

**A study of a grade 6 elementary ESL class in a private international school in Dubai to determine the main factors affecting their acquisition of the English language.**

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## **The Abstract.**

Second language teachers are intrigued by the factors responsible for the second language acquisition of their students and for the different rates of acquisition within a class; an understanding of the interplay of the factors is essential for successful language teaching. This study endeavours to determine the factors affecting the different rates of SLA of a group of nine elementary grade 6 ESL students over an academic year. The researcher used a grounded theory approach whereby the research question, “What factors are affecting the different rates of second language acquisition of the subjects in the ESL and mainstream classroom?” was investigated. A multi-research tool method, triangulation, was used to ensure that the research question was examined from different perspectives. As the research proceeded, data was collected and analysed, indicating the perceived dominant factors affecting the students’ rate of language acquisition. The analysis of the data indicated that motivation, personality variables and IQ were considered to be dominant factors affecting the subjects’ language acquisition. Having identified these factors, the researcher proceeded to review the studies and theories written about them by researchers in the field. The review supported the validity of the huge role of motivation in the second language learning process and the view that an above average IQ is not necessary for successful second language acquisition but revealed that the role of personality is less conclusive.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction.

I have chosen to investigate the factors affecting the SLA of an elementary ESL class during an academic year because it is a subject that deeply fascinates me. Over the years I have remarked upon the different rates of SLA among my ESL students; clearly, they had the same teaching materials and teacher so other factors were affecting their acquisition of English.

The study is a grounded theory study whereby the researcher “seeks to generate a theory which relates to the particular situation forming the focus of the study.” (Robson, 2002, p.190) Robson explains that grounded theory is “both a strategy for doing research and a particular style of analysing data arising from that research.” ((Robson; 2002, p.191) It involves the researcher making visits to the field and analysing the data collected from each visit in between visits. The researcher continues to make visits “until the categories found through analysis are saturated.” (Robson; 2002, p.192) As the researcher identifies different categories from the data, he/she gradually builds up a theory to answer his/her initial research question and “the theory is grounded” in the sense of being derived from the study itself.” (Robson; 2002, p 178 )

In a grounded theory study, the researcher should involve the use of multiple research tools to ensure that the research is thorough. A process of triangulation is used which involves the use of multiple research tools to facilitate the generation of different perspectives from different people involved in the subjects’ situation. Robson (2002; p.176) explains that Denzin (1988) has listed four types of triangulation: data triangulation, observer triangulation, methodological triangulation, and theory triangulation. This study uses data triangulation whereby the researcher uses more than one type of data collection. The aim of employing multiple research methods ensures that findings from one method and one perspective are hopefully confirmed by another and results are less likely due to chance.

Regarding the analysis of the data collected, interpretivism was the methodology used for this study in contrast with positivism which is an approach used in qualitative research. The positivist tradition is more concerned with testing for causality and examining correlations between variables and is used in quantitative research. (Denzin; 1989) Cano ([www.qmu.ac.uk](http://www.qmu.ac.uk)) explains how Flick (1988) writes that in interpretative research the researcher is constantly engaged in a process of interpretation. The research deals with interpreting texts because the methods used by the researcher, whether direct observation or interviews generate data which are transformed into texts by recording and transcribing. Furthermore, the researcher is in most cases a participant observer whereby he/she operates in the field and is in a position to observe and influence what is being observed by his/her participation in events. Flick (1988, p.11) states that by being a participant observer and interpreting texts of data:

“The research is concerned with constructions of reality – its own constructions and in particular those constructions it meets in the field or in the people it studies.”

Naturally, I have formulated hunches/hypotheses concerning learning rate disparities among students but I entered my research in an unbiased manner and I wanted the results from the research to speak to me to enable to allow conclusions to be drawn from the data alone. Bell (2005; p.19) writes,

“... researchers will begin with research questions but they do not start with a hypothesis, nor do they begin their investigation with a thorough review of the literature relating to the topic. They build up theory from their data and... analysis takes place as the data are collected.”

The research strategy of this investigation was based on grounded theory whereby theory is derived from data. As data is collected and analysed, the researcher is able to gradually build up a theory. Punch in Bell (2005) writes that grounded theory researchers:

“...build up theory from their data... As the research proceeds, there will be more data collection and more analysis until “theoretical saturation” is reached, which is the stage at which “new data are not showing any new theoretical elements, but rather confirming what has already been found.”

