ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS’ MOTIVATION AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS AND ENJOYMENT OF TEACHING METHODS AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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A Thesis

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Learners generally want to be proficient in actively using the foreign language. However, they come into a class with diverse motivations, attitudes and learning histories, which are said to be factors that influence their language learning process and achievement in general, and specifically their preferences in teaching methods and learning activities (Barkhuizen, 1998; Dörnyei, 1994; Heining-Boyton & Haitema, 2007; Horwitz, 1988; Littlewood, 2010; Kouritzin, Piquemal, & Renaud, 2009; Krashen, 1981; Price & Gascoigne, 2006; Roberts, 1992).

Therefore, to ensure successful language learning, this study aims to examine the learners’ motivation for studying English and furthermore their perceptions on useful and pleasurable activities to help current and future language educators to cultivate a learning environment, which fosters the successful and enjoyable learning of a foreign language.

This research was conducted in several English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at a Midwest American university town. The study participants were 15 international students from various different countries who are currently enrolled at this university. Data was collected by using a mixed-methods approach with surveys and follow-up interviews, and was analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. Results have shown that learners’ beliefs and their learning background have an influence on their perceptions of learning activities and teaching methods. In terms of enjoyment of such practices, there was an apparent inclination towards interactive and communicative approaches rather than traditional, non-communicative ones, whereas no distinct style was favored in regard to effectiveness.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Our world today is a multicultural and globalized place. The inventions and improvements of new technologies, combined with their applications and the Internet make it possible to communicate and interact with people all over the world. Taken together, these advances opened up new possibilities on the job market and for the economy, but as a result, they also made things more complex. Due to globalization, flexibility is oftentimes highly desired, and speaking another language is not just an additional qualification anymore, but rapidly has become a prerequisite for a successful career.

Another important factor is the multicultural society we are living in (Banks, 2003). Language learning is not merely about being able to use a language properly. By learning a language, one unavoidably learns something about the country in which the particular language is used, its culture and its customs, which will ideally facilitate understanding, tolerance and respect for each other.

There are a variety of different approaches and teaching methods today, but not all of them might be effective for everybody. Many teachers do not seem to be aware which instructions and practices work and are helpful to language learners. They just teach in the same way they themselves were taught at school, or how they have learned it during their studies at the university, but are often unaware of the effect they consequently have on their students’ learning processes. In addition, there are also numerous educators who would love to try out different techniques, but are simply not sure where to start or which ones are effective. It is in every educator’s best interest, and usually it is their intention, to help learners be successful in their studies. Therefore, a key duty of teachers is to help and support students in their learning processes by finding strategies and methods that are effective. Additionally, they should facilitate their learning in general, and with regard to language learning, make them feel confident and competent in using the foreign language.
When I first started to learn English in High School, I neither particularly liked nor disliked this subject. My classroom performance and grades were not bad, but not particularly good either. English did not present any significant meaning to me, and I had not realized the importance and usefulness of learning another language yet. Learning English was just another mandatory field of study. Especially in the first few years of my own English learning experience, it was mostly about learning vocabulary and their conjugation, and applying grammar and tense rules properly. I am not claiming it necessarily to be a wrong approach, because it is essential to create a strong foundation and learn the basics, but it was not motivating, fun, or authentic. I believe that part of my former indifference towards this subject area was due to the lack of purpose I saw in learning the language.

This attitude changed completely when I had the opportunity to study a year abroad at an American high school. I developed an interest and learned to love the language. There were various opportunities and advantages I encountered by learning and improving my English skills, such as being able to interact and talk to people from different countries, or simply being able to watch and understand movies in their original form. This experience was also the reason why I later chose English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as one of my subject areas. My goal is to get students interested and motivate them to be open to learn a language. As mentioned before, I am of the opinion that language learning is not solely about speaking and understanding another language: I believe that it can broaden one’s horizon, because one will be able to read and understand a variety of media (such as books, newspaper and journal articles, etc.), and furthermore learn, either explicitly or implicitly, about diverse peoples, their countries, their cultures and traditions. Additionally, being proficient in another language can establish new possibilities such as meeting and getting to know different people and gaining more flexibility on the job market.
Research Questions

In today’s world it is an illusion to think that we have a homogeneous and uniform classroom setting. Diversity in regard to various aspects of education is clearly evident, which unquestionably includes learning styles and students’ preferences. The purpose of this study encompasses the investigation of English Language Learners’ (ELL) perceptions of teaching strategies and learning activities in order to have a better understanding of what is most beneficial for their language learning processes. Thus, the following questions were used to accomplish this:

1. What is the learner’s motivation for studying English?

2. What is the learner perception of instructional methods and learning activities in terms of effectiveness and enjoyment?

Rationale

Finding the right teaching methods and learning activities that fit your learners is not an easy task. There are many different ideas and approaches available, but many times teachers do not have enough time or the liberty to try them all out. Concerning this matter, it is crucial that teachers work together to discuss and evaluate their findings with other language teachers in order to facilitate and improve students’ learning. Thus, researching and presenting the findings about this topic could offer a good starting point for educators and language instructors to find some useful resources and tips, which then could also lead to further and more thorough research about finding enjoyable and effective teaching methods and learning activities. This particular thesis might be specifically focused on activities and strategies for ELLs, but I strongly believe that it is not limited to this particular language. Other foreign language teachers can surely profit
from this when they try to implement and use some of the suggestions that will be presented in this thesis in their own classrooms.

Furthermore, in order to find out which learning activities and methods are effective as well as enjoyable to students, it is important to be aware of students’ motivations for learning a foreign language and know about their perceptions of the usefulness and enjoyment of such classroom activities.

One might not always be successful in finding the appropriate approach for his or her current language students, and this is tolerable. Nevertheless, one should be aware of the variety of different methods and the abundance of learning activities and always try to be open and flexible to adjust their teaching accordingly.

**Definition of terms**

In this section, definitions of terms, which are frequently used in this paper, are given and explained for clarity purposes.

1. **English as a Foreign Language (EFL):** This term is an abbreviation for English as a Foreign Language.
2. **English Language Learner (ELL):** This is an abbreviation for English Language Learner, which refers to anyone studying English as a second or foreign language.
3. **Enjoyment:** This term refers to anything that gives a person satisfaction and pleasure. According to the Merriam-Webster’s Learner’s Dictionary (2011), it is “a feeling of pleasure caused by doing or experiencing something you like.”
4. **First language (L1):** This term refers to the first language acquired by a child. It can be used interchangeably with *mother tongue* and *native language* and is often abbreviated as *L1* (Crystal, 2001; Lightbown & Spada, 1993).
5. **Foreign language**: This term refers to languages that are not a speaker’s native language. This usually excludes languages that have a special status within a country (such as English as a second language in Nigeria). There is a distinction between a foreign and a second language: although both are not a speaker’s mother tongue, the latter inhabits a particular status, whereas the former does not (Crystal, 2001).

6. **Language learning vs. language acquisition**: Language learning and language acquisition are oftentimes used interchangeably (Crystal, 2001; Lightbown & Spada, 1993). However, Krashen (1981) clearly contrasts acquisition and learning from each other. Language acquisition is an unconscious process similar to a child’s first and second language acquisition. Its focus is not on the structure and form of the language, but rather on communication (Krashen, 1981; Lightbown & Spada, 1993). In contrast, language learning represents a conscious learning of a language, where the emphasis is on the form and rules of a language, and it is said that error corrections and the presentation of explicit grammar rules are helpful in this process (Krashen, 1981).

7. **Motivation**: According to the APA College Dictionary of Psychology (2009), motivation is the “impetus that gives purpose or direction to human […] behaviour” (p. 252) and can function either on a conscious or an unconscious level. The term can further be differentiated into extrinsic (an external incentive, such as the expectation of punishment or a reward) and intrinsic (e.g. a genuine interest in a subject) motivation.
8. **Native speaker**: A native speaker is a person for whom a certain language is the first language (Crystal, 2001). According to Lightbown and Spada (1993), he/she learned it from an early age and acquired full mastery of the particular language.

9. **Second language (L2)**: A language, which is not a person’s native language, but which is learned due to a communicative need. In some countries, oftentimes, a second language is given a special status by making it an official medium used by the government, law, education, or the media (Crystal, 2001). The abbreviation L2 is frequently used to refer to this term (Lightbown & Spada, 1993).

10. **Traditional teaching approaches**: When talking about traditional teaching approaches in this thesis, I am referring to methodologies such as the Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual-Method whose primary focus are on the study of the target language’s grammar and structure and which, furthermore, put little emphasis on using the foreign language for communicative purposes.

**Summary of Chapters**

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic of the thesis and furthermore includes the rationale for this research study, as well as definition of frequently used terms. Chapter II presents a review of literature, which provides background information relevant to this research study and the proposed research questions. It focuses on the societal perceptions of English as an international language and its various uses, and furthermore gives a brief description of several methodologies of English language teaching, the role of attitude and motivation in English language learning, as well as an account on previously conducted research concerning teacher and student perceptions. The third chapter contains information about the methods and procedures used in this study. It includes the research design,
a report of the participants and the study site, the utilized instrumentation and moreover the procedures used to collect and analyze the data. Chapter IV is a summary of the study’s data analysis and findings. And finally, the fifth chapter provides conclusions drawn from this study, subsequent implications for current and future teachers, and also makes recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, several topics will be presented which are relevant to the investigation of identifying English language teaching methodologies and learning activities currently used in schools, as well as students’ attitudes towards their foreign language learning and their perceptions of the effectiveness of experienced classroom activities demonstrated in current literature and research. The focus will be on providing information about the status of the English language in the world and its main uses, a summary of major methodologies of English language teaching and an account of students’ attitudes towards their own foreign language education including their possible motivation. Finally, a brief account of previously conducted research about teacher and student perceptions on learning activities and teaching methods will be presented.

**English as an International Language**

The importance of learning another language is an acknowledged fact. The idea of teaching languages already exists for many centuries now and is not just a recent trend or passing impulse in education.

In the Western World, Latin was the first dominant language used for educational, religious, commercial, and governmental purposes. Due to political changes in Europe during the sixteenth century, its influential status gradually decreased and was replaced by languages such as French, Italian, and English (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). However, not only historical factors were the reason for the increasing importance of the English language, but, according to Crystal (1997), geographical and socio-cultural aspects also played a significant role in this development. Initially, the spread of English was promoted by Britain’s industrial and trading leadership in the world by the beginning of the nineteenth century, thus, leading to the necessity
of a sufficient knowledge of the English language if one wanted to understand and learn more about new innovations and advances made by Britain. In addition, British and American colonialism as well as the migration of English-speaking individuals to other parts of the world further contributed to this (McKay, 2002). The growing importance and expansion of the English language has also been due to fortunate circumstances, because

[i]n the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries English was the language of the leading colonial nation – Britain. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was the language of the leader of the industrial revolution – also Britain. In the late-nineteenth century and the early twentieth it was the language of the leading economic power – the USA. As a result, when new technologies brought new linguistic opportunities, English emerged as a first-rank language in industries which affected all aspects of society – the press, advertising, broadcasting, motion pictures, sound recording, transport and communications. (Crystal, 1997, p. 110-11)

For these reasons, English has become the most widely studied foreign language in the world (Kitao & Kitao, 1999; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Nevertheless, to be fully acknowledged as an international language by definition, the respective language should be spoken by a large amount of native speakers of another language to be considered as a means of wider communication. And since English is often used for communicative purposes by individuals from different countries as well as between ones of one country, it fulfills this criterion (McKay, 2002).

