ESL teacher education programs, ESL curriculum design, and ESL teaching-learning methods. Your participation is voluntary and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time. If you have any questions please feel free to ask me. If you have any concerns you may contact my supervisor, Dr. Kelleen Toohey (Phone: 604-291-4517; at< toohey @sfu.ca >) or Dr. Tom O'shea Director of Graduate Programs, Faculty of Education (Phone: 604-291-3395;at <oshea @ sfu. ca>), or Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director, Office of Research Ethics, SFU,(Phone: 604-268-6395;at <hal_Weinberg @ sfu.ca>).You will be given a copy of this information for your records. At the end of the research, a summary of research findings will be offered to you upon receiving your written request by the researcher.

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research on ESL Anxiety. I really appreciate your time, energy, insights and contribution. I hope this participation will make ESL anxiety construct clearer and the proposed design on the basis of these findings meet the needs of ESL learners.
Sincerely,
Shoaleh Bigdeli

Appendix 2: Interview Scripts

PARTICIPANT # 1: SAFAR

Shoaleh:

1- When did you come to Canada?

Safar:

2-I came to Canada 4.5 years ago.

Shoaleh:

3-How many languages did you know?

Safar:

4-Before I come to Canada I knew Farsi and English.

Shoaleh:

5- Before coming to Canada how much English did you know? and where did you learn English?

Safar:

6- I learned English from grade 1-12.

7-Then at the university I had some English courses.

8-Mostly, I learned English in private English Institutes.

9- I meant I learned English in private institutes more, I mean more regular.

Shoaleh:

10- How was your English then?

Safar:

11- When I came to Canada my English was very inefficient.

12- I was unable to communicate and express myself.

13-At that time I was unwilling to communicate.

14-I preferred just to answer questions.

15- When I wanted to ask a question, I tried to   think about it in advance, I
    preferred not to give my comments and just answer questions.

Shoaleh:

16-So ,how did you communicate through this medium?

Safar:

17-I did not take part in communications as much as possible.

18- I just made myself ready to answer questions.

19- I was afraid of taking part in communications.

20-I just replied questions, and I was unable to follow discussions or arguments.

Shoaleh:

21-How did you feel about English as your means of communication in Canada?

Safar:

22-I did not feel comfortable to communicate with others.

23-You know it was different from my mother tongue.

24- I was unable to open my mouth and talk automatically.

25-I was unable to express my thoughts.

26-If I wanted to give my opinion I had to change it at least 100 times!

Shoaleh:

27-Did you have any bodily experience while communicating in English?

Safar:

28-During communication I felt heart pounding and excessive warmth in my
body.

Shoaleh:

29-How did you feel about your English knowledge?

Safar:

30-From the very beginning I knew that my English competence is not enough, in
fact our Educational system [Iranian] did not pay attention to listening and
speaking, the major focus was grammar.

31-And since I cannot memorize things very well, I just memorized the
grammatical rules for the exam and after a little while I forgot them, so I had
difficulty.

32-In addition, we did not have enough writing in our English language Education
system.

33-In high school it was very limited, and in the university I do not remember
writing task, mostly they taught structure there.

34-Or they taught Especial English which did not require writing.

Shoaleh:

35-Do you see any interference from your mother tongue?

Safar:

36-I think Farsi is a barrier for my English Learning because I tried to find Farsi
words in my mind.

37-I thought in Persian, and I tried to translate my thoughts into English, so most of my
translations were meaningless.

38-From the beginning I was worried about my language competence because I
was sure that I do not know enough.

39-So I decided to control myself and I preferred not to talk in social gatherings
unless I was obliged to.

40-I felt as a grown up person who has transferred to her childhood.

Shoaleh:

41-How do you feel now? Have you noticed any major changes in yourself and your language proficiency since you came here?

Safar:

42-Since I came here many things have changed in my life.

43- I had a sense of humour in my country but here I lost it because I did not know the applied meaning of humour in this new society.

44-I did not know how to apply it appropriately.

45-I consider it as a change in my identity.

46-There, I was hospitable and I was interested to have relationships with others but here I limited my relationships.

47-This was another great change, I tried to achieve what I lost.

48-This captured my energy and wasted my time.

49-All the time I was in search of what I lost. I have not get used to it yet.

50-Still I do not think that I could communicate with others as well as possible. 51-Whenever I speak I am conscious to my mistakes.

52-This is annoying.

53-Still if I do not feel safe and secure I prefer to avoid unnecessary communications.

54-I feel better with my friends because they do not judge the way I am.

55-The major problem is to communicate and I am still not comfortable with communication.

56-In my country I was a professional.

57- I was an authority and I was quite able to take part in communications and present myself.

58-I had the ability to express my own ideas and show off myself.

59-Suddenly, I became nobody, unable to express my ideas.

60-I changed, personally I felt so unsafe and insecure because I was always worried about making mistakes.

61-I preferred not to talk, this way I avoid others' evaluations and judgments.

62-Meanwhile, others think that I have no idea to express but to me it was just to keep the safe side.

63- It was an embarrassing feeling.

64-I witnessed people who did not have any specific idea but they thought that they are wonderful thinkers .

65-They said with no hesitation and contemplation.

66-They did not care about their ideas and their mistakes, they did not think about what they say.

67-You know, here, people get used to think aloud and others appreciate or confirm their own ideas.