In this manner, the research began with the question “What factors are affecting the different rates of SLA among the subjects?” and ignoring any pre-formed hunches I allowed the data to guide me and discover the prominent factors from the research. Although I read some literature regarding factors affecting SLA during my research, I chose to do the bulk of my reading and the literature review after analysing the data to reveal the recurring factors so it could in no way influence the data emerging from the research.

The research tools employed in the study were:

1. A teacher’s log which provided data about the students’ rate of language acquisition from the ESL teacher’s perspective.
2. Recorded interviews with students which provided data from the students’ perspectives.
3. IQ tests which gave pertinent quantitative data about the intellectual ability of each ESL student which could then be correlated with quantitative data from the ESL assessments during the year.
4. Questionnaires completed by students’ parents to discover their reasons for enrolling their children in English speaking schools and how much support they gave them.
5. Recorded interviews with the ESL students’ mainstream teachers to obtain a perspective about the students’ progress from teachers who taught them in the larger mainstream classes and who were able to observe how the students were accessing the curriculum and integrating with their peers.
6. An interview with an ESL teacher who teaches the students twice a week. The teacher taught the students in groups of two and it was valuable to hear her view of the students’ progress and compare it to their main ESL teacher’s view.
7. Assessment results and grades. These were used in conjunction with other methods to allow the researcher to investigate whether factors had a positive or negative effect on the SLA process.

## Participants of the study.

The class is a multilingual class consisting of nine students, two male and seven female. The average age of the students is 11 years old. The students are elementary (first year) ESL students. Two students are from Germany, three are from Iran, two are from South Korea, one from Italy and one from Malaysia. Seven of the students were involved in the study for the entire academic year whereas two students arrived during the year, one in January and one in February. One participant left the class after six weeks of ESL instruction due to high levels of anxiety. Although the study does not generate data from him and he is not included in the nine participants, he is mentioned during the study with reference to his anxiety.



## Chapter 2. Methodology and an Analysis of Results.

In this chapter I shall illustrate and discuss the results of each research method and proceed to analyse them.

### 1. A teacher's log.

I wrote retrospective entries in my teacher's log twice a week from September 2007 to April 2008. I tried hard to ensure that the entries would provide valid data for my research and that they were not simply a record of the events of the lesson. In order to analyse the data I read through the entries and made a note of repeated key words concerning factors which affected the students' learning, either positively or negatively, for example, "motivated" or "anxious." Towards the end of the diary, it was interesting to note that I was making repeated entries of concern about a couple of students whose rate of learning appeared to be much slower than the other students.

I then accumulated all the key words and categorised the data under main headings. The technique of "coding" seemed to be the most appropriate form of collecting and illustrating the data. Bell (2005) quotes Miles and Huberman 1994

"Codes are used to retrieve and organise the chunks... The organizing part will entail some system for categorizing the various chunks, so the researcher can quickly find, pull out, and cluster the segments relating to a particular research question, hypothesis, construct or theme. Clustering, and... display of condensed chunks then sets the stage for drawing conclusions."