The status of English differs in various countries around the world. In countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Ireland it is either used exclusively or maintains the role as dominant language. However, there are also some countries, where it serves as a communicative instrument for people who do not share one
common national language (Kitao & Kitao, 1999). This is the case with India, where English is
the medium of communication and the language of the government. Furthermore, it is in fact
some kind of status symbol and apparently has an effect on how one is seen by others in society.
Another significant reason is to secure one’s financial and professional success, because
proficiency in English is nowadays often needed to achieve a higher education and has become a
prerequisite for a successful career (Kitao & Kitao, 1999; McKay, 2002). In this sense, it
concurs with Crystal’s view on the achievement of global status of a language. He believes that a
language attains this stage as soon as it acquires a “special role that is recognized in every
country” (Crystal, 1997, p. 2). According to McKay (2002), this significant status is then
realized through endorsing the study of English as a foreign language, or by making it an official
language of a particular country. Nevertheless, the majority of countries in the world learn
English as a foreign language. Thus, it does not serve primarily for everyday life communicative
purposes, but its study has rather varying motivations for different individuals.

**Uses of English**

Some of the main reasons for learning English may include studying it as a hobby or for
traveling purposes. It is said that international travel promoted the need for a common language;
thus, much information about a country is disseminated in English, and it is commonly spoken
by people working in the tourist industry, for instance, at airports, on tourist’s tours and
attractions, in hotels and shops, which are frequently visited by tourists (Kitao & Kitao, 1999;
McKay, 2002). Moreover, the dominance of the English language in popular culture such as in
the music and film industry contributed to the spread of this respective language and further
augmented its popularity. Songs and movies, which are known all around the world, are
generally written in English, and are oftentimes of American or British origin (Kitao & Kitao,
However, not only did popular music and films instigate many to learn the language in order to understand them, but also the widely used practice of publishing electronic and printed media, such as news and other information as well as fictional publications in the particular language, was an additional factor for people’s motivation to acquire at least a certain level of proficiency (Kitao & Kitao, 1999; McKay, 2002). Undoubtedly, some of the most important uses of English are for educational, business, diplomatic and professional purposes. In order to communicate with each other, English is used as a common denominator for communication at international conferences, trade and business meetings, and within many international organizations (Kitao & Kitao, 1999).

All of the abovementioned factors facilitated the spread of the English language to various areas and countries all over the world. Adequate knowledge of this respective language is not only useful for entertainment purposes (e.g. travels, popular films and music), but it moreover, plays an essential role in academia and can be seen as a prerequisite in order to become a member of a global community, and to successfully take part in a diverse society.

**Methodologies of English Language Teaching**

In accordance to the perception of reasons for learning a foreign language and of the kind of competence level learners should obtain, the methods for language teaching have changed several times throughout history. Richards and Rodgers (1986) state that those changes in language teaching methods not only reflect and acknowledge the shift of attitudes towards proficiency that is thought to be desirable for learners of the language, but that it also mirrors the alterations in the way the nature of language in general and the nature of language learning is understood during that particular time.
Before the sixteenth century, Latin held a central status as the language of education, government, commerce, and religion in Europe (Richards & Rodgers, 1986), thus making it a necessity to learn it. Although French replaced Latin as lingua franca during the sixteenth and seventeenth century; turning it from being a living to a dead language, the study of Latin grammar and rhetoric, nevertheless, formed the basis for foreign language teaching between the seventeenth and nineteenth century. The communicative aspect of language learning was mainly ignored within this approach, whereas a significant focus was laid on the learning and memorizing of grammar rules and translating exemplary sentences, which were supposed to demonstrate the grammatical system of the language (Kitao & Kitao, 1999; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Howatt, 2004). This line of teaching a foreign language later became known as the Grammar-Translation method.

**Grammar-Translation Method**

According to Howatt (2004), the Grammar-Translation method was originally created as a simple and thus, more appropriate approach for teaching students. Before 1800, the practice of language learners was studying the grammar by oneself and then applying this knowledge to the interpretation of texts. This, however, was not applicable to young students and their aptitude, and therefore, this particular method was devised as “an attempt to adapt these traditions to the circumstances and requirements of schools” (Howatt, 2004, p. 151).

The focus of the Grammar-Translation method is the extensive and thorough study of the language’s grammatical components and rules, and its aim is not only the study of another language, but it is intended to further assist a student’s understanding of his or her native language (Kitao & Kitao, 1999). Thus, the conscious knowledge of grammar rules, the ability to read literature in that language, and being able to write and translate in and out of the target
language are the principles of this method. Due to the fact that neither oral proficiency nor listening comprehension is one of the objectives, the medium of instruction is generally the student’s native language. Lessons are teacher-centered and the teaching is deductive, which means that students first learn the grammar rules and then apply them by doing practice exercises (Kitao & Kitao, 1999; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Also, a great emphasis is put on literature and texts, although for educational purposes the focus is mainly on exemplary sentences. Additionally, practice along with accuracy is highly stressed (Howatt, 2004; Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

The Grammar-Translation approach has been the dominant method in European and foreign language teaching for almost a century (during the 1840s and 1940s), and it has been said that it may still be used in altered forms in some countries around the world (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). However, toward the mid-nineteenth century, doubts arose in regard to the effectiveness and practicality of this teaching method. Due to several changes and advances in the world and thus resulting in more opportunities to communicate with people from other countries, a higher demand for oral proficiency had arisen, which required a rethinking of the current language teaching model (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

**The Direct Method**

The Direct Method can be seen as one of the natural methods of language teaching. Its emphasis lies on communicative skills rather than grammar, reading or writing. And according to Howatt (2004),

[1]earning how to speak a new language […] is not a rational process, which can be organized in a step-by-step manner following graded syllabuses of new points to learn, exercises and explanations. It is an intuitive process for which human beings have a
natural capacity that can be awakened provided only that the proper conditions exist. (p. 210)

Advocates believe that a second language can be taught similar to the ways a first language is acquired. Thus, the usage of materials (e.g., pictures and other visuals), direct demonstration (e.g., doing pantomime), and paraphrasing is encouraged in order to explain something and furthermore, help students to connect meaning directly with the respective word. Consequently, there is an exclusive use of the target language in the classroom and translation into the students’ native language is to be avoided (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Moreover, the syllabus is arranged around subjects or situations rather than specific structures; vocabulary is presented in context, and pronunciation is a key factor of this method. In addition, grammar is taught inductively, requiring students to work out the rules and generalizations through given examples, and oral communication skills are obtained by going through a graduated progression in which mainly students and the teacher engage in a question-answer-dialogue (Diller, 1978; Kitao & Kitao, 1999; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Although the Direct Method appeared to be successfully implemented in private language schools, it was, nonetheless, difficult to be realized in a regular school classroom due to several factors. Some of them were, for instance, the necessity of native (or native-like) speaking teachers, the dependence on the instructor’s teaching skills and the strict avoidance of the students’ native language, which was said to be often counterproductive in regard to their comprehension (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

However, another approach was introduced in response to the dissatisfaction of the Grammar-Translation method, which displays some similarities with the Direct Method.
The Audio-Lingual-Method (ALM)

The Audio-Lingual-Method (ALM) is a combination of principles of structural linguistics (the knowledge of a language’s basic sentence patterns, its elements and grammatical structures facilitates language learning), contrastive analysis (the belief that the comparison between English and other languages will help detect possible problem areas, which can then be addressed), aural-oral procedures (precedence was given to aural training, then pronunciation, speaking, reading, and writing), and behaviorist psychology (it is based on B.F. Skinner’s stimulus-response-theory) (Carrasquillo, 1994; Richards & Rodgers, 1986) and was developed on the basis of Fries’ Structural Approach in the 1950s (Kitao & Kitao, 1999). As the name of the method already implies, there is a particular order in which the skills are taught: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is a teacher-centered approach in which the teacher directs and controls students’ language behavior, giving them little control over learning styles, pace of learning, or content of the class. Moreover, the teacher serves as primary language model that the students imitate. Thus, the medium of instruction is the target language, and the native language is not used in the classroom. In accordance with the behaviorist approach, the students respond to the instructor’s given stimulus. Language learning is viewed as internalizing specific habits through constant repetition, memorization and drills, and also by reinforcement (either positive to encourage, or negative to discourage or correct certain behavior) (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Kitao & Kitao, 1999, Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Drills and dialogues, which are the central form of practice of ALM, not only serve as aid for contextualizing key structures and also as examples of conditions in which those structures might be used, but cultural aspects of the target language are also taught through dialogues. Contrasting to the Direct Method, students
were rather discouraged to initiate interactions and use the foreign language spontaneously, because this might lead to unwanted errors (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

**Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

The common objective of most of the previously described methods is oral/communicative proficiency in the target language. In Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or Communicative Approach, being able to make use of the foreign language as means of social interaction is essential, but contrastingly to the others, its goal is to build up a communicative competence, which not only involves the students’ need of knowledge about a language’s structure and meanings, but moreover, requires them to be consciously aware of the various functions of language use within a social context and make use of it appropriately.

Components of communicative competence are the following four competencies: the grammatical competence, the sociolinguistic competence, the discourse competence, and the strategic competence. According to Savignon (2002), the grammatical competence is “the ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactical and phonological features of a language and to make use of those features to interpret and form words and sentences” (p.9). It is not about being able to explicitly state the rules, but rather the ability to use those rules in context and for communication purposes (Canale & Swain, 1980; Burke, 2006; Savignon, 2002). Although the focus in a CLT classroom is on communication, grammar is seen as an integral part and the implicit teaching of grammar might occur more often than explicit grammar teaching (Burke, 2006; Savignon, 2002). In order to develop grammatical competence, teaching and learning practices should relate to the learner’s communicative needs and experiences (Ellis, 1997; Lightbown & Spada, 1993). Discourse competence involves the ability to put together phrases, sentences or utterances to form a meaningful whole through the process of interpreting,
negotiating, and expressing meaning (Burke, 2006; Savignon, 2002). The third competence is concerned with several contextual factors in which the target language is used: the setting, the roles of the participants, the purpose of their interaction, and the information that they share with each other (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 2002). Learners are required to understand various social contexts, the function of the interaction, and furthermore, the appropriateness of content, nonverbal language, and tone (Canale & Swain, 1980; Burke, 2006; Savignon, 2002). Thus, acquiring a cultural knowledge and sensitivity of the target language are also seen as crucial while developing the sociolinguistic competence (Savignon, 2002). Nevertheless, foreign language learners will undoubtedly encounter unfamiliar situations and contexts and moreover, experience some difficulties and constraints due to imperfect knowledge of social or linguistic rules as well as performance variables such as fatigue or distraction. Therefore, strategic competence which includes verbal and nonverbal coping strategies can help to compensate for communication breakdowns that are caused by the aforementioned factors (Canale & Swain, 1980; Burke, 2006; Savignon, 2002).

In a CLT learning environment, the learners are also expected to be able to negotiate meaning with their partner (Larsen-Freeman, 1986), and according to Kitao and Kitao (1999), this process is not only achieved on the basis of “the intent of the speaker but is modified based on who the speaker is, [and] what the relationship is between the hearer and speaker, etc.” (p. 26). Thus, the way of how and in which function language is used is dependent on several factors.

Students mainly interact with each other in various different formations (pairs, small groups, whole groups) and materials and classroom activities such as role-plays, games, and problem solving tasks are intended to promote the communicative usage of the target language (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The role of the teacher is less central, but
nonetheless diverse: one the one hand, the instructor acts as another participant within the learning community, and on the other hand, he/she acts as facilitator of the students’ learning who analyzes and subsequently responds to students’ needs, operates as manager to organize and create classroom activities and situations, which encourage communication among students, and additionally, is an advisor who answers questions and who furthermore monitors students’ performance (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

Rather than being a method, CLT is perceived as an approach, which focuses on cooperative learning in contrast to an individualistic one (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Due to the fact that the applicability and usefulness of the foreign language, and the usage of authentic materials in the classroom are emphasized, it is said that students will be more motivated and feel that they are actually learning something valuable (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, Kitao & Kitao, 1999).