68- But in my culture we have to be sure about the correctness of what we say otherwise, we keep silent.

69-First we become confident about an issue, or think a lot about it, we must get confidence that our sayings will not be boring for others and be suitable for a specific community, but it is not the same here, it is a huge cultural difference.

70-In my country I did not achieve anything this much difficult.

71-I get used to try 10 times less and I achieve 10 times more.

72- I did not have to prove myself to other people, and then communicate with them, but here in any relationship at first you need to prove yourself, take others' confidence and then continue your relationship.

73-I think I can learn from these sufferings.

74- I feel anywhere in the world that I go I have no other problem, I learnt how to stay alive, I learnt the secret of survival, I am not terrified of any other experience, because I know the meaning of difficulty, and suffering and how to endure them. I did not know this much before I came here.

75-My English is improved and it is due to more communication with others.

76- I do not think as much as before on my sentences and I articulate them automatically.

77-My listening and writing are improved as well.

Shoaleh:

78-Do you have any comments?

Safar:

79-The most important part to me is relationship with English speakers, to learn cultural language.

80- I think my problems were mostly due to my English Language incompetence.

81- Of course the kind of one's personality is important as well.

82-There are too many people who communicate easier and faster.

83-Some others are more conservative and it is important for them to protect their dignity through their communication.

Participant # 2-Setareh:

TOEFL Result (Computer-based): 230

Shoaleh:

1-When did you come to Canada?

Setareh:

2-I came to Canada on September 2001.

Shoaleh:

3- Before coming to Canada how much English did you know? and where did you learn English?

Setareh:

4-I learnt English since grade 1.

5-In Grade 1 and 2 I had native English speaker teacher.

6- After revolution I had Iranian English teachers.

7-Since high school I attended private English classes.

Shoaleh:

8- How was your English then?

9-From second year of university I became English language teacher and that experience helped me a lot, especially it helped my speaking.

Shoaleh:

10-How was your English when you came here?

Setareh:

11-When I came to Canada I thought that my English competence and performance is very good and if I have a chance to stay 6 months in an English context I will improve as fast as possible, but it was not this way.

Shoaleh:

12-So ,how did you communicate through this medium?

Setareh:

12- I had more expectations of myself; I was not that much fast to understand others.

13-I was unable to express myself and give comments; I was not fast in my reactions.

14-I was unable to understand others' speech.

15-I was unable to give comments and ideas about different issues.

Shoaleh:

21-How did you feel about English as your means of communication in Canada?

22-These together made me feel bad.

23-Generally, in the society when I talked to people, in bus, restaurants, and ...I felt that the language that I learnt was not efficient, and it was totally different with English language, which is used here.

24-I have learnt a lot of grammar and all the time I tried to communicate correctly and every one thought that my listening is the same.

25-My Farsi accent was not dominant but I have a lot of problems in listening.

26-Here pronunciations were very different and I was unable to hear many words.

27-So I have problems in understanding what others talked about.

Shoaleh:

28-So, what did you do?

Setareh:

29-Mostly I asked people to repeat their sentences several times, I had a conflict inside myself and I felt it in others' judgment about myself as well.

30-Social life has a specific language.

31- I think knowing the language is one part and the other part is to know the environmental language, I mean cultural and technological language.

32-There is a must to know the literacy of this society and this is anxiety provoking.

Shoaleh:

33-Did you have any bodily experience while communicating in English?

Safar:

34- At the very beginning I felt anxious because I knew that I have to listen and speak in another language and I did not feel confident.

35-I felt my heart pounding badly, my hands became cold and clammy, and while speaking I felt I cannot breath.

36- It was disgusting.

Shoaleh:

37-How did you feel about your English knowledge?

Setareh:

38- Whenever I wanted to go to a mall or any other place I tried to make prefabricated sentences in my mind.

39-In reading I had difficulty with words my vocabulary was not rich.

40- I had to look up too many words in dictionary.

41-After a while I learnt that I can get the meanings from the context and there is no need to find all the unknown words.

42-I learnt that cultural differences made my situation worst.

43-There were too many unknowns about this new culture, and I had to adjust to all of them.

44-Shopping, transportation, bank issues, and…, everything was different and they exert a lot of pressure.

Shoaleh:

45-Could you explain more?

Setareh:

46-For example banking system is totally different and I thought it was a good idea if I had seen a film about banking rules and regulations.

47-You know here everything works technologically and it is anxiety provoking.

Shoaleh:

48- Why did you have this much trouble?

49-I think the English that I learnt there was not enough to fulfil my needs in this society.

50- I learnt English out of the context, in an abstract form.

51- I did not know the culture of communication.

52-By making prefabricated sentences I tried to overcome my anxiety.

53-Even thinking about those feelings is terrible!

Shoaleh:

54-Why this was this much troublesome?

Setareh:

55-You know you are among people who can express themselves in their own language but you feel you do not belong to them because you do not know the language of communication.

56- I lacked sense of belonging.

57-I felt that the community did not accept me.

58- I did not feel confident and peaceful.

59-However I tried to be sociable but it was not responsive.

60-When I came here I believed that I know English very well but I found that my estimation was wrong.

61- I always had this idea in my mind that I am incapable, and I always repeat to others and myself that I am incapable.

62-I had a close friend here and I preferred he does everything for me because I was not fine with myself and of course my linguistic knowledge.

63- I did not let myself to make mistakes.

64- I did not feel safe and secure.