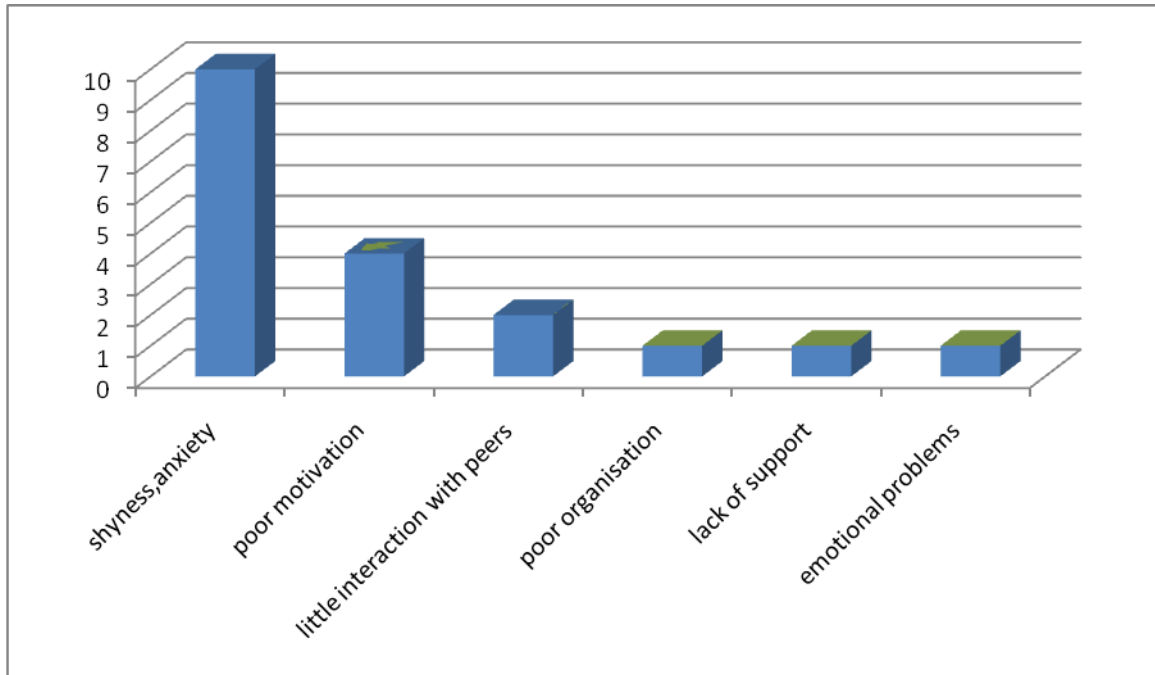
Coding, which entails examining the data and allocating numbers to different key words, allows the researcher to group important issues in the written data which is necessary in order to analyse it. To meet this end, I prepared a coding frame and a key. There appeared to be two groups of salient data; those in group one which referred to both positive and negative factors which might affect the students' rate of learning, for example, "reticent to speak", "conscientious" and "highly motivated." Reading the teacher's log, it became very apparent that some students' names were frequently mentioned, either because they were exhibiting signs of making faster progress than other students or because they were noticeably less successful language learners and were therefore students of concern. These students provided data in the second group of entries, referring to more and less successful subjects in the study.

Concerning the factors which might have an effect on the subjects' rate of SLA, it was apparent that they could be divided into two headings, positive factors which could have a positive effect on learning and negative factors which could have a detrimental effect on a student's rate of learning; these issues are listed below.

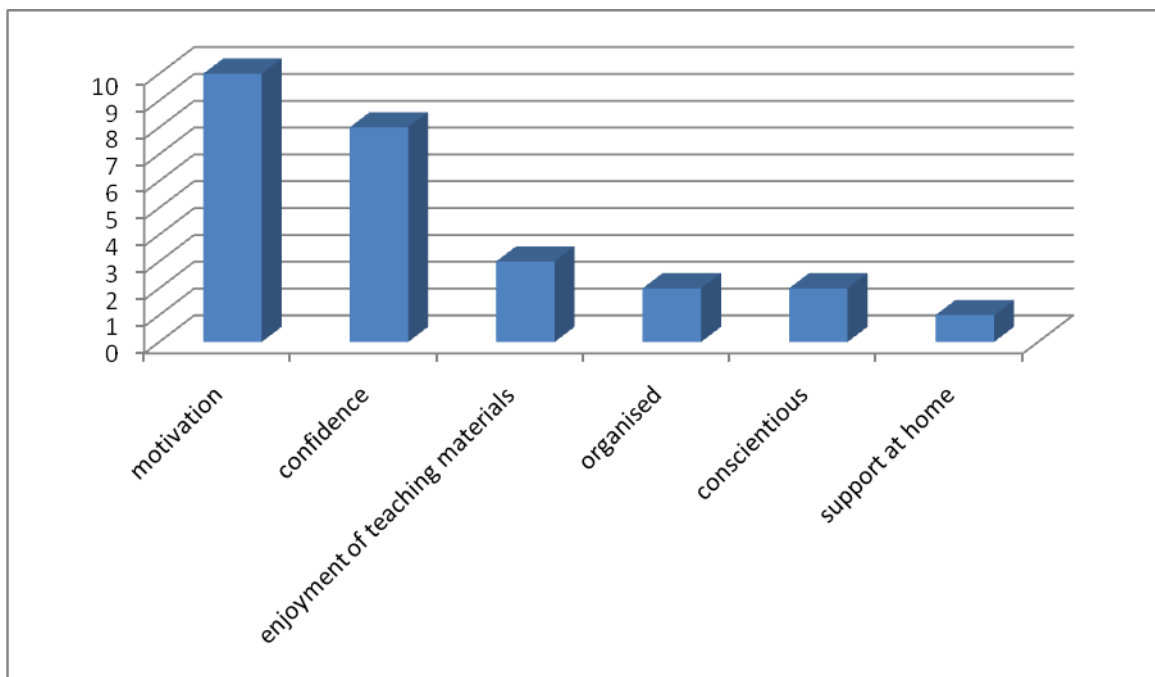
<b>Negative issues.</b>	<b>Positive issues.</b>
Lack of confidence, anxiety, shyness	Confidence
Poor motivation	Motivation
Little interaction with peers	Enjoyment of teaching materials