**The Role of Attitude and Motivation in Foreign Language Learning**

Attitude and motivation are said to have a significant influence on students’ language learning. Several researchers have found that there is a correlation between learners’ attitude (whether it is positive or negative), their motivation to learn another language and achievement in foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 1994; Horwitz, 1988; Kouritzin, Piquemal & Renaud, 2009; Krashen, 1981; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Price & Gascoigne, 2006; Roberts, 1992; Tse, 2000). And according to Brown (1987),

attitudes, like all aspects of the development of cognition and affect in human beings, develop early in childhood and are the result of parents’ and peers’ attitudes, contact with people who are “different” in any number of ways, and interacting affective factors in the
human experience. These attitudes form a part of one’s perceptions of self, of others, and of the culture in which one is living. (p. 126)

Thus, learners are not “blank pages” who are unbiased, but they come into the classroom with a preset of perceptions and opinions formed by factors such as previous experiences (Barkhuizen, 1998; Block, 1994; Christison & Krahne, 1986; Green, 1993; Nunan, 1986; Peacock, 1998) that can have a strong impact on their learning and, subsequently, on their academic success (Tse, 2000). Krashen (1981) has identified several factors, which encourage and motivate an individual’s second language learning by supporting communication with speakers of the target language, and which furthermore, have an influence on the attainment of the necessary information to learn another language.

Moreover, a great emphasis has been put on motivation in relation to foreign language learning since it is said to have a significant impact on the perceived importance of language learning and its achievement (Dörnyei, 1994; Kouritzin et al., 2009; Krashen, 1981; Price & Gascoigne, 2006; Roberts, 1992). Additionally, Gardner and Lambert (as cited in Carrasquillo, 1994) who define motivation in terms of a learner’s objective or orientation, distinguish between integrative and instrumental motivation (Carrasquillo, 1994; Kouritzin et al., 2009; Krashen, 1981). Integrative motivation is defined as the desire to be part of the target language’s community. It is a result of the learner’s positive attitude toward and his/her interest in this community and its culture. According to Carrasquillo (1994) and Krashen (1981), several research studies suggest that this type of motivation has been related to proficiency in language learning. A positive attitude towards language learning has been said to lead to greater success in the attainment because of the learner’s interest, which motivates them to participate more
actively in the classroom and also invest more in their language learning in general (Brown, 1987; Carrasquillo, 1994; Krashen, 1981; Price & Gascoigne, 2006).

The primary reason for instrumentally motivated learners to learn another language is to enhance their qualification and thus, to obtain a particular educational, financial or professional advantage (Carrasquillo, 1994; Kouritzin et al., 2009). According to Krashen (1981), the purpose of foreign language learning is based on practical usage, and language acquisition might cease after the desired goal is achieved. Consequently, this might limit the spectrum of language aspects that these students are learning, because they might focus only on elements which they consider as necessary and valuable for their intention (Krashen, 1981). Additionally, this self-restriction might also have an impact on the language learning and, subsequently, on the acquired proficiency level.

Although there are several other studies which are not as confirmative in regard to a direct connection between students’ positive attitude and a successful language learning achievement and which report weaker linkage of the effect of positive attitudes have on language learning success (Krashen, 1981), it appears to be unquestionable that certain attitudes towards languages (including a positive attitude toward its native speakers and their culture) and language learning in general, have an impact on one’s learning and eventually on one’s level of competency.

In their longitudinal study, Heining-Boyton and Haitema (2007) examined the attitudes of elementary school children toward foreign language learning over a four-year period (from 2nd to 5th grade), and as a follow-up study, they subsequently interviewed 13 high school students, who had previously participated in the elementary school study, to find out whether or not their perceptions had changed as adolescents. Initially there was a generally positive attitude toward
foreign language learning at the elementary school level, which, however, significantly declined over time. Furthermore, students displayed a rather negative perception towards the use of a foreign language outside the class, which Heining-Boyton and Haitema (2007) assumed to be interrelated with the general loss of desirability and prestige of school itself and its activities within children’s attitudes. Nevertheless, the researchers felt that student perceptions remained mostly positive on the items measured. The majority of adolescent participants in the follow-up study expressed a positive attitude toward their previous foreign language learning in elementary school. Moreover, while some showed an enthusiastic or affirmative attitude toward foreign cultures and perceived the study of language as valuable in itself, others had a more pragmatic viewpoint in that they recognized the need to understand other cultures and their languages and, even though they expressed a rather negative attitude, acknowledged the fact that learning another language and attaining a certain proficiency level have their benefits (Heining-Boyton & Haitema, 2007).

Another interesting finding of this longitudinal study was the fact that the hierarchical order of school subjects could also play a role in a learner’s perception towards language learning. If learning a foreign language was not seen as an essential component of the school’s curriculum, then students might develop a similar attitude and perceive it as less important, as opposed to the core subjects (science, mathematics, and language arts). Heining-Boyton and Haitema (2007) concluded that the formation of attitude inhabits a fundamental part in early schooling and that “children and adolescents are knowledgeable consumers” (p. 164). Therefore, it is the educator’s task to utilize the children’s and adolescents’ positive desire to learn another language and to furthermore, assist them in this process (Heining-Boyton & Haitema, 2007).
In addition, several research studies were conducted to discover students’ beliefs concerning the importance of foreign language learning, and moreover, their motivation and arguments for studying it. Comparing Ely’s (1986), Price and Gascoigne’s (2006) and Roberts’ (1992) compiled student arguments, the most common ones were (1) cultural understanding, (2) job/career opportunities, (3) interpersonal communication, (4) educational, and (5) travelling purposes. The overall findings of these three studies showed a supportive attitude toward foreign language learning, whereby understanding and learning about other cultures and studying it for communicative purposes appeared to be the most frequently stated factors of motivation (Ely, 1986; Price & Gascoigne, 2006; Roberts, 1992).

Taking these elements into consideration, educators should display a positive attitude themselves, be knowledgeable of ways to encourage and make use of students’ positive attitudes, and additionally stimulate their motivation in order to support students’ language learning.

**Teacher and Student Perceptions**

It is not unusual that individuals have diverse perspectives and opinions. They might agree on certain topics, but display contrasting views on others. This appears to be true for teachers and students as well. Furthermore, research has shown that teacher and student perceptions were not always in compliance with each other (Barkhuizen, 1998; Block, 1994; Nunan, 1986; Peacock, 1998). Nunan (1986) presented results from two research studies along with his own findings on the investigation of teacher and student expectations and perceptions regarding the usefulness of various language teaching activities. Contrary to teachers’ beliefs who rated communicative practices as highly helpful in Eltis’ and Low’s study (1985), Alcorso and Kalantzis (1985) found out that students rather favored traditional, non-communicative learning activities such as grammar exercises, memorizing, and repetition work (Nunan, 1986).
Moreover, his own research confirmed this apparent mismatch of teacher and student perceptions. Nunan (1986) selected ten of the most and least popular student learning activities and had surveyed sixty teachers from the same program as Willing (1985). A comparison of these findings revealed that students and teachers clearly differed in their views on the degree of importance and usefulness of particular activities. Similar findings were obtained by Block (1993), who had collected data through observations and oral diary accounts from a semi-intensive EFL class and its teacher. Additionally, Barkhuizen’s (1998) and Peacock’s (1998) studies, which had investigated South African and Hong Kong Chinese ELLs, revealed analogous results. On account of Peacock’s (1998) claim of a presumed link between the use of certain instructional methods and student achievement, Green’s (1993) statement that “a mismatch between student needs and expectations and the […] style of the teacher, may result in learning problems for the students” (p. 2) and Horwitz’ (1988) opinion that certain beliefs might “result in negative [learning] outcomes” (p. 292) reveal significant implications for foreign language educators. They were of the opinion that the gap between teacher and student perceptions could cause the learner to lose confidence and lead to dissatisfaction with the class, and ultimately result in a reluctance to participate in certain learning activities (Green, 1993; Horwitz, 1988).

**Summary**

This chapter started off by explaining the status of English as an international language and its primary fields of application. Then it continued to briefly outline major methodologies of English language teaching and their main characteristics, which were implemented in education over the centuries. Finally, the role of motivation and attitudinal factors, which are said to have an influence on the achievement of proficiency in foreign language learning, is discussed.
The status of English within the global community and the variety of its usage were examined in order to try to explain the general popularity of learning English as a foreign language all around the world. Furthermore, to gain a better understanding about the teaching methods and learning activities that the students perceive as effective and enjoyable, knowing about their history of language learning is important, and thus, the most predominant teaching methodologies were introduced. In addition, the role of one’s attitude and motivation in foreign language learning is looked upon, because of its crucial role in finding out for what purposes English is learned and what kind of teaching approaches could then be used to support this learning process and ensure the learner’s success. Lastly, a brief account on teacher and student perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities was presented.
CHAPTER III: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The spread of the English language in various areas and countries has been stimulated by several different factors that include the usage of the language for educational, professional, diplomatic and business purposes. The reasons for learning English can be diverse and may include recreational intentions such as traveling around or understanding popular media, but oftentimes it also involves being able to communicate with diverse people from around the world and becoming a member of a global community. Despite the multiplicity of reasons for learning English, they all most likely have at least one common objective, which is the attainment of a sufficient knowledge of the respective language to successfully take part.

Speaking from my own experiences, I will claim that any learning is made easier when one enjoys the subject in general, but moreover, feels comfortable in the learning environment and likes the learning activities. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine language learners’ perceptions of the enjoyment and effectiveness of their experienced classroom methods and activities to try to determine which ones are perceived as both helpful and enjoyable, in order to help educators to improve their instructions and consequently facilitate their students’ language learning.

This chapter focuses on the methods and procedures, which were used to conduct this research. It contains information about the research design, the participants, the setting context, the instrumentation used, and also the data collection as well as the data analysis.

The following research questions served as guidance for the conduction of the investigation of student perceptions in terms of enjoyment and effectiveness of English language learning activities.

1. What is the learner’s motivation for studying English?
2. What is the learner perception of instructional methods and learning activities in terms of effectiveness and enjoyment?

Methods

Research Design

This research study employed a complementary mixed method approach with both quantitative and qualitative components, because this approach can “give complementary and mutually enhancing ways of reaching richer interpretations of observed phenomena than may be possible from a quantitative or qualitative approach alone” (Calfee & Sperling, 2010, p. 7).

Qualitative and quantitative research is commonly seen as two opposing approaches to studying a certain phenomenon (Lichtman, 2010; Muijs, 2004, Silverman, 2000). Qualitative research is said to be an umbrella term, which includes a wide range of methods (Muijs, 2004). And according to Lichtman (2010), it is “a way of knowing in which a researcher gathers, organizes, and interprets information obtained from humans using his or her eyes and ears as filters” (p. 5). Consequently, the researcher becomes the “primary ‘instrument’ of data collection” (Johnson & Onwuegubuzie, 2004, p. 18) and data is usually obtained through interviews and observations of human subjects in natural and social settings (Lichtman, 2010; Muijs, 2004). It emphasizes the hypothesis generation, and also the discovery and exploration of phenomena. Its main goals are to describe, interpret, and understand human behavior, and furthermore, to recognize the importance of the individuals studied and conveying their voices. Additionally, it also acknowledges the fact that the researcher’s voice is intimately linked to what is studied, to the human subjects, and subsequently to the interpretations drawn from the data (Lichtman, 2010).
In contrast to this, quantitative research is said to focus on hypothesis testing, confirmation and explanation of phenomena, finding out about cause and effect, and using statistical analysis (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Lichtman, 2010; Muijs, 2004). Remaining objective and having as little bias as possible is a vital key component in this scientific approach. The goal is to be able to make generalizations and predictions based on one’s findings in order to apply it to other situations (Lichtman, 2010).

In order to explore students’ perceptions of the importance of learning English, and moreover, the effectiveness and enjoyment of certain language learning activities, a mixed-method approach was used. First, a questionnaire with a Likert scale survey, which was complemented by open-ended questions, was given out to international students attending a Midwestern American university. After having analyzed the data obtained from the questionnaire, several participants were asked to further elaborate on some of their answers in a follow-up interview to gain more in-depth information regarding this inquiry.