65-I evaluated myself less than my real self.

66-I felt vulnerable.

67-You feel that you are less than others; you are not a good match for this society.

68-You know I was an accepted person in my homeland among my relatives, friends, and colleagues but here I experience how others rejected me.

69-I had to compromise.

70-And I think language was the key element in all of these experiences.

71- I had ideas and comments to express but I was unable to use English to express myself so I felt deficient.

72-The other major problem that I had here and I think is due to language insufficiency was my inability to follow English instructions.

73-Here you are not in contact with persons.

74-Everywhere there is a machine that does not understand your feelings and the amount of distress that you feel when you do not know what to do.

75-There is no one to answer your questions and help you.

76-I think if I knew English better these instructions did not make me anxious.

77-I think that designers did not consider human emotions.

78-I think they did not recognize me as a human being.

Shoaleh:

79-How do you feel now? Have you noticed any major changes in yourself and your language proficiency since you came here?

Setareh:

80-You know, when you are in that condition because your mind is busy with different issues, you don't have time to think about the pressure that you experience.

81- But, now, when I think about those days I feel pity for myself.

82-What a huge amount of pressure it was!

83-Since it was repeated regularly in those days, I always expect the same conditions.

84-It becomes part of one's very existence.

85- I mean even if the environment does not give you the same signal you expect the same, and all these are due to language deficiency.

86- if I knew English well I have not gone through these problems.

Participant #3-Nazanin:

TOEFL Result (Paper-based): 567

Shoaleh:

1-When did you come to Canada?

Nazanin:

2-I came to Vancouver on January 2003.

Shoaleh:

3-How was your English then?

4-At first I witnessed my weaknesses but know I am proud of myself because I feel I am stronger than these people.

5-They do not know any other languages, even French.

6-They just know their mother tongue.

7-But I know a second language, and I feel very happy.

Nazanin:

8- I was very eager to learn English.

9- I learnt English through drawing books.

10-Then my parents and I went to the USA for one year.

11-Since there I was in contact with kids I learnt some English from them.

12-Then I started to learn English formally in grade 1-12.

9-From guidance school (grade 6) I attended a private language institute.

13- I studied English up to the end of high school.

14-At university level I started to attend a conversation class, a TOEFL class and then I got a private English tutor to teach me at home.

15- At that time I listened to English films and transcribed them because my teacher believed that it would help my listening.

16-I watched films with English footnotes.

Shoaleh:

17-How did you feel about your English then?

18-When I came to Canada I was ashamed of my English .

19-I did not feel good to talk to others especially in front of Iranians .

20-I do not know the reason but I did not want to be evaluated by them.

21-Some times I lost words it seemed that my memory does not work.

22-Even now in front of others I have long pauses, and I forget even simple words.

23-At the very beginning I did not understand different English accents.

24-I preferred not to take part in conversations and communications.

25- If I had to communicate I asked people several times to repeat their sentences.

26- It was really embarrassing.

27-I was unable to understand TV and radio programs.

Shoaleh:

28-Do you know the reasons that you felt so?

29-I was afraid of my language competence and the new culture.

30- I did not know what are the expectations of the new culture.

31-You know even now when some one is Moslem her nationality is not important and I feel better to communicate with her in English.

32- still I do not feel confidence in communicating with English speaking people or people from other religions who speak English.

33-You know even now before each communication I try to imagine the probable scenario and to predict dialogues.

34-I think in Farsi and then I translate my sentences into English.

35-I have learnt more words, my listening is improved but still my writing is not that much better than before.

36-Still my reading is slow and I have problems in comprehension.

Participant #4-Parinaz:

No official language test

Shoaleh:

1- When did you come to Canada?

Parinaz:

2-I came to Canada about one and half year ago with my husband and two kids.

Shoaleh:

3-What do you do here?

Parinaz:

4-I am homemaker and I am studying English since I came here.

5- I watch TV and listen to the radio but I am not satisfied with my English learning.

Shoaleh:

6- Before coming to Canada how much English did you know? and where did you learn English?

7- Before I came here, I studied English for 12 years at school and then during my bachelor degree at university.

8-After applying for Canadian immigration I continued to study English, but this time intensively to become equipped with this instrument.

9-Still I am very weak in speaking and listening; however I think my grammar is better than my other skills.

Shoaleh:

10-How do you feel about your communications here and back home?

Parinaz:

11-I was a very sociable person in my country and I expressed my thoughts and ideas simply and easily.

12-But I am not that person here.

13-There, I was proud of my capabilities , and myself.

14- Here I am nothing, this makes me feel incompetent and embarrassed.

Shoaleh:

15-Why do you think it is so?

Parinaz:

16-Sometimes I think the reason is that I count on my husband for everything.

17- So he has improved because he is responsible for family issues and I delegated everything to him.

18-Men are more active than women and they reach their goals actively.

19-I think if I were here by my own I was much more successful than now because I viewed language as a main instrument to settle in this society but now I do not look at it in that sense.

Shoaleh:

20-How do you feel about English as your means of communication in Canada?

Parinaz:

21-Sometimes when I see my kids and husband are successful in learning English I feel guilty.

22- I try to convince myself that knowing English is not that much necessary to live in this country and I can survive without this language.

23-But it does not work; I know that I acted passively.

24- When I see my family is successful I come to conclusion that I feel guilty and at the same time victim of this situation.