Poor organisation of work	Conscientiousness
Lack of support at home	Organised
Emotional problems	Support at home

By counting the frequency of the entries referring to the above issues it was then possible to plot two separate bar charts to illustrate their frequency in the log.



A bar chart to illustrate the frequency of negative factors affecting the students' rate of learning.



A bar chart to illustrate the frequency of positive factors affecting the students' rate of learning.

Analysis of the bar graphs.

An analysis of the bar graphs reveals that shyness/anxiety was a prominent entry in the log with ten entries altogether; this is by far the most frequent “negative” factor and is followed by “poor motivation” with three entries. However, upon rereading the teacher’s log, I noticed that eight of the entries referring to anxiety/shyness were all written during the first two months of the first term. The other two entries were made during the second term and these referred to a new South Korean student who joined the class in late January 2008. Thus, it would appear that anxiety is a prominent factor that might affect the students’ learning at the beginning of the year when the students are anxious about their lack of language skills and are not comfortable with their new surroundings. However, the data would also suggest that feelings of anxiety and shyness are short-lived in the ESL classroom and thus if they do have a negative effect on the rate of language learning, it is at the beginning of the school year. However, as later data will reveal, it is a different issue in the mainstream classroom where the ESL students are in larger groups of 25 students who are mostly proficient in English. The feelings of anxiety and shyness which might impede learning continue during the school year in the mainstream classes for some of the students.

The second most frequently mentioned factor is “poor motivation;” however, when I located the entries in the teacher’s log, they were all related to one student, Yesol, a South Korean student.

Concerning the bar chart illustrating positive factors, motivation is the most frequently cited with ten entries and this is closely followed by “confidence” with eight entries. The entries relating to confidence all concerned speaking aloud in class in speaking activities and offering answers, explanations when scaffolding was taking place; one entry referred to a student correcting her peer’s grammatical error.

Thus, the data in the teacher’s log suggest that motivation and confidence are two factors which appear to have a positive effect on the rate of language learning whereas anxiety and shyness a dominant factor hindering language acquisition at the beginning of the learning process.

As mentioned earlier, the teacher’s log also consisted of data which referred to groups of students who either learning at a slower rate than the other students or who were learning at a faster rate than the others. Frequent entries had been made about the comparatively poor rate of language acquisition of Ahmed, an Iranian male student, and Yesol, a South Korean female student. Both students obtained the lowest marks in their continuous assessments and the entries indicate that both students made frequent, repetitive errors in their target language.

In the very first entry I wrote that, “Ahmed is a worrying case for me; he is back in elementary ESL after a year with me last year, coupled with private tuition twice a week.”

Later, I wrote, “I must speak to Claire (Learning Support teacher) about possibly giving him an assessment to pinpoint any areas of concern”...During the second term I wrote that “Ahmed made glaring mistakes – especially because this is his second year of elementary ESL... Without doubt his English has improved, he’s learnt a lot since he arrived with no English at all. However, I’m concerned about his repeated elementary mistakes.” During pair work activities Ahmed frequently allowed his partner to do the work, illustrated by my entry, “It was noticeable that Golnaz was doing most of the work, not Ahmed.”

I had frequent discussions with Ahmed’s mainstream class teacher; she also had huge concerns for him and said that he was unable to access most of the curriculum in her class and expressed doubts about his ability to cope next year in The High school where he will receive less ESL support and will begin to learn Arabic and French. The learning support assessment indicated that he has auditory dyslexia which affects his ability to process and differentiate sounds and follow oral instruction in the classroom. He is also technically blind in one eye which hinders his reading and writing skills.

Yesol is the other student who I made frequent entries of concern about. At the beginning of the year I was pleased with the progress she had made during the summer holiday when she had received private English lessons three times a week. However, as the year progressed, her rate of learning appeared to become stagnant and I made increasingly frequent entries of concern. For example, I wrote, “Yesol didn’t give verbs in the past simple, she said, “The little girl dance with the mother” – not getting the third person singular right nor putting it in the past simple.” Later I wrote, “As I walked around the classroom, I was intrigued that Yesol, who got 22/22 in yesterday’s past tense activity, was only writing irregular verbs in the past simple and regular verbs in the present simple.”