Combining qualitative and quantitative research components has been proven to be advantageous in answering the proposed research questions. The goal of mixed-methods is to make use of the individual strengths of each method and therefore complementing each other and minimizing each other’s weaknesses (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), there are several benefits in using both quantitative and qualitative research components together: on the one hand, statistical data can be used to add details to the extensive interview responses and increase the generalizability of the results. On the other hand, qualitative data can provide more in-depth insights and a better understanding. Using both approaches can help to provide stronger evidence and to corroborate the findings, and thus generate a more comprehensive picture (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).
Questionnaires and surveys are a way to obtain a great amount of data in a non-threatening way, because they can be completed anonymously. They can be administered to many people and comparing and analyzing the data is generally easier. Interviews, however, are a valuable method to get extensive information about a participant’s personal thoughts and experiences on a particular topic while also allowing the interviewer to be more flexible with the interviewee. Furthermore, the researcher is able to learn more about the participant’s answers to the questionnaire (Mertens, 2005). Consequently, quantitative and qualitative strategies complement each other to produce a more complete knowledge.

Participants

The purpose of this study is to acquire a deeper understanding of students’ perceptions regarding language learning activities as well as English language learning in general. Thus, the participants are all international students who are currently attending English language courses concurrently to their regular university classes in a Midwestern American university to improve their English skills in certain areas (for example, speaking and academic writing).

For this study, 15 students were recruited for the Likert survey, of which five were subsequently interviewed for more in depth information after analyzing the questionnaire. Though participants were selected randomly with no preference in age, gender, or country of origin; while recruiting them, attention was given on a relatively balanced number of representatives of both genders and a comparatively diverse background of native languages. Moreover, to ensure that participants are able to fully understand the questionnaire and are also able to answer any follow-up interview questions to a comprehensible level, all participants were students in graduate English classes. They originated from different parts of the world, with
China (n=7) and Russia (n=3) being the most frequently represented countries: others were from South Korea (n=1), Azerbaijan (n=1), India (n=1), Jordan (n=1), and Kenya (n=1).

The following table (Table 1) illustrates the number of years that each of the participants had studied English.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority (n=7) of participants who most likely had started learning English in school, had indicated that they have been studying the language more than 10 years, closely followed by those who have been learning for at least 5-10 years (n=5). The years that Chinese students had spent learning English ranged from eight to 16 years, whereas students from Russia had studied the target language for five, six, and ten years. The participant from India who had attended an English medium school at the age of four had learned English for 22 years; the South Korean student had studied it for 17 years, and the Jordan learner indicated that she had spent over ten years. Among the study participants, the ones who stood out were the Azerbaijani student who had started studying English four years ago, and the participant from Kenya who stated that he
had been learning it for over 30 years. It might not be too surprising to see that there is one
student in these ESL classes who has been learning for less than five years, however, it is
interesting that there is one participant who has been learning the target language for over 30
years and still attended a supplementary English class.

For this study, five participants were interviewed after the questionnaire data was
analyzed. Those participants had consented to do a follow-up interview prior to answering the
survey questions. Akash\(^1\) was from India and has been studying English for most of his life.
Since English holds a special status as an official medium of communication and as the language
of the government, students from India generally learn it as a second language at a young age,
besides acquiring their respective national language. Thus, Akash had also attended an English
medium school in which every subject had been taught in the second language. Another
interviewee was from China where the study of English as a foreign language (EFL) was
apparently seen as important. Han has been learning English for ten years before coming to the
United States to study abroad, and he mentioned that it was actually his first time leaving his
home town and traveling abroad. Furthermore, he revealed that everything had been so different
and unfamiliar at first, but he had realized that in regard to his language skills, he had noticeably
improved after being in the U.S. for only a few months. Similar to Han, Ben had also
experienced some language difficulties in the beginning. Although he had been studying English
for five years in Russia, he did not feel that his previous studies had been helpful for his current
studies abroad. Interestingly, he was the only participant who indicated that learning English
was perceived as not so important in his home country. In contrast to this view, Johan stated that
in Kenya the study of English was seen as very important. He has been learning it for over 30
\(^1\) All participants’ names have been replaced with a pseudonym.
years, but he still expressed the desire to improve his skills. Despite the fact that Johan has spent an extensive amount of time on his English studies, he said that he did not do any additional activities to improve his language skills. Lastly, Minah from South Korea had learned English for 17 years. She had taken several additional language classes in Korea and also while being abroad in an English-speaking country. Johan’s and her primary motivation for studying English was clearly for higher education aspirations. Additionally, both explicitly stressed the importance and the need for correct grammar and sentence structures when using the target language on their open-ended questions responses and also during our interviews.

In this thesis, every participant’s responses to the open-ended questions and their answers during the interview were purposefully recorded verbatim in order to give a true representation of their speech and writing.

**Setting Context**

The research for this study was conducted in four different English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at a Midwestern American university, which focused either on listening and speaking or academic composition. The latter focused on consistent review and intensive work on grammar and sentence structure and furthermore, the development of grammatical accuracy. The primary goals of these ESL classes were to help the students develop and organize their writing and to provide them with the necessary skills to produce compositional work on an academic level. Depending on the proficiency level (intermediate or advanced), the listening and speaking classes worked on the learners’ pronunciation as well as broadening their vocabulary and listening to academic lectures. Activities such as oral presentations, debates, leading group discussions and impromptu speaking were used to practice those skills. The ultimate objectives
were to obtain an overall fluency and acquire the ability to effectively participate in activities in and outside the classroom.

With the exception of one participant who is actually employed at this university and who is pursuing an additional degree, the other participants were all international graduate students who were required to take those classes, supplementary to their regular studies, in order to improve their English language skills for academic purposes. Classes started early in the morning and were held in the Department of English and American Culture Studies building. The number of students in each class was ranging from a minimum of five to a maximum of nine students.

Before the start of each semester, students whose first language was not English were tested by the ESL program regardless whether they had attended other English-speaking universities or had lived in the United States prior to attending this particular university. The test consisted of a timed, written exam in which students had to write an argumentative, academic essay, and an oral evaluation which was a 10-15 minutes interview with a trained ESL staff member. Even though international students generally took a TOEFL test, this standardized test served primarily for admission purposes to the university, but the intention of the English placement test was to ensure that every student was being assessed in the same way. The goal of this program was to provide support to students’ academic and professional future by helping them to develop and improve their English language skills.

**Instrumentation**

A questionnaire with both Likert scale surveys and open-ended questions was designed by the researcher in order to collect data (see Appendix A for the complete questionnaire). Some of the ideas of learning activities listed in the tables are either taken from several different studies
on students’ preferred classroom learning activities, which were briefly introduced in Littlewood’s (2010) research article, or taken from my personal language learning experiences at school.

The first three questions are demographic questions, written to provide some general information about the participant’s native language and country and also the number of years that he/she studied English. Even though the demographic questions do not necessarily contribute directly to the answering of the proposed research questions, they could serve as reference points when one wants to analyze and compare learning experiences in different parts of the world.

Questions 4 through 7 were written to clarify the students’ personal perceptions and their respective home country’s views on English language learning, as well as their reasons for learning English and studying in an English-speaking country. Since this study’s purpose is to examine students’ opinion on certain foreign language learning activities, knowing the country’s attitude and the participants’ personal attitude and motivation toward the English language and its learning are central to answering the research questions.

Furthermore, Questions 8 to 10 are concerned with the participants’ previous English language learning experiences within and outside of the school environment and they also inquire about their opinion on the effectiveness. Question 8 deals with different language learning activities, which could mainly be categorized into interactive, communicative-based and more traditional, non-communicative language teaching activities. Participants are asked to identify the frequency of usage of those activities that were used in their previous English classes at home. Question 9 asks whether any additional activities or actions have been taken to improve one’s English skills, whereas Question 10 is interested in finding out if those previous experiences have been useful. The participants’ language learning history is an integral part in
determining the effectiveness and enjoyment of classroom learning activities, because the ones they previously experienced and were helpful might differ from the ones that they liked. Lastly, the survey questions 11 to 13 specifically ask about the liking (or disliking) and the usefulness of the aforementioned learning activities and are therefore directly linked to the second research question. To see the complete questionnaire, refer to the Appendix A.

After collecting and analyzing the questionnaire data, a follow-up interview was planned with some of the participants who had previously agreed to be interviewed. The questions would concentrate on the survey questions 9, 11, 12 and 13, since their focus is on the students’ perceptions of the activities’ usefulness and enjoyment. Appendix B includes the interview questions. Interview participants were not necessarily asked all of those questions, since it depended on their responses on the preceding questionnaire. Thus, interview questions which participants were asked slightly differed from each other.

Carrying out a follow-up interview allowed me to obtain more in depth information about their feelings and perceptions. And according to Lichtman (2010), using interviews gives participants an opportunity to share their knowledge while they “can add a dimension to our understanding of the situation that questionnaire data does not reveal” (p.101). Due to the fact that some questions could only be asked if certain criteria were met (for instance, if there was a discrepancy between a participant’s perceived effectiveness of a particular activity and its correlating perception of enjoyment), I decided to use a semi-structured or guided interview in which the general structure is the same for all participants, but which allows one to adjust and vary questions according to the given situation (Lichtman, 2010).
Procedures

Data Collection

With the aid of the questionnaire, I wanted to examine the perceptions of international students studying English as a foreign language with respect to the effectiveness of and their preferences in various language learning activities. This included the investigation of their motivation for and attitude towards English language learning in general and also the participants’ view on their previous foreign language learning experiences in their native country.

The research participants and I met at a designated time and place, which I had individually scheduled with each of them. Following the analysis of the collected data, five out of those 15 individuals were selected for follow-up interviews. The potential interviewees were those who had previously consented to participate in a follow-up interview.

Data Analysis

The answers of the open-ended questions (Questions 6, 7, and 10) were analyzed by using content analysis. Stemler (2001) claimed that it is an effective and useful technique to process and handle a large set of data. The main advantage of content analysis is the fact that it is “a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding” (Stemler, 2010, para.1). Since a great amount of information was obtained by conducting the survey and the follow-up interviews, the benefits of using this technique and codes to deal with the collected data facilitated the process of organizing, classifying and finding themes within this data. In the process of analyzing, recurring themes in the responses to the open-ended questions of each participant were identified and thus codes were derived which were then used to organize the answers into thematically divided categories and to make inferences. When reading through the participants’ statements,
similar responses were grouped into a specific, previously identified theme. Learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in order to “benefit from it for one’s future life”, or to “improve one’s English language skills” are some of the examples for recurring themes in this study.

The qualitative data from the open-ended questions and the interviews were both analyzed by using codes. However, due to the fact that different questions were asked on the questionnaire and during the interviews, the identified themes and codes also varied and thus were neither compared nor contrasted with each other.

The answers obtained from the Likert scale survey questions were evaluated by looking at the frequencies and percent of chosen answers. Presenting the quantitative data in a table that displays frequency and percentage distribution of the numerical data makes it more easily comprehensible and additionally, enables one to see the differences among the various groups of values more quickly (Levine & Stephan, 2010). For the survey questions (questions 1-5, 8, 9, 11-13) tables and graphs were created and the occurrence of answers was counted (e.g. “How many participants come from this particular country?” or “How many studied English for five years?”). In this way, the frequency count for each item was determined. Furthermore, the percentage numbers were calculated by dividing the number of people who rated a specific item by the number of all research participants, and then multiplied times 100.

Prominent percent numbers and frequency counts (both, high and low) of certain learning activities indicate the level of concurrence (or disagreement) and how the participants feel about those activities, depending on how they were rated (either on the higher, positive or on the lower, negative end of the scale). If, for instance, many students have rated a particular strategy to be ineffective for their language learning, then the level of agreement is evidently higher, thus
suggesting a more universal consensus among those English language students in regard to this point.

The purpose of the data collection was to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the learner’s motivation for studying English?
2. What is the learner perception of instructional methods and learning activities in terms of effectiveness and enjoyment?