25- You know not knowing sufficient English lead to my isolation and I do not want to live in this way.

26-I want to overcome this state to communicate easily and to express myself with these people.

27-When I think about my country, religion and culture I become motivated to learn English as soon as possible but feeling incompetent is devastating.

28-This incapability has affected my emotional state and I feel badly depressed.

29- I was teacher in my country and I taught for 22 years there.

30-Everyday form morning to noon I was in contact with at least 100 students and my colleagues.

31- Imagine my situation! A sociable person with this much of contact has no relationship with anyone.

32-I was in close contact with my family there, everyday we talked over the phone and now my relationship is zero.

33-I do not feel safe to go out, I am always with my thoughts and I think I am dumb!

34-I cannot communicate with others.

35-I am depressed, and I feel so sorry because I made this decision and I came here.

36-In fact my husband made this decision.

37-I had no other way just to follow him.

38-I feel pity for myself.

39-I am quite sure if I become successful in language learning my depression will be relieved and I will feel better.

40-I am always anxious to communicate with others.

41-I cannot communicate with them easily.

42- In face-to-face communication I am afraid of others to make fun of me.

43- when I am on the phone I forget what I want to talk about even I cannot remember the simplest sentences and words.

44-I feel anxious and worried and I forget everything.

45-To make mistakes is horrible.

46-I am afraid by being ridiculed by others.

Shoaleh:

47-Do you have any bodily experience while communicating in English?

Parinaz:

48-When I want to talk in English I feel hot.

49-I perspire.

50- I feel that I am empty.

51-With people who are patient and understand my situation I feel better and I can overcome my anxiety, in other cases I feel warmth in my body and face, I forget everything.

Shoaleh:

52-How do you feel now? Have you noticed any major changes in yourself and your language proficiency since you came here?

Parinaz:

53-I thinks Canadians are very friendly and positive but I feel better with Iranians I think we have more commonalities.

54-I prefer not to take part in any communication in English to prevent encountering any problem during the communication.

55- I did not have this feeling before and I think everything is related to my language anxiety.

56-I know more words than my daughter but I cannot use them in real situations.

57- I do not understand English and this have made a gap between my family members (husband and kids) and I.

58-When my kids speak English I feel very bad.

59- It hurts me because I do not understand what they are talking about.

60-I asked them not to talk in English at home.

61- It makes me sad.

62- I feel it separates me from them.

63-I think it is one of the major social problems of immigrants.

64-It separates them from their kids, and gradually this gap becomes deeper and deeper.

65-I think kids become mingled with this culture earlier than their parents and it is not good for family relationships.

66-I have forbidden English at my home!

67-My kids are not allowed to talk in English, to listen to English radio or TV channels.

68-They try to convince me that using English at home is more necessary for me than for them but I resist because I feel humiliated.

69-You know before coming here I knew how to answer their questions they relied on me.

70-They were younger and I knew how to make them feel safe and secure but now I do not know even how to help myself.

71-I want to make home a secure place for them.

72- I want them to consult with me.

73-I want to be able to give them confidence and peace of mind.

74-But they think I do not know how to respond to their needs.

75-They do not ask for my consultation any more.

76-I feel that I am behind, I feel bad.

77- I think about a volunteer job at my kid's school.

78- I hope this helps me to learn English and help me to get rid of this situation.

79-Otherwise I am trapped (stuck) at home.

Participant #5-Adeleh:

IELTS Results: Listening: 7.0,Reading: 7.5,Writing: 6,Speaking: 9.0,Overall band: 8.

Shoaleh:

1-When did you come to Canada?

Adeleh:

2-I came to Vancouver on November 2003.

Shoaleh:

3-Why did you choose Vancouver?

Adeleh:

4- I chose Vancouver because of the weather conditions and proximity to my brother and his family who lived in States.

5-Also, one of my colleagues was living here with her family.

6-They rented an apartment for me and I started my new life there.

Shoaleh:

7-How was your English then?

Adeleh:

8-Before coming to Canada I always had this idea that I know English perfectly.

9-It was not only my own idea but also anyone who knew me.

10-I have proved in my different life experiences that I was very efficient English learner.

11-I have studied English since I was a kid.

12-Then during school and university

13-I studied English for nearly 16 years back home, from grade 1-12,then during my university studies.

14-I have a degree in English Translation.

15- I had a high self-esteem about my English linguistic knowledge.

16-But here I felt just the opposite.

17-I did not feel myself a good match with society's expectations and in fact with my expectations of myself .

18- In Canada I was unable to speak English well.

19-I preferred to keep silent as much as possible because I thought I am always being judged by others.

20-I had the very bad feeling that I do not know English at all.

21- I was unable to understand different English accents and dialects.

22-This made me very unhappy.

23-I had another image of myself and my image become distorted in this new society

24- As I encountered this situation I felt so upset and miserable.

Shoaleh:

25--Did you have any bodily experience while communicating in English?

Adeleh:

26-My heart pounded badly.

27-I felt an acute pain in my abdomen, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, low blood pressure, fainting....

28-Some times I have this urgency to go to the washroom as soon as possible.

29-I felt my bad feelings with all my cells.

30-I was unable to sleep at night.,

31-Even when I go to sleep I woke up very early and I had difficulty going back to sleep.

32-To get rid of this fear and pain I'd like to cry.

33-It was unbelievable, I mean how I felt.