In February 2008 an entry illustrated my disappointment with Yesol’s piece of creative writing and how it was weaker than the other students. I wrote. “I was concerned that Yesol finished after twenty minutes and when I looked at her work it was less than a page long... however, the other students were mostly on their second page and were writing in paragraphs – this is something we’ve discussed since September and I’m reinforcing what they’re teaching in the mainstream classroom so why isn’t she doing it?”

In April 2008, my entry expresses further concern. Her class teacher had asked me to look at her work in the mainstream class and said that she was disappointed with it. Her teacher commented that Yesol was making very frequent, elementary mistakes in her written output. I wrote in my log:

“Laurise is concerned because she feels Yesol will struggle next year in The High School and I agree with her... I’m concerned that it’s an example of fossilisation – that she is satisfied with the present level of her English skills because she is now able to communicate – it would appear that the concept of improving her language skills and developing fluency is not one she shares with us.”

Comments in the teacher’s log reveal that Samia soon emerged as a more successful language learner. She was often able to induce grammar rules and was able to notice a

grammar point if it was implicitly presented. For example, in a lesson when I implicitly presented the past simple tense, I wrote in my log that she was the only student who deduced the rule from the presentation and was able to use the target language during the follow up activity. She also made attempts to correct fellow students work and encourage them to use the past simple tense. For example, an entry says, “Samia was keen to help other students and offer them verbs in the past simple. She is definitely ready to use the tense.” In another entry I wrote, “Samia gave a beautiful explanation (of the target language)...She really expressed this succinctly and I thought it demonstrated just how she has come on recently.”

Another entry indicates Samia’s faster rate of SLA, “I feel that Samia’s rate of acquisition is faster than the others at the moment ... I suspect a lot of this has to do with the class teacher – she seems to have solid parameters laid down and is more organised in her approach to her work. For example her class teacher has trained her to bring her bilingual dictionary, homework diary etc to each ESL class whereas other students are wasting time by returning for items left in their school bag.”

However, the log reveals that there was a period of time when Samia’s class teacher and I were concerned that she became demotivated and the quality of her work deteriorated. I wrote that:-

“Samia came into the classroom very upset and said that she thinks her parents are going to separate. I had suspected something was wrong at home from her holiday diary entries and also NB had said she wasn’t producing the work she expected from her this term. This is such a shame because she has probably been the most motivated student in the class and this could now affect her rate of SLA – rather disastrous in view of her entering The High School next year.”

Fortunately, this episode was short lived and although her parents did separate, Samia reverted to her motivated self, her output improved and she proceeded to obtain the highest ESL grade of the class at the end of the year. It was however, a good reminder that external factors can so easily affect students’ rate of SLA and that the student and teacher may have no control over such factors.

## 2 a) An interview with NB, a grade 6 teacher in December 2007.

I had become intrigued by a huge disparity between the rate of SLA of two students in the class, Samia and Lena, who were both in the same mainstream class. I was intrigued to talk with their teacher, NB, to hear what factors she thought were affecting such different rates of SLA only four months after the beginning of the academic year. Teaching them for most of the day enabled her to have a “bigger picture” of their abilities and I was interested to know how they coped in the mainstream class.

I conducted an informal interview with NB and some of the data collected by this research tool was extremely pertinent to my research. (see appendix ) Question one asked NB whether she was happy with Samia’s and Lena’s progress to which she replied that she was pleased

with Samia's progress which had been excellent but concerned with Lena's progress. She said that, "Lena probably has other problems; her progress is less than other ESL students." She then proceeded to speculate that, "Maybe Samia wants to be part of the mainstream whereas Lena wants to do nothing. Samia feels put out that she's not part of the mainstream at the moment." She reinforces this view later during the open ended question when she said that in her opinion, "The greatest thing an ESL student can have is motivation but it's motivation to not be different, self motivation is the most important thing in ESL teaching."