In order to answer the first question, regarding the motivation of students to learn English, several ways of data collection were used. First, the questions 4 to 7 specifically ask for the individual’s explanation on his/her motivation to study English (Question 6) and the reasons for studying in an English speaking country (Question 7). Furthermore, by asking whether the respective language is perceived as important in the participant’s native country (Question 4) and his/her personal opinion on the importance of its learning (Question 5), the answers indirectly revealed the attitude toward the studied language, and disclosed any possible correlation between the motivation to study it and the value of having sufficient knowledge about it. In addition, Question 9, in which participants were asked to identify additional activities they had done to improve their language skills (if they had done any), also gave further information on the individual’s motivation and reasons for learning English.

Data collected and analyzed from Questions 8, and 11-13 were used to answer the question on what kinds of instructional methods and activities were thought to be enjoyable and enhancing to one’s learning. The second research question was answered by analyzing the percentage numbers and frequency counts, which were obtained through these survey questions, by looking at the characteristics of salient items and also comparing the activities that were
perceived as helpful (or not useful at all) and those which were seen as fun and motivating (or not at all).

Moreover, the participants’ statements made during the follow-up interviews served as further source of information to get more in-depth insights into their reasoning for their particular selection of choices.

**Limitations of the Study**

There are various limitations to this study such as survey-based errors, which include sampling-error, non-response and measurement errors (Cui, 2003). The fact that this study only surveyed 15 students and interviewed five out of those 15 participants and therefore only covers a small number of the ELL population, shows that it can hardly be representative for a population at large and my intentions are not to make such a claim. Furthermore, the chosen sample was specifically defined by certain characteristics that needed to be fulfilled (such as being an international student who attends an English language course) in order to be considered as a possible participant for this particular study. However, within this group of potential participants the sampling was random. Another form of survey-based error is the non-response error, which arises when participants do not respond to the survey questions (Cui, 2003). To reduce the occurrence of this type of error, the length of the questionnaire was limited to a total of 13 items and participants were given a week to complete it. There is also a possibility of measurement errors happening while filling out the questionnaire. A measurement error emerges when participants either do not respond to specific questions, give insufficient answers to open-ended questions, or do not follow instructions correctly (Cui, 2003). This kind of error will most likely happen due to the absence of the prime investigator and his lack of control over the situation.
Furthermore, concerning the interview questions, the wording could possibly bias the interviewee’s responses. Thus, the questions were kept as opinion-free as possible and similar questions and structure were kept for every interview.

Summary

In the third chapter, the general composition of this research study is introduced. It presented, in detail, what types of method was used to conduct this project and whom its participants were. In addition, it provided further information on the context of the setting, the kind of instrumentation that was used to collect data, and moreover, the data collected and the analysis of the findings.

To gain insights into the field of interest, a questionnaire with qualitative and quantitative components was designed and distributed to international university students at a Midwestern American town. The obtained data was then analyzed by using content analysis as well as by looking at the frequencies and percent of chosen answers. Finally, limitations of this study were discussed.
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of this research was to investigate ELLs’ personal perceptions of instructional methods and learning activities in terms of their enjoyment and effectiveness and furthermore, their motivation for studying English. Several research studies have shown that teacher and student perceptions regarding teaching strategies and learning activities are not always in accordance with each other (e.g. Block, 1994; Barkhuizen, 1998; Nunan, 1986). Thus, by examining the motivation and perceptions of ELLs, inferences can be made for the implementation of instructional methods and learning activities in English language classes in order to facilitate and support the students’ language learning.

This chapter includes the analysis of collected data and its results, which were obtained through questionnaires and complemented by follow-up interviews with participants.

Data Analysis and Discussion

In order to answer the proposed research questions data was collected through different methods, using questionnaires with a combination of Likert scale surveys and open-ended questions, as well as follow-up interviews with some of the participants.

Perceptions of Importance and the Motivation and Reasons for Studying EFL

Successful foreign language learning depends on several factors such as the learner’s motivation for studying a particular language, the perceived importance and furthermore the attitude towards the language itself and its community (Dörnyei, 1994; Kouritzin et al., 2009; Krashen, 1981; Price & Gascoigne, 2006; Roberts, 1992). Oftentimes, the perception of importance for learning English has a great influence on the learner’s motivation, and vice versa. In other words, if one is personally interested in a language and feels that it is important to learn about other cultures and communities, then the individual has an integrative motivation to
become part of the target language’s community and moreover augment their knowledge about it. However, if someone thinks the study of a foreign language is important to gain a certain educational, financial, or professional advantage due to a societal and job market pressure, the learner is instrumentally motivated and learns it for practical purposes.

The study participants’ personal perceptions of the significance for learning English were clearly consonant in that 14 out of 15 participants stated that it is important to them; only one did not answer the question. Regarding their respective home country’s perception, the viewpoints were more varied: the majority (60%, n=9) was of the opinion that learning English is seen as very important in their home country, 20% (n=3) thought it is important, whereas 13.3% (n=2) stated that it is only somewhat important and one participant (6.7%) even reported that it is not so important. Interestingly, the three participants who have expressed a rather indifferent standpoint of their home country’s view on the significance for learning English were from Russia.

The following table (Table 2) displays the recurring themes that have been identified from the participants’ responses to the open-ended questions, as well as their frequency and the percent numbers. The questions had asked about the ELLs’ motivation for learning English and the reasons for studying in the United States. Since these were written responses of participants, learners could state more than one argument, and similar statements were put into a category of the same theme. The three most frequently stated reasons were improving one’s language skills, especially for higher education purposes which 10 out of 15 learners mentioned in their answers; secondly, to be able to communicate and interact with people around the world (8 out of 15), and lastly, because proficiency in English is oftentimes a job requirement and beneficial for one’s future career (7 out of 15).
Table 2

*Frequency and Percentage of Recurring Themes in Students’ Answers Regarding Reasons for Studying EFL*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory school subject</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal interest</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve language skills/ for higher education purposes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International language and communicative intentions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits for the future</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job requirement/ career</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain experience of studying and working abroad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn about American culture</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money and better funding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better education compared to one’s home country</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In regard to their motivation and reasons for learning English as a foreign language (EFL) and studying abroad, many participants articulated its need for a higher education aspiration and furthermore, said that they wanted to enhance their English language skills (66.7%, n=10).
Akash argued “to excel in academics it is very important to have good english, since the higher education in India is totally english based”. In accordance to his statement Minah said that …for me the purpose of learning English is for higher education, so when I study speaking English, it’s not just for everyday conversation, it is also for going to conferences and presenting my paper or defense my dissertation at the end of my graduate year.

There seems to be a general agreement that a study abroad in the United States will be beneficial for their individual studies due to a more advanced and overall better educational system. When participants were asked about their reasons for studying abroad, Han and Akash stated, “I could really learn more useful and modern knowledge in my field” and “mainly to learn better communication, Management and technology in my field.” Moreover, one student claimed, “if I want to pursue my major in the future, it’s the best choice to study in U.S.” (Mei, questionnaire). And similar to this statement, Han also explained, “my major is also connected to finance, so I think if you come here [United States], you can learn more useful and more advanced knowledge.” These responses support the assertion that students believe they will gain an educational and ultimately professional advantage by continuing their higher education studies in the United States.

The second most often mentioned reason was the fact that English is perceived as the international language, which is spoken by many around the world, and thus, is the key for communicative purposes (53.3%, n=8). Amira claimed “it [English] is the language we need in many fields of our life since we live in a global world now.” And another ELL agreed by saying, “English is an international language which will be very useful in the future.” In addition, both

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2 All participants’ responses are recorded verbatim.
Ben and Johan responded that their reason for studying English is “to effectively communicate to others across the globe”, and because “it is the scientific and international communicating language.” These comments clearly show the participants’ acute awareness of the importance of being able to successfully communicate and interact with people from other countries since globalization and multiculturalism (Banks, 2003) permeates almost every area of our lives today.

The second theme was closely followed by the argument that studying EFL will be beneficial in relation to one’s future job and career (46.7%, n=7). Numerous participants believed proficiency in the English language and furthermore studying in the states would give them an advantage on the job market. Irem was of the opinion that, “it will help me to find a job, because nowadays it is a requirement in every companies.” Her reason for leaving her home country to study abroad was due to the fact that “it creates more opportunities to build a strong career.” Mei and others agreed with Irem’s view, and Akash stated that, “studying in U.S. definitely adds a new dimension to your profile.” All three assertions are interrelated with each other. It is indisputable that if one wants to effectively communicate and work with others around the globe, one needs to attain certain proficiency and work on improving their language skills. These main reasons indicate a more instrumentally oriented motivation (Gardner & Lambert as cited in Carrasquillo, 1994; Kouritzin et al., 2009), which might be expectable due to the setting of this study.

**Language Learning History**

Throughout the centuries there have been various developments of foreign language teaching methods, which corresponded with the current understanding of foreign language learning and the particular needs at that time. The majority of existing teaching methods have put great emphasis on mechanical aspects of the target language such as grammar, structure and
form (e.g. Grammar-Translation-Method). Students were traditionally taught through memorization and repetitive exercises and the usage of drills. Even with the emergence of more communicative and interactive approaches and the shift of focus towards communicative aspects, the language learners in this study oftentimes reported that they were still taught mainly in the traditional way. When they were asked about methods and learning activities that they had experienced in their home country while learning English, the six most frequently stated strategies were (1) using vocabulary lists (80%, n=12), (2) doing translation exercises and having error corrections by the teacher (both 60%, n=9), (3) completing grammar exercises (53.3%, n=8), (4) listening to teacher explanations (46.7%, n=7) and (5) doing pronunciation practice (33.3%, n=5). All of the aforementioned activities are considered to be part of the traditional approach, which implied more non-communicative teaching instructions with little focus on speaking the language for communicative purposes (characterization taken from Littlewood, 2010). During our interview, Han told me that he had taken additional classes, which focused on passing the TOEFL test and the GMAT. He explained that

…especially the TOEFL really helped me a lot. Especially listening and speaking. You know, Chinese students, they are good at reading and writing, but they are not good at speaking it [English]. […] You know, in China we didn’t speak a lot. We only did some writing and reading.

With the exception of one participant, everyone felt that their previous English language learning had been helpful for his or her studies in the U.S. However, Ben was the only one who disagreed. He complained about the lack of communicative activities and said that, “… my previous teachers was beginning. … It [the English class] was very easy. We had to remember some words or we read some texts, short stories, and it is all [we did].”
Multiple learning activities, which would be considered more interactive and part of the communicative approaches, were among the ones that participants had rarely experienced during their past English language study. With 53.3% (n=8), small group work, role-play and games ranked highest, followed by 46.7% (n=7) saying that they were seldom exposed to group discussions and the use of real life material, and thirdly, songs (40%, n=6) and oral presentations (33.3%, n=5). Lastly, pronunciation practice (26.7%, n=4) was the only activity in this ranking that would be considered a traditional way of learning. The use of this particular teaching practice seems to differ among countries, since it was also part of the top 5 most frequently used activities, which were previously mentioned. It might also be worth mentioning that 26.7% (n=4) of the participants do not recall having done any oral presentations or using visual materials (20%, n=3) during their former language education.

Besides learning English at school, the majority of students (93.3%, n=14) stated that they did additional activities to help them learn the target language. Popular among the proposed activities were watching TV shows and movies in English, with 13 out of 14 participants (92.9%) indicating it on their questionnaire; listening to English music (57.1%, n=8) and attending additional classes outside of school (28.6%, n=4). None of them had studied abroad prior to their current study in the U.S., and only few had travelled to English-speaking countries (14.3%, n=2).