34- I do not know what was going on but I saw my body reflects to this situation intensely.

Shoaleh:

35-How did you feel about your communications in English?

Adeleh:

36-In some cases I did not find suitable words even simple ones to convey my ideas.

37-I felt very bad.

38-I had a major grief about my English performance, and in that grief all my body from tiniest cell to major organs orchestrate my sadness, fear, and overall anxiety.

39-I was always anxious about what was going to happen and how could I find my way.

40-I wish I knew English better than I did.

41-So I felt more confident.

42-My English abilities did not fulfil my expectations of myself .

43- I worried about others' evaluation as well.

Shoaleh:

44-Do you see cultural differences as interfering in your experience?

Adeleh:

45-I had this idea that the first world is quite different from the 3rd world.

46-Mass media has always given this message.

47-But in reality I did not confront it, so it worsens my anxious state.

48-People were the same specially those images that I disliked in my country were seen everywhere, e.g.: careless people, Hastings's homelessness, poverty, power relations, etc.

49-Cultural shock added to the problem, the way people handled their parties was different, they were all standing and just eating, talking rarely, etc. everything was different.

50- Not enjoying that much support system, feeling alone, and becoming nobody with any clear view about future, it was how I felt here.

51-I did not feel confident with my listening, speaking, and writing.

52-It was a great shock.

53-Before coming here I thought that I know English well.

54-In addition, there is no person to response your needs in the society.

55- Everything is delegated to technology, just a tape is speaking and if you do not understand what the tape is saying there is no one to get help from.

56- When you go to print shop to copy or fax something you have to do it by your own and all these things need a good command of English.

57-It hurts a lot and destroys your self-esteem.

58-Incapability is the sense that one gets from this lack of language proficiency.

Shoaleh:

59-How did you feel about yourself?

Adeleh:

60-After a while this anxiety of communication made me isolated.

61- I preferred to avoid any contact with others.

62-I felt that I have become an uneasy going person.

63-You know in my country I was very sociable I had too many friends.

64- My new " I " who was afraid of everyone and everything was so miserable.

65-This anxious feeling was very embarrassing.

66-When I look back to those days it seems to me that I was very brave.

67-How could one choose to live in a place where she does not know the language properly, knows no one and has no idea about?

68- I dare say that ignorance is one of the major reasons.

69- I did not know what was waiting for me outside there.

Shoaleh:

70-Do you have any suggestions?

Adeleh:

71-It seems to me that government does not equip immigrants for their new life.

72- The system is designed for kids who get used to the new society faster and easier than adults.

73-You know, some adults if could survive these horrible states and overcome the language barrier they might be successful.

74-Otherwise they are condemned to destroy.

75-The worst part is that no one cares.

76-No one understands the amount of pressure that you experience.

77-You are left alone.

78-Wandered, helpless and…oh ,

79- It is awful.

80-You have to be in this situation to understand what I experienced.

81-Whenever I remember those days all my sufferings come to surface and I feel that I am at the very same condition again.

82-It is horrifying.

83-I even do not like to go back to my memories.

84-It is the government responsibility to take care of mental and physical health of immigrants.

85- The government has to consider their individual needs.

86-you know, all the immigrant societies and support groups somehow support those who are not professionals.

87-They even do not show you how to find the correct path.

88-They do not render any valuable help to people who know some English.

89-I think these treatments are not ethical.

90- We are living systems.

91-If they help us to learn the language of the new society we will be more successful and happier.

Shoaleh:

92-What do you mean by the language of the society? You mean English?

Adeleh:

93- I mean not only the language per se but also, the new culture, and expectations, the realities that we are unaware of.

94- For example our language inefficiencies is the greatest one of them.

95-They have mentioned that they need people who get IELTS score of 6/9.

96-I had got 8 out of 9 but I was not successful at the very beginning.

97- I really hurt during this process.

98-I believe an efficient ESL program that is a combination of language, culture and social norms would be of a great help.

99-It is the government responsibility to support the newcomers.

Participant # 6:Mahsa
IELTS: several attempts, un-successful (under band 6)

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Shoaleh:

1-When did you come Canada?

Mahsa:

2-I came to Canada 4.5 years ago.

3-I came with my husband and kids.

4-We choose Vancouver because one of our friends lived here.

Shoaleh:

5-How many other languages do you know and for how long?

Mahsa:

6-I know Farsi and Turkish; I learned it from my mother and my husband, of course my parents talk in Farsi to all of us, I mean my siblings and I.

Shoaleh:

7-How was your English when you came to Canada?

8-Before I came to Canada I believed that I knew English well but since I came here I understood that I know no English!

9-You know, I have studied English in school from grade 8-12 for four years.

10-Then at university I passed general and especial English courses for my field of study.

11-Because of the nature of my work I was in close contact with English Medical terminology but that did not work here.

12 -Before coming to Canada I thought that I knew English but here I found that I know nothing about this language.

Shoaleh:

13-How?

Mahsa:

14-At first I did not understand what other's say and I was unable to communicate.

15-This undesirable situation lead to my increased depression over time.

16- I am sure it is mostly due to my language deficiency.

17-I was capable in my homeland but here because of the language barrier I was unable to do anything.

18-You know everything needs language proficiency.

Shoaleh:

19-How did you feel about your English Knowledge?

Mahsa:

20-I suffered a lot during my stay here.

21- At the very beginning no one in my family was fine with English language.

22-It was very difficult for my husband and my children.

23-My younger one always had fever at nights.

24-All the time my kid had nightmare about English and talked in her dreams and said, and "I don't know English".

25-She tolerated a great pressure.

26-I remember that I was in contact with her teacher; I got course material from her teacher and translated for her.

27-At the exam time I was always with her.

28-Her teacher gave me the questions, I read them for her, asked for the responses, translated them into English till she learnt how to read and write.

29-I did all my best to help my family.

30- I witnessed how the teacher punished my kid because she did not know how to do her assignments.

31-The teacher did not have this understanding that how it was difficult for an immigrant kid to get used to the new language and to use it properly.

32-I witnessed my kids sobbing.

33- It is very difficult for a mother to witness her kids' torture.

34-I think not knowing the language is similar to a torture.

35-You have no way to do anything.

36- One become powerless and frustrated.

37- I believe more than 80 % of my family problems were due to language deficiency.

38-Mostly we suffered form speaking and listening, I think these two skills are the most necessary ones at the beginning.

39-To communicate and understand others you need these two more than reading and writing.

Shoaleh:

40-Do you have any suggestions?

Mahsa:

41-I think Canadian government accepts immigrants but they do not have any specific planning to help them overcome their language barriers.

42-Immigrants are from different English levels so a diverse curriculum and ESL syllabus is required for them.

43-I, myself, went to Cap college for a while but I am sure others in my age cannot do that.

44-I get used to read studying and being in educational settings.

45-I had a close contact with youngsters because of the nature of my job in my home country, but I assure you that for others in my age it is impossible.

46-Attending these classes hurt me a lot because I did not feel homogenous with my classmates.

47-I was reluctant to speak because I was at their mother's age.

48- I did not feel good because of the class atmosphere.

49-They were not my suitable classmates.

50- I always was in the position of being teacher to this age group but as their classmate.

51- I was unable to tolerate how they made fun of my speech and language proficiency.

52- I felt humiliated and ashamed because of their reactions.

53-I get used to communication in my home country but here I was forced to reduce my communications.

54-This language deficiency made a weak person from me.

55- I was very strong and powerful there.

56-I had a very reliable personality but here I felt broken.

57-I think government has no suitable ESL plan for adults and Iranians.

58-Even with job finding government has no specific plan, because of my language deficiency I even did not find a volunteer job anywhere.

59-I think those people who are from lower classes of society or those who have less degree feel better here and they are more successful.

60-Those with higher education and high-ranking positions in their homeland suffer more.

61-It seems to me that Canadian society is planned for those who are from low rank jobs and less education,

62-I mean those who see themselves capable these ESL programs do not work at all!

63-I think men are more successful than women here because they are more flexible and they challenge better.

64-For example I think my husband employs defense and coping mechanisms that are different from mine.

65- He moves step by step but I keep silent and make myself isolated.

66-The great stressor in this society was language for me; it is the base of all my problems.

67-It damaged my identity.

68-I always saw myself as a capable reliable person, with high self-esteem.

69-I had an image of a successful person about myself but since I came here I feel I am weak and incapable.

70- I am lost, I do not know what my status is.

71- I feel that I become nothing, I have no energy.

72- I cannot accept my new I.

73-I am frustrated and unacceptable according to my standards.

74-I do not know how to find myself.

75- I have no influence over my life.

76-I am the same as a feather who has gone with the wind.

77-I have no energy, and all these things are due to this damn language! 78-Lack of language proficiency severely damaged my family relationships.

79-I see that my relationship with my husband and my kids are damaged.

80-My parenting role is changed, and this new invalid distorted parenting image has put me in conflict.

81-Before coming to Canada I was capable to manage my family financially and spiritually.

82- From all the aspects that you could imagine, but since we moved here my role is upside down and this bothers me too much.

83-I know that I am not anymore a good model for my kids.

84- They had me as a powerful model in their minds but I am not anymore powerful.

85-Each time that I go out and my kids talk instead of me I feel more shattered.

86-I think this language "killed' me!

87-You know how painful was this experience.

88-It influenced me overall.

89-Mentally it shattered my role as a wife, and as a mother, my emotional and social roles are changed.

90- My inside is destructed and it killed me totally.

Shoaleh:

91-Do you have any suggestions?

Mahsa:

92-Correct management could be helpful.

93- Those who want to come here as immigrants must view different aspects of this decision before making it.

94- Government is responsible to let them know about the consequences of this decision.

95-ESL planning is extremely important.

96-They did not have any supporting systems here; they left us in a vacuum.

97-This vacuum has different impacts on each of us.

98-It doesn't have any constructive side to me all was destructive.

99-The destructive part was very inhibiting and returned me to zero.

100- I had to start from the very beginning and I had to start again and I was not able to start from nothing.

101-The destructive effect of language was more progressive than my success rate.

102- I was unable to make a balance between my previous status and the new one.

103-I think this imbalance was very unfair.

104- I did not deserve this much of trouble and suffering.

Participant # 7 Tabassom:
IELTS :One unsuccessful attempt (under band 6)

Shoaleh
1-When did you come to Canada?

Tabassom:

2-I came to Canada 4 months ago.

3-I chose Vancouver because one of my friends was living here.

Shoaleh:

4-How was your English then?

Tabassom:

5-I was always afraid of English.

6- Because of my fear of this language I never studied it seriously.