The opinion of students who had taken supplementary English classes agreed regarding the usefulness of those courses. Minah had taken several different courses and she said that prior to the classes,

… I had never spoken English before except very small talk with professor […] and sometimes I had to meet people, because I was working for an organization and
sometimes it had international conferences. Other than that I had never spoken English before, so the ESL course was helpful in terms of making me practice speaking English. And even though Akash had been to an English medium school, where every subject was taught in English, he had also gone to private teaching institutions to improve his language skills. He explained the learning situation in his home country and the reason for attending extra language classes:

… the thing is, sometimes I felt that I needed some extra assistance, because when we learn in the school environment, […] there are fifty students and the teacher can’t really pay attention individually on every student, so if you have individual coaching, […] the teacher has five students at a time. So she can personally pay attention on you and that actually benefits you in a way.

Although both Minah and Akash acknowledged the fact that having additional lessons had been helpful to their learning, Minah admitted the strong focus on communicative activities used in those classes had been stressful due to her mindset which made her want to translate everything from her native language to English and also her ambition to be perfect in terms of grammar. Furthermore, Akash still expressed the need to improve his speaking skills by having more exposure to the language and more interaction with both native speakers and other English-speaking, international peers.

In regard to watching TV shows and movies in English, the most frequently stated advantages were that it helped learners with expanding their vocabulary repertoire, listening to correct pronunciation and moreover learning authentic phrases and expressions. Minah mentioned that, “… in terms of learning the ordinary expressions, that [watching TV] was
helpful, and also in terms of listening, because pretty much what they are talking about on TV is very similar to what every American is using in their everyday life.”

However, another participant strongly disagreed. Johan did not believe that watching TV would improve his ability to understand and speak English. He said that, “I can pick words in a fragmented manner, but I cannot really talk in a coherent manner by just listening to what people are saying in the TV.” He had been the only one who stated that he had not previously done any additional activities to improve his language skills.

In conclusion, it can be inferred that the study participants have mainly experienced a traditional way of foreign language teaching and learning, with little emphasis on and usage of activities which focus on being able to speak and interact with others in the target language, despite their general desire to be proficient in speaking.

Perceptions of Instructional Methods and Learning Activities

The previous section revealed that students’ former English language learning experiences were greatly influenced by a more traditional approach regarding teaching instructions and learning activities. A large number of learners were taught by memorizing vocabulary from teacher-prepared lists, and completing grammar and translation exercises. Since this study is interested in finding out what the ELL perceives as helpful and pleasing, participants were asked to indicate, which of the proposed activities they believed could have been helpful to their process of learning English. The collected data showed that 93.4% (n=14) either strongly agreed or agreed that the use of visual material, oral presentations and error corrections by the teacher could have been the most valuable. Concerning oral presentations, Akash expressed his surprise in regard to course requirements when attending classes at an American university:
... if I’m in front of a group, I can’t really express my thoughts well. So, I faced the problems earlier, before I came here, and I never actually made a conscious effort to speak in like a group of people or something like that, especially in English. So, once I came here […] the teaching methods or learning methods are pretty much different. Like our course requires us to have many more presentations and everything. So it was kind of a cultural shock for me […] Not a cultural, but maybe a learning environment thing […].

Thus, if he had had more experience in preparing and presenting various topics during his school days, it would have definitely been beneficial for his oral skills and also for reducing his anxiety to speak in front of others in his second language.

Barely displaying a difference to the previous percentage, 93.3% (n=14) of the ELLs thought group discussions and small group work would have been useful, and ranking third place pronunciation practice and the use of real life material were seen as advantageous, with approximately 86.6% (n=13). One of the Chinese students had mentioned that in his country the focus was not so much on developing oral skills, thus, he claimed that Chinese students hardly practiced speaking English. If he had been previously exposed to communicative activities such as discussions, it would have been advantageous for his current studies. He revealed that after coming to the U.S., he suddenly had to prepare a multitude of presentations and take part in numerous group discussions for his classes, but he realized that after only eight months his language skills had improved considerably.

Despite the fact that grammar exercises were apparently used quite often in their former English classes (it ranked third place among the most frequently used activities), 11 participants (66.6%) indicated that those exercises could have been helpful to their learning. Additionally, among the six out of 14 activities, which were rated negatively, grammar and translation
exercises (26.7%, n=4) were disliked the most. Contrary to my expectations though, a majority of participants felt neutral toward those two activities. Two students expressed mixed views on translation exercises during our interviews depending on whether it involved written or oral translation. Han preferred spoken translation such as an interpreter and he did not feel the necessity of translating texts, if it was not one’s actual job. Whereas Minah was of the opinion that, in terms of speaking, translation exercises were not effective at all. She favored written translation due to several different reasons:

… the good thing of translation is that it really helps me to dissect the sentences and analyze the sentence, because I have to accurately translate papers. So in terms of learning the sentence structure, I think it is really helpful, and at the same time it helps me write a paper, because I know the structure of the sentence.

In addition to the abovementioned ones, games (20%, n=3), songs, role-play and vocabulary lists (each 13.3%, n=2) were some of the other disliked activities. Conversely, playing games and using songs were also among the popular items. Group discussions and small group work were enjoyed by 60%, and furthermore, 53.3% indicated that they liked games, songs, teacher explanations and error corrections. Akash argued that working and discussing in groups is “the best teaching technique a teacher can have”, because

… once you are in a group, you have to be active; you need to put in […] your input to be a part of the group and to be an active member. You have to do some critical thinking and […] the best learning thing for a student is to have group sessions or probably small group work, conversations and everything.

Ben’s standpoint was in accordance with this statement. He also thought that conversations were the best way to study English and that it was a necessity in order to learn a language effectively.
In regard to playing games, the participants displayed contrasting views. Because of his inexperience with playing games as an educational method, Johan associated this activity only with word games such as Scrabble. Even though he acknowledged the fact that one might be able to learn vocabulary, his point of view on language learning was that it was more than increasing one’s vocabulary repertoire; rather it was about learning the rules. Furthermore, Minah showed a similarly negative attitude toward playing games and role-plays. Her primary reason for studying English was for higher education purposes, thus, she did not think that playing games and doing role-plays the way she had previously experienced it would benefit her aspiration. She expressed her dissatisfaction by saying,

I felt like the teacher treat us like kids, even though we have better knowledge [of grammar]. […] if it’s high-level of role-play and playing games, it might have been helpful, but it was just kids’ games, or very […] unnecessary topics like, for example, “My roommate did not clean up the living room, how am I going to say…?” then for us who need English for job or higher education, it doesn’t help us at all, so that’s the reason I hate those.

In contrast to these opinions, Akash and Han demonstrated a positive attitude. During the interview, the former reasoned that by playing games “you get to enjoy what you are doing. So teaching something through that game, that’s a really good process of teaching a student.” In addition, Han pointed out that incorporating role-play into a class did not only help in language learning, but was also beneficial for his studies in general. He believed that it helped him to get a better understanding of various topics and theories: “… the role-play sometimes just makes the theory more close to you, to the students. […] If you use just […] role-plays to make it more close to your life, I think, [it gives you a] better understanding.”
The reason for liking error corrections by the teacher was the fact that one would get feedback on their frequently made mistakes at a timely manner, and therefore, could work specifically on those to improve one’s skills. And moreover, teacher explanations were seen in a favorable light, because its purpose was to facilitate the learning process and ultimately make it easier for the students.

In both categories of popular and most disliked activities were instructional methods and learning activities, which included traditional as well as communicative attributes. Nevertheless, the most popular ones were strategies that are associated with the interactive and communicative teaching methodologies: the use of visual (86.7%, n=13) and real life material (73.3%, n=11), and oral presentations (66.7%, n=10). Visual and real life material, especially TV programs, are said to provide opportunities to learn vocabulary, everyday expressions and pronunciation and additionally, offer authentic learning experiences. Akash claimed that,

Having real life experiences or that exercises actually helps students to connect with his own life or he has experienced those things, so he can connect well to it and that’s why he gets more interested into learning about that thing and that’s what motivates him in a way to learn more […] deeply into it.

And concerning oral presentations, this learner also stated that it was a “self-learning process”, because on the one hand, it helped him to overcome his own weaknesses such as the anxiety of talking in front of other people and on the other hand, by preparing the presentation he gained further knowledge because “it makes you understand your topic more in-depth”. Additionally, another student explained that this activity was a good way to practice her organizational skills since her studies required her to have a well-structured speech, and it also helped her find and
learn correct and often used English expressions, which ultimately would support her in broadening her language knowledge.

The ranking of the learning activities and instructional methods that the ELLs’ perceived as most effective slightly differed from the ones that were popular among them, but the chosen items were the same. The last question on the questionnaire asked the participants to evaluate 14 learning and teaching strategies by using a Likert scale, which was divided into categories of very effective, effective, somewhat effective, somewhat ineffective, and ineffective. When looking solely on the numbers of the “very effective” category, these are the following top 3: (1) oral presentations (46.7%, n=7); (2) the use of real life material and error corrections by the teacher (both 40%, n=6); and (3) vocabulary lists, playing games, the use of visual material, and teacher explanations (33.3%, n=5).

If the percentages of both categories, very effective and effective, are combined, the results show a minimal difference in ranking. In this case, error corrections by the teacher ranked in first place with 93.3% (n=14) indicating that it is at least effective, oral presentation and the usage of visual material was in second place (86.7%, n=13), and third place was taken by vocabulary lists and teacher explanations (73.3%, n=11). Using real life material, which had initially been perceived as a rather very effective method (40%, n=6), now ranked only fourth (66.7%, n=10) and games came in fifth place (60%, n=9).

Nevertheless, some participants felt that playing games was a good way to motivate students because it did not necessarily make them feel like they were explicitly learning. One ELL suggested that since younger children learned mostly through play, it should continue throughout one’s life. Furthermore, Akash claimed that if the teacher was able to develop a meaningful game for his or her students, then it would “attract students and make them interested
into what he’s trying to say or what he’s teaching, so it’s definitely [...] really effective and helpful for students.” Another participant, Johan, described the benefits of teacher explanations in the following way:

… the teacher knows the stuff. The teacher has gone through, realizes the difficulties that the students would have in terms of understanding what they are trying to explain. So, really, they make it much easier. They walk the students around the problems that students would have if they didn’t have the teacher. [...] I always know what is difficult for my students, so I give them the easy way that I have figured to address whatever problem they are trying to learn.

Since it is inevitable that learners will face difficulties and problems during their learning process, the teacher’s expertise and awareness in regard to potential struggles are seen as an enormous and valuable support for the learner.

The perceptions on group discussions, role-play, as well as games and the use of real life and visual material seem to show hardly any discrepancies between the enjoyment and effectiveness (Table 3). However, despite the fact that the majority perceived those learning activities and instructional methods, which could be attributed to communicative approaches, as enjoyable, in contrast to other ELLs, Johan displayed a different opinion and seemed to strongly favor traditional teaching and learning activities over communicative approaches. He thought repetition and drills could be beneficial to his learning: “If I’m writing something repeatedly, or I’m listening to something and I have to repeat it; that might help me.” Additionally, he perceived autodidactic material, which explicitly focuses on certain language skills to be helpful: “… there is one book I bought that had a CD on. It was to teach non-speakers of English how to speak the language; we are talking of things like intonation, and it is nice. That can work, but it
But I don’t think conversation in terms of […] talking to know how to talk, I don’t think would help me.” Although Johan affirmed the usefulness of the process of preparing an oral presentation, he did not think that he would gain anything from the actual presentation. However, he liked listening to others presenting their topics because the situation was then similar to a teacher standing in front of a class explaining and talking to the students, which he enjoyed.

Rankings of the strategies chosen as most effective are more varied, in that they included almost even numbers of each approach (traditional items: 3; communicative items: 4). This could be an indication that, even though ELLs generally preferred practices, which focus more on active target language use, they acknowledged the effectiveness and importance of an input by the teacher as well as being knowledgeable about the language’s structure and form. Nevertheless, the preference of communicative and interactive learning activities in terms of enjoyment might be explained by the learners’ frequently expressed desire to improve their speaking skills, the lack of such methods and moreover the overuse of non-communicative approaches such as grammar and translation exercises during their previous language studies.