7-I had studied English 7 years at school and at university I passed 3 English courses.

8-But I never feel happy with this language.

9-It was a monster to me!

10-I had private English teacher before coming to Canada.

11-But I never feel good with this language.

12- Before coming to Canada I knew that my language is not proficient but I did not believe that the deficiency is this much!

13-I am even unable to remember and use simple words and sentences.

14- I see myself weak and this language is more powerful than me.

15-I have lost my self-esteem.

16-However as I know about myself I always had a strong personality and high self-esteem.

17-I prefer to escape this language.

18-I am afraid of confrontation.

19-since I came to Canada I tried to hide behind my friend and ask him to do communications instead of me.

20- It is very difficult and embarrassing.

21-Reading and writing do not bother me that much but when in my English class I see that I have not gained any progress it makes me dissatisfied and sad.

22-Mostly I suffer from speaking and listening.

23-When someone is speaking I cannot communicate and I feel terribly bad because I do not understand what they say.

24-I feel my body's warmth and my face redness, and others recognize my feelings and stress.

25- It makes me very upset.

26-Here, at the very beginning it seemed to me that everyone is shouting at me, and is violent, because they talk aloud.

27-When some one complains I think they mean something about my actions and me.

28-I do not recognize sentences.

29-Even in my apartment I do not feel safe and secure, any time that someone passes the corridors I become terrified, because I think they want to come to my place and talk to me.

30-Whenever I think building manager or one of the neighbours want to talk to me I become absolutely irritated and frightened, it bothers me severely.

31-Communicating in English is very difficult for me.

32-Even in my English class I do not feel safe and secure.

33-Sometimes I prefer to be absent from the class.

34-I feel I am less capable than others, the weakest student in the class.

35- Being evaluated by others hurt me.

36- I always blame myself because I had the chance to improve my English in my country but I did not do that.

37-I believe that language insufficiency is my real problem, the root of all my sufferings.

38-During my life I never felt this much humiliation and never felt this much guilt.

39-I am shameful of my language, I have to impose myself on others.

40- I am under a huge amount of pressure and I transfer it to others.

41- I never had this experience to be this much inferior to others.

42-Unfortunately, during this time I feel that I have become weaker and weaker because I do not have any chance to speak to any native speaker that much.

43-The society does not give me this opportunity.

44-In my country at least I had the opportunity to talk to my English teacher twice a week but it comes to nothing here.

45-When I see that others judge my status and see me as an incapable person it makes me mad.

46-I feel pity for myself.

Shoaleh: I interviewed Tabassom 5 months later because I thought that when I interviewed her for the first time she did not have the experience of being in contact with real English environment. I believe that this time her experience is what she really lived during 9 months of living and working in Canada.

Shoaleh:

47-I know that It is 9 months that you live in Canada. How are your language experiences now?

Tabassom:

48-Very difficult.

49-My speaking is weak and I avoid communications.

50-I escape communications.

51-It is nearly 4 months that I am working in a store.

52-I have to communicate with different people.

53-I have to understand and respond.

54-My listening has improved.

55-But unfortunately I cannot speak.

56-May be it is due to my fear of this language.

57-I think I have lost my self-esteem in this regard.

58-even I could not make a simple sentence.

59-And when I want to communicate to my manager I am really freezed.

60-I think it is due to my uncontrollable distress and anxiety.

Shoaleh:

61-Do you know what are you afraid of?

62-What are you anxious about?

Tabassom:

63-I am afraid that I could not communicate.

64-If I want to talk I surely make mistakes.

65-I am sure that I cannot convey my messages.

66-Sometimes, immediately after talking to another person I find that I made a mistake in my sentences.

67-And at the other times I do not find it promptly.

68-I find my mistakes after several hours or even days.

69-I think people are right to react to my language use.

70-Regardless of different personalities, I mean that some people try to tease others but I do not blame them for teasing me because I know even using a wrong noun or verb changes the meaning of the whole conversation.

71-Sometimes they understand what I want to convey.

72-Even after passage of time my speaking does not improve.

Shoaleh:

73-What are the reasons?

Tabassom:

74- I do not know.

75-It is really strange for me.

76-I had a critical period in my job due to this language deficiency.

77-My manager told me that I am an awesome worker but others do not understand me.

78-She told me that I am speaking very badly and she cannot understand me as well.

79-I thought to ask an English tutor to help me.

80-I consulted those who are experienced in ESL area and they told me that I cannot learn it fluently in a short period of time.

81-I am wondered about the solution but I do not know how to find the way.

82-I am in an English environment, but I want to ask ESL researchers about this problem. What is the solution?

83-It inserts a lot of pressure.

84-I am sure most ESL learners suffer from this issue more or less.

85-I want to avoid communication to feel safe and secure and this avoidance jeopardizes my job.

86-Losing my job will intensify this pressure.

87-Sometimes I feel I want to runaway and go back home.

88-It is too much pressure, I cannot tolerate more.

Shoaleh:

89-How do you feel in your body when you want to communicate?

Tabassom:

90-I feel hot, my face flushes.

91-I lose my concentration.

92-These feelings worsens my situation.

93-I feel that my head is empty.

94-Then even I cannot talk in Farsi.

95-I become confused.

96-When I am successful in communication the same as kids I feel happy.

97-Unfortunately, recently I cannot make even a simple sentence while talking to my manager.