The subsequent table (Table 3) displays the ELLs’ perceptions of the 14 learning items in regard to enjoyment, effectiveness and potential helpfulness in percent.
Table 3

*ELLs’ Perceptions of Learning Activities in terms of Enjoyment, Effectiveness and Potential*

**Helpfulness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
<th>Enjoyment</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Potential Helpfulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar exercises</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation exercises</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation practice</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group discussions</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group work</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-play</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of real life material</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary lists</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error corrections</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
<td>93.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of visual material</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
<td>93.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher explanation</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>93.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

This chapter shared the results and analysis of collected data as it tried to answer the proposed research questions. Although every individual might have different reasons and motivations for learning English and coming to the U.S. to study, frequently stated themes were the desire to improve their language skills, especially for communicative purposes, to pursue a higher education aspiration, and moreover, the expectation of gaining an advantage on the job market.

Additionally, despite the fact that the study participants came from various countries, their English language learning history displayed numerous similarities. They were oftentimes taught in a more traditional way, which focused on their writing and reading skills by putting great emphasis on the target language’s grammar and form, rather than promoting the actual use of it for communicative purposes.

In regard to the enjoyment of particular activities, the ELLs’ perceptions revealed some disparities. Overall, communicative approaches in terms of enjoyable learning activities and instructional methods were predominantly favored. In regards to the helpfulness of certain items, there appeared to be a more even distribution between traditional and communicative teaching and learning practices. Activities from both styles were perceived as beneficial and valuable for the participants’ English language learning.
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of the study was the investigation of ELLs’ motivation for studying EFL and furthermore their perceptions on certain foreign language instructional methods and learning activities in terms of enjoyment and effectiveness. The implementation of this study was guided by two research questions:

1. What is the learner’s motivation for studying English?

2. What is the learner perception of instructional methods and learning activities in terms of effectiveness and enjoyment?

This chapter includes a summary of all chapters, conclusions inferred from the analysis of collected data, as well as implications for teachers, and recommendations for further research.

Summary of Chapters

The first chapter of this paper was an introduction of this study’s topic. The purpose of this research was the exploration of ELLs’ motivation for learning another language and also their opinion on learning activities and teaching practices, which they believed to be useful and enjoyable for their foreign language learning process. It enclosed an introduction of the topic, proposed the research questions and rationale, and furthermore, included definitions of relevant terms.

A review of related research, which had already been conducted concerning this particular issue, was presented in the second chapter. Relevant literature on the following topics was obtained: English as an international language, uses of English, various methodologies of English language teaching, the role of attitude and motivation in foreign language learning, and teacher and student perceptions in regard to language learning activities.
The third chapter introduced the research design as a complementary mixed-method approach, its methods and procedures. It also offered an explanation of the way data has been collected and how it has been analyzed, and it additionally addressed the limitations of this study.

In the fourth chapter, the analyzed data findings, which had been gathered through questionnaires and follow-up interviews, were presented by using the following headings: the perceptions of importance and the motivation and reasons for studying EFL, students’ language learning history, and the perceptions of instructional methods and learning activities. The purpose of this part was to answer the research questions, which were used to guide this study, and to provide evidence to support my conclusions.

**Conclusions**

Differing viewpoints are not uncommon among individuals. This also appears to be true for teachers and students. Research has shown that learning activities and instructional strategies, which students found to be beneficial for their language learning, did not always fall in line with what teachers believed to be useful (Barkhuizen, 1998; Block, 1994; Nunan, 1986; Peacock, 1998). Consequently, this mismatch might cause a negative outcome for ELLs (Green, 1993; Horwitz, 1988), which every language teacher should try to avoid. Thus, it is important to investigate and subsequently make use of students’ perceptions of language learning in general, and specifically of the effectiveness and enjoyment of teaching and learning methods. Findings from this study have revealed that, even though, interactive and communicative teaching and learning practices were generally favored in terms of enjoyment, the majority of participants felt that for successful language learning a mixture of both traditional and communicative approaches, were necessary to attain proficiency. One participant had indicated that he did not like grammar study, but nonetheless, found it to be useful. Han explained his choice by saying,
…if you […] begin to learn the language; if you do not know the grammar, you cannot write, you cannot read. So, it’s basic knowledge. […] you should know it at the beginning, but after you know it, I don’t think you need to do more exercises, because when you write, when read, maybe when you speak, you have to use it [the grammar]. Maybe do that more, I think. You do not specialize in grammar.

He was of the opinion that once the learner had obtained certain knowledge about the grammar, there was no need for explicit grammar practice. Rather he suggested that grammar learning should take place in a more implicit way through writing and reading, and even through speaking the target language. Han’s statement and other results of this study seem to be in line with Green’s (1993) study findings. His research investigated 263 second-year university ESL students on their perceptions of enjoyment and usefulness of communicative and non-communicative activities. He found out that those students clearly enjoyed communicative strategies more, whereas their preference was not so apparent when they were rating the effectiveness of such activities (Green, 1993). Green (1993) thus argued that by looking at multiple students’ comments, it appeared that they were “willing to accept both communicative and non-communicative activities as effective” (p. 6). This seems be true for this study’s population as well. The results of this investigation showed an inclination regarding interactive and communicative learning and teaching approaches. However, there was no apparent preference in terms of helpfulness. Both categories were perceived as being needed and beneficial to their language learning. Correspondingly, Littlewood’s (2010) study revealed that participants enjoyed activities of a communicative nature the most, but believed that for their actual language learning progress, traditional, non-communicative techniques had proven to be more valuable. And although slightly differing from the aforementioned results in that the
students in Christison’s and Krahnke’s (1986) research rated communicative practices higher in both categories, enjoyment and effectiveness, their study also showed that the ELLs favored communication-oriented teaching rather than grammar and translation work.

These results however, contradict with the findings from studies such as Nunan (1986) and Barkhuizen (1998), who had found that students preferred traditional teaching methods, which focused on mechanical aspects of the target language. Nevertheless, this does not attenuate or denigrate the importance of teachers’ need to be aware of students’ attitude toward and preconceptions of language learning. Rather these findings emphasize this significance, because it shows that what is true for one learner population might not be applicable to another.

Research studies have also shown that there is a tendency for a correlation between the perceived effectiveness and enjoyment of learning activities and instructional methods (e.g. Barkhuizen, 1998; Green, 1993). Participants’ rankings in this investigation seem to confirm this assumption. Learners’ frequently chose activities on the subject of what they thought was most valuable and interesting corresponded with each other. For instance, communicative and interactive approaches such as group discussions and oral presentations were ranked highly, both in terms of helpfulness and enjoyment. This could be explained by the ELLs’ general aspiration to improve their oral skills. The aforementioned activities provide ample opportunities to practice this competence, because the learners have to take on an active role in order to be successful and thus these activities are seen as effective and pleasing.

In conclusion, this study confirms that language learners’ motivation, attitude and their previous learning history play an important role concerning ELLs’ perceptions, since these components are said to have an influence on them (Barkhuizen, 1998; Dörnyei, 1994; Heining-Boyton & Haitema, 2007; Horwitz, 1988; Littlewood, 2010; Kouritzin et al., 2009; Krashen,
1981; Price & Gascoigne, 2006; Roberts, 1992). And with respect to this study, these factors appear to also have noticeably influenced the participants’ choices of popular and useful learning methods. This conclusion will lead to implications for current and future foreign language teachers, which will be discussed in the next section.

Implications for Current and Future Foreign Language Teachers

In terms of enjoyment, the study participants for this research have displayed a more positive tendency towards interactive teaching and learning approaches that emphasize communicational aspects, but had not shown a distinct inclination towards either communicative and traditional, non-communicative approaches regarding their effectiveness. These ELLs rather have acknowledged the usefulness of both methods in order to learn the target language and ultimately to be proficient. This entails some implications for current and future foreign language teachers.

The constant emergence of new and different methods is said to mirror the changes in the perceptions of the theories of language learning and acquisition and of the contemporary objectives and needs for learning the target language (Kitao & Kitao, 1999; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Howatt, 2004). Ultimately, the intentions were to improve and enhance the previous teaching methodologies (Diller, 1978; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Therefore, the development of various English teaching methodologies over the course of time has revealed that there appears to be no one, single method to successful English language teaching. Learners in this study have clearly expressed their desire and need to attain a sufficient oral proficiency, but they also indicated the necessity of teacher support through explanations and error corrections, and furthermore, the requirement of a certain degree of grammar knowledge. The subsequent implications for foreign language educators are thus to be flexible and versatile in their teaching,
and moreover, to use a method such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which primarily makes use of interactive, communicative approaches and activities, but which also promotes the teaching of grammar and form of the target language in a meaningful context (Burke, 2006; Lightbown & Spada, 1993; Savignon, 2002).

In addition, multiple studies have shown that learners have varying preferences in learning activities and teaching methods in relation to what they consider to be advantageous to their learning and furthermore pleasing (Barkhuizen, 1998; Christison & Krahne, 1986; Green, 1993; Horwitz, 1988; Littlewood, 2010; Peacock, 1998). Thus, teachers would be well-advised to find out about students’ learning history, motivations and perceptions prior to starting a class and moreover continuously explore students’ beliefs (Christison & Krahne, 1986; Barkhuizen, 1998; Horwitz, 1988). Furthermore, creating a learning environment and curriculum, which focuses on the learner and his or her needs and additionally allows for more learner autonomy, by involving students in the choice and implementation of course activities could lead to a more positive attitude and satisfaction on the part of the learners, and ultimately, facilitate the process of successful language learning (Barkhuizen, 1998; Nunan, 1986; Peacock, 1998).

Another way to engage students more and to reduce the occurrence of misunderstanding, dissatisfaction and potential opposition is to make course objectives clear to the learners (Barkhuizen, 1998; Green, 1993; Horwitz, 1988; Peacock, 1998). Ideally, the teacher would explain the purpose of those activities that are unfamiliar to the students. Barkhuizen (1998) suggests using journals regularly, getting feedback after finishing particular activities, and implementing course evaluation.

As Kumaravadivelu (as cited in Barkhuizen, 1998) puts it, “the more we know about the learner’s personal approaches and personal concepts, the better and more productive our
intervention will be” (p.102). Thus, it is essential for foreign language teachers to be aware of the various factors that influence the students’ language learning process in order to cultivate a learning environment that promotes both enjoyment and effectiveness of foreign language learning.

As I am a future EFL teacher myself, this research study has further animated my ambition to broaden my knowledge about methods and approaches which help educators to teach effectively and students to learn successfully. During my former studies, I had not been introduced to any specific teaching methods, and practices and methodologies were hardly discussed. Thus, I felt the need to research this particular topic, and it was interesting to read about the various methodologies of foreign language teaching. Especially an approach such as CLT seems not only to incorporate various aspects of the target language that are essential in order to effectively make use of the language, but moreover, it also focuses on elements such as the target language’s culture and the components of communicative competence. In relation to this study’s results, CLT appears to include the aspects that participants thought to be most effective for successful language learning in the most possible way, compared to other methodologies. Hence, I am interested in learning more in depth about the way it is implemented and used in an actual classroom.

Teaching English as a compulsory school subject will most likely have a strong influence on students’ attitudes and motivations and will differ from those learners who study the target language voluntarily and at private language institutions. Nevertheless, in the future, I would like to find out about my students’ beliefs and perceptions in regard to its importance, because I feel that it will be beneficial to me personally and also to the design and implementation of the curriculum. When teaching older students, the use of a questionnaire similar to the one used in
this research study at the beginning of a school term might be helpful to learn more about their
language learning history, attitudes and motivations, and continuous feedback can be obtained by
asking students to evaluate the class activities or the course itself.

Although I had not really anticipated any particular outcome of this study, I did expect
participants’ to favor communicative and interactive approaches both in terms of effectiveness
and enjoyment. However, the actual outcomes differed from my expectations, and this made me
realize how important and valuable it is to conduct such a research study in order to overcome
misconceptions and ultimately gain more in depth insight and a better understanding of one’s
learners.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The aim of this study was to investigate ELL perceptions of the enjoyment and
effectiveness of certain instructional methods and learning activities. It included the question
whether and how motivation and attitude play a role in studying English. Although participants
were asked to reveal demographic information about their home country, their native language,
and years of learning English, this study did not specifically try to examine the influence of
learners’ nationality, age, or number of years of EFL study, in regard to this research topic.
Nevertheless, including those variables and also exploring the learners’ aspiration on the subject
of foreign language learning in this kind of study would be interesting and furthermore useful for
foreign language educators who plan on teaching abroad. One of the study participants recalled
an experience in one of her EFL courses, in which the students were from Europe as well as from
different Asian countries and who also varied in age. She noticed the varying needs of her
classmates, which had partially to do with their differing nationalities and ages. This ELL
observed that students from European countries had more problems with the use of correct
grammar than with speaking the target language, whereas Asian students were already knowledgeable since they had learned it during their previous studies in their home countries, but had difficulties in using the language orally. However, the course instructor had put great emphasis on teaching the grammar and thus she regretted having lost class time on something she had already learned:

I think age and nationality are important, because some students from European countries […] are strong at speaking but not at grammar. […] I knew them [grammar rules], I didn’t have to learn them. […] I have to sacrifice some time during the class, because I have to learn everything that I already know.

Knowing about and considering students’ learning history before starting a class can therefore help to create an environment which accommodates and meets the learners’ specific needs.

Furthermore, conducting this research with a different and larger population would add more validity to the findings. Since the researched population was small in size and somewhat homogenous, in that they were all international students currently enrolled at an American university, their motivation and attitude might not have varied so much from each other because their primary goals were to be able to communicate with others while living in the target language’s country and also to successfully complete their studies at a higher education institution. And even though data has shown a variety of other motivations for learning English, increasing the number of participants and moreover using a different learner population might lead to other, more diverse findings.

Summary

The data analysis has shown that students’ learning history, motivation and attitude concerning their English language learning have an influence on their perceptions of the
effectiveness and enjoyment of teaching and learning practices. Furthermore, despite the fact that learners favored communicative and interactive activities, they recognized the usefulness of traditional, non-communicative methods as well. These findings imply that foreign language teachers should be well-aware of students’ beliefs and attitudes, and moreover, use a compound of various instructional approaches, which equally includes interactive, communicative and traditional, non-communicative activities. Being knowledgeable about what one’s students need and want to achieve and personally perceive as helpful and pleasing, can help the instructor to improve his or her own teaching and ultimately help to facilitate his or her students’ language learning process.
REFERENCES


http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/multicultural/banks2.htm


APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
Questionnaire

1. What is your native country? _____________________________________________

2. What is your native language? ____________________________________________

3. For how many years have you studied English? _______________

Perception on English Language Learning

4. How important is learning English in your native country?
   □ Very important
   □ Important
   □ Somewhat important
   □ Not so important
   □ Not important at all

5. Do you personally think it is important to learn English? □ Yes □ No

Directions: Please answer Questions 6 to 7 by giving a written explanation.

6. What are your reasons for studying English? ________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________

7. Why did you decide to study abroad? _________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________
English Language Learning Experiences

Directions: Please indicate which of the following category applies best for each statement by placing an “X” in the appropriate column.

8. When you were learning English in your home country, what did you experience that benefited your learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning activity</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. We learned grammar through explicit rule teaching and exercises.</td>
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<td>2. We did pronunciation practice exercises.</td>
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<td>3. Errors were corrected by the teacher.</td>
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<td>4. We used classroom conversations and discussions.</td>
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<td>5. The teacher gave us vocabulary that we were supposed to study (e.g. vocabulary lists).</td>
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<td>6. We worked and talked in small groups.</td>
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<td>7. The teacher used materials from real life (e.g. TV, magazines, newspaper, radio shows, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. The teacher used visual material such as pictures and movies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. We used songs and games to learn the language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. We worked and talked in pairs.</td>
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<td>11. We did role-plays.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. There were a lot of teacher explanations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. We did translation exercises.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. We gave oral presentations in front of the class.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Directions: Please check off the answer(s) that apply to you (You can choose more than one if there are several which apply to your previous English language learning experience).

9. Did you do any additional activities to improve your language skills?
   □ Yes □ No

If you checked off “yes”, please indicate which of the following apply to you:
   □ I had additional lessons outside of school (e.g. at language schools).
   □ I studied abroad in an English-speaking country for a longer period of time.
   □ I attended special language programs (e.g. summer programs).
   □ I listened to English music.
   □ I watched movies and television shows in English.
   □ I travelled to English-speaking countries.
   □ Other: _________________________________________________________

10. Do you think your previous English studies in your home country have been helpful for your study here in the United States? □ Yes □ No

   Explain.________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

Effectiveness and Enjoyment of Teaching Methods and Learning Activities

Directions: Please indicate which of the following category applies best for each statement by placing an “X” in the appropriate column.
11. What do you think could have helped you in your English language learning that you have not experience in your own studies?

*have not*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning activity</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Grammar exercises</td>
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<td>2 Translation exercises</td>
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<td>3 Pronunciation practice</td>
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<td>4 Singing and listening to songs</td>
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<td>5 Classroom conversations and group discussions</td>
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<td>6 Small group work</td>
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<td>7 Role-plays</td>
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<td>8 Usage of real life materials (TV, radio shows, newspaper, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Vocabulary lists</td>
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<td>10 Playing games</td>
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<td>11 Error corrections by the teacher</td>
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<td>12 Usage of visual material (e.g. pictures, movies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 More teacher explanations</td>
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<td>14 Oral presentations</td>
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12. Which of these activities did you find to be *enjoyable*?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning activity</th>
<th>Like</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Dislike</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Grammar exercises</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Translation exercises</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. Pronunciation practice
4. Singing and listening to songs
5. Classroom conversations and group discussions
6. Small group work
7. Role-plays
8. Usage of real life materials (TV, radio shows, newspaper, etc.)
9. Vocabulary lists
10. Playing games
11. Error corrections by the teacher
12. Usage of visual material (e.g. pictures, movies)
13. More teacher explanations
14. Oral presentations

13. Which of these activities did you find effective for your studies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning activity</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Somewhat ineffective</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Grammar exercises</td>
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<td>2 Translation exercises</td>
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<tr>
<th>Learning activity</th>
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<th>Effective</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
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<td>6 Small group work</td>
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<td>Usage of real life materials (TV, radio shows, newspaper, etc.)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Playing games</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>More teacher explanations</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Oral presentations</td>
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APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Follow-up Interview Questions

Question 9:
Did you do any additional activities to improve your language skills?

□ Yes       □ No

If you checked off “yes”, please indicate which of the following apply to you:

□ I had additional lessons outside of school (e.g. at language schools).
□ I studied abroad in an English-speaking country for a longer period of time.
□ I attended special language programs (e.g. summer programs).
□ I listened to English music.
□ I watched movies and television shows in English.
□ I travelled to English-speaking countries.
□ Other: _________________________________________________________

If students answered this question with “yes”, the follow-up questions could be:

1. Why do you think did this additional activity help you in your English language learning?

Question 11:
What do you think could have helped you in your English language learning that you have not experience in your own studies?

Possible follow-up question:

2. Looking at your choice(s) of learning activity(ies) that you think could have helped your language learning, please explain why you chose …. .

Question 12:
Which of these activities did you find to be enjoyable?

Possible follow-up question:

3.1. What did you like about this/those particular activity/ies?
3.2. What did you dislike about this/those particular activity/ies?
Question 13:
*Which of these activities did you find *effective* for your studies?*

Possible follow-up question:
4.1. Why did you find this/those activity/ies helpful?
4.2. Why did you think this/those activity/ies are not helpful?

After comparing answers of **Q12 and Q13**, and if there are any discrepancies between the activities which were perceived as enjoyable but not helpful (or vice versa):

Possible follow-up question:
5. You stated on the questionnaire that you liked this activity, but at the same time you didn’t find it helpful. What do you think is the reason for this difference?
APPENDIX C

STUDENT CONSENT FORM
Explanation and Informed Consent Form for Participants

Dear Student,

My name is You-Mi Seo. I am a graduate student in the College of Education and Human Development at Bowling Green State University. I am currently doing a research study for my Masters Thesis. The title of my thesis is: English Language Learners’ Motivation and their Perception on the Effectiveness and Enjoyment of Teaching Methods and Learning Activities. This study will measure your opinion and thoughts on teaching methods and learning activities that you might have experienced while studying English right now and in the past. Since you are currently attending an English language class in an English speaking country, I am interested in your motivation for learning the language and also your personal view on the way you were and are still taught.

1) Purpose and Procedure
With this form, I am asking you to let me use your responses from the questionnaire and possibly your interview responses (if I interview you) for my study. If you consent, I will use your survey and open-ended question responses for my research project. The survey questionnaire will take about 10-15 minutes.

All of the questionnaire forms will be kept in my office in a safe place. Your information (name, contact information) will not be used in my study; instead you will be given a numerical code and a different, made-up name (pseudonym).

You can choose, whether you want to participate in this study or not. You do not have to sign this consent letter. There will be no disadvantage for you, if you decide not to take part in this. Furthermore, it will not have a negative impact on your grades or your relationship with your instructor or anyone working at Bowling Green State University.

In addition to the questionnaire, I may ask you to have a follow-up interview with you based on some of your responses that you have made on the questionnaire. I would like to tape-record our interview so that I will be able to quote you when writing my thesis. The interview will presumably be in the beginning of April and take approximately 10 minutes.

If you would like to participate in the follow-up interview as well, please check off the respective box below.

You can choose not to be interviewed afterward but still agree to participate in the questionnaire, even if you do not want to be part of the interview. Again, there will be no negative outcome for you, if you decide not to be interviewed.

2) Benefits
This study is intended to help language teachers improve foreign language instruction and possibly even your English language class in the future. It is supposed to focus on what you as a student find helpful and enjoyable when learning another language, so that teachers can use those
Numerical Code: __________________

methods to assist you in improving your language skills in a possibly faster and more fun way. I will provide copies of my thesis to your teachers so they will be able to understand what students prefer concerning language instruction.

3) Voluntary nature
Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to tell me that you do not want to participate at any time. You do not have to answer every question, if you do not want to. I appreciate any information that you are willing to share with me.

4) Confidentiality/Anonymity Protection
Neither your personal information nor your identity will be given in my study. All of your information (name, contact information) will be kept separately from the questionnaire forms and interview recordings and transcripts, and will be locked away in a cabinet in my office. No one else, besides me, will be listening to the recordings or read the whole transcript. Moreover, you will be given a numerical code and a pseudonym, and this information will be kept in a password protected document. I will only use your pseudonym in my thesis.

5) Risks
There are no risks in participating in my study beyond what you experience in everyday life.

6) Researcher’s Contact Information
If you have any questions regarding this study or your rights, feel free to contact me or my thesis advisor at any time.

You-Mi Seo (Principal Investigator)                  Dr. Mohammed Darabie (Advisor)
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You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board at 419-372-7716 or harb@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research.

Informed Consent Statement
To participate in this study, you must be at least 18 years old.
By signing this form, you are agreeing to take part in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to stop your participation at any time. You may choose to participate in the survey, but not in the follow-up interview by checking off the respective box below.

Please check one (X) below:

( ) : YES, I want to participate in both, the questionnaire and the follow-up interview.

If you have checked this, please provide me with your e-mail address and your phone number, so that we can schedule a meeting for an interview later on.
Numerical Code: 

E-mail: ___________________________ Phone Number: ___________________________

( ): YES, I want to participate in the questionnaire, but NOT in the follow-up interview.

Student Name (please print) ___________________________ Date __________

Student Signature ___________________________