Shoaleh:

98-Do you think your mother tongue, cultural differences, etc. influenced your situation?

Tabassom

99-I think in Persian and my mind is always busy.

100-My improvement is very sluggish.

101-Sometimes during my conversation I use Farsi words.

102-Farsi and English become mixed unexpectedly.

103-I have to think a lot about even remembering simple English words.

104-Yesterday I forgot "inside" and I was in a bad situation because I was unable to complete my sentence.

105-It seems that my brain is blank.

-There is nothing inside it about English.

Shoaleh:

106-What are the effects of this linguistic experience on you?

107-I want to know about the consequences and effects of this issue on you.

Tabassom:

108-I think the effects are negative.

109-It has decreased my self-esteem dramatically.

110-In my working environment people were willing to communicate at the very beginning.

111-But I was unable to respond, and I just answered with smile or short words.

112-After two weeks they are not that much eager to continue their communication.

113-They are not silly.

114-They understand that I am unable to communicate.

115-Some of them may think that I do not like to communicate.

116-I cannot communicate and it gives me a very sad feeling.

117-With your colleagues you are always anxious about communications.

118-I feel dumb.

119-I know that I am more knowledgeable than them but I cannot communicate and convey my ideas.

120-These are very bad feelings and gradually they made me weaker and weaker.

121-I know just that it is too much pressure on me.

122-However I am alone in Canada but even being far from my family and country does not bother me this much.

123-Since I found this job the pressure in more intensified than before.

124-I have to be at work 4-8 hours per day.

125- I am all the time anxious and terrified.

126-If it was in Farsi I was fine.

127-I mean I am fine with the work but not the language.

Shoaleh:

128-You knew English when you were back home, did not you?

Tabassom:

129-yes,but even with my private tutor I did not have the experience of usual conversations.

130-I thought about a topic in advance and I made ready myself.

131-It was not conversation.

132-I did not learn how to apply structures.

133-She made me ready for the immigration interview.

134-I memorized all the responses to different questions.

135-but now I have to decide what and how to use words, sentences and structures promptly.

136-And I was always afraid of talking in English.

Shoaleh;

137-Why? For example why did you feel so in Iran? I mean from the point of importance?

Tabassom:

138-I had this feeling all the time that I cannot learn it.

Shoaleh:

139-Why? You have a university degree and you were a successful person. Why you were this much afraid of this language?

Tabassom:

140-I do not know.

141-Now in this environment I could say that it is " killing" ,"embarrassing".

142-if I had anyway not to work for sure I do not go to work.

143-I prefer to avoid communications.

Shoaleh:

144-Do you have any suggestions to improve this situation?

Tabassom:

145-I suggest others to learn colloquial English at first.

146-I tell them not to go for academic English or to pass IELTS or other standard tests.

147-The most problematic part is colloquial English.

148- I think academic English is not required at the very beginning.

149-to live in a society being successful in oral communication is must.

150-learning grammatical rules and different techniques to pass a standard test do not suffice.

151-We need practical English.

152-I feel paralyzed.

153-I crawl and I try to grab any support to move.

154-I suggest everyone to learn colloquial daily English.

155-Even if you want to go to university you will not have any problem, provided that you can speak this language.

156-I think personality is important as well.

157-I think talkative persons that are not afraid of making mistakes are more successful than others.

158-I have some Iranian colleagues who work here for more than 8 years.

159-When I ask them about spelling of a word they do not know it.

160-But they know how to use it and how to convey their message.

161-They have heard the words.

162-And they have learned how to use it.

163-They have learnt different words.

164-They could hear different accents.

165-So they could communicate.

166-And they are living here.

167-They are more successful than me.

Shoaleh:

168-Have you been to any language institute in Canada?

Tabassom:

169-Yes,but I made a mistake.

170-I did not know that colloquial English is more important.

171-I had been to IELTS classes.

172-I think that was not a suitable choice.

173-I had to go to conversation classes.

174-May be immigrants' ESL classes that have students from different ages and levels in the same class was more productive.

175-I had to believe that my conversation is weak.

176-I think if I had been to those classes I was more successful.

177-Everyone tells me that it is good that you are in an English environment.

178-It is good that you are obliged to communicate in English.

179-But it is 4 months that I am under too much obligation to speak at work.

180-I was in a critical position to lose my job.

181-Sometimes I think I will lose my job because of my language proficiency.

182-But I do not know.

183-Even at home reading books seem important.

184-But I cannot concentrate.

185- It is too much pressure.

186-Too much pressure.

187-One has to be in this situation to know what I say.

188-I suggest everyone to learn colloquial language in his or her countries.

189-If they know it there is no need to be worried.

190-Afterwards, those who want to go to universities will pass it as soon as possible.

200-And those who want to work they encounter no problem.

201-I want to tell everyone that even if they get an acceptable score from IELTS or TOEFL, do not leave their country unless they know how to speak the language.

202-It is much more than physiological changes.

203-it is very deep.

204-The sense of being not valuable is very deep and frustrating.

205-It is very bad.

206-I cannot convey my abilities and my messages.

207- I am unable to talk on the phone.

208-And when my manager gets angry at me no one could understand my situation.

209-I believe I have physiological changes but at the same time the pressure is too much for me to remember anything.

210-I believe good colloquial English will help everyone to promote fast and everything goes well.

211-If you do not have this good command you could not communicate with any one, whether a low worker or a pro

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