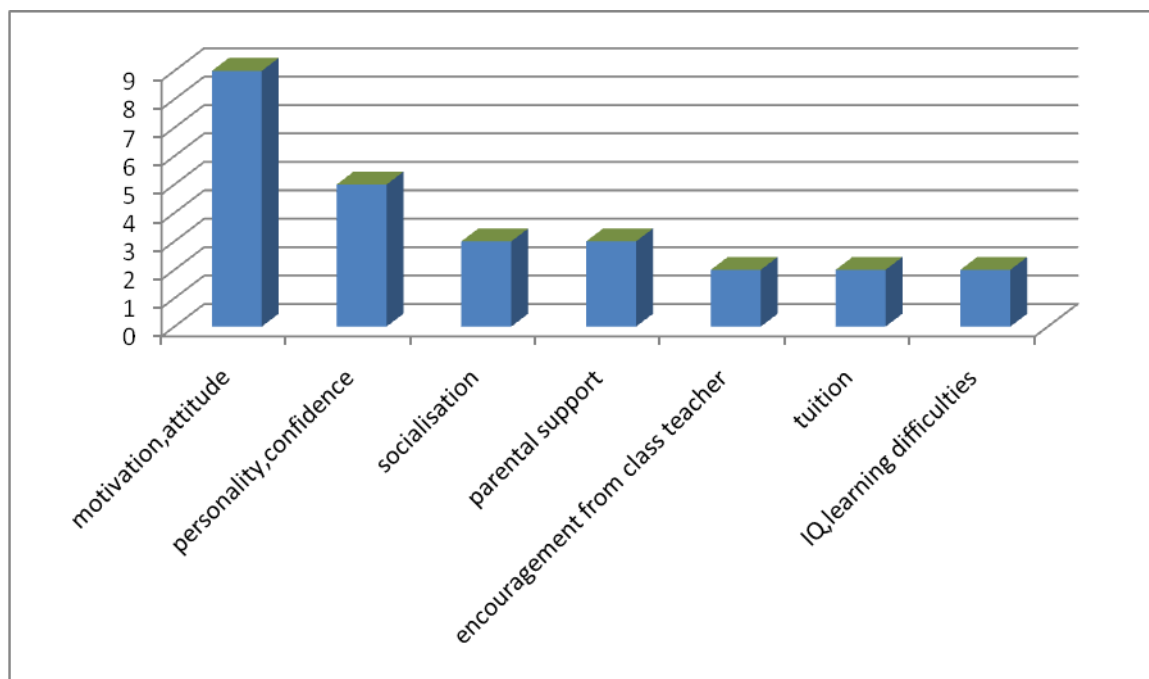
The interview also revealed the different personalities of the students. Samia was more confident in class and would try to make oral contributions to class discussions whereas Lena was very reluctant to talk in class. The two students sat on an ESL table with students from my elementary ESL stream and from the intermediate ESL stream; however, the teacher said that next term she would try moving Samia to mix with students with more advanced English skills and that she might benefit from this. She said that Lena would be uncomfortable with this; she was nervous in class and would be anxious if sitting in a group of native speakers, she felt comfortable with her fellow ESL students. This point illustrates the students' different personalities with Lena being less confident and having an anxious nature but Samia being more self confident and willing to have a try.

Another piece of salient data emerged from the interview with regards to the socialisation of the students. Their teacher commented that although the students both interacted well with peers in the mainstream classroom, "they tend to gravitate to others with similar skills" and she specifically commented on Samia's friendship with a student who had marked learning difficulties and was unable to access most of the mainstream curriculum. She pointed out that although the other students interacted well with the ESL students, they "get fed up with them if they have to work with them." NB continued by explaining that Samia and Lena socialised with other ESL students in the playground and commented that whereas Samia spoke English in the playground, Lena gravitated towards her German friend and spoke German. Thus the picture emerging from this is of the ESL students mostly interacting with fellow ESL students both within and outside the classroom but Lena preferring to speak her native language whenever possible.

This threw a light on the different rates of learning I was witnessing in the ESL classroom where Lena was struggling to automatise elementary grammar structures and to retain basic vocabulary. The key factors that emerged from the interview were motivation, IQ, personality (confidence versus anxiety) and socialisation. It appeared that Samia's rate of learning was helped by her high motivation and her desire to integrate, her perceived high IQ, her confident personality and her willingness to socialise in English, albeit with fellow ESL students. Lena however, did not display much motivation in the classroom at all, suffered from anxiety when speaking in English in the classroom and frequently socialised in German. Her teacher also explained that she believed Lena was not a bright student.

2b) Recorded Interviews with four Grade 6 mainstream class teachers who taught the ESL students.

At the end of the school year I recorded interviews with the four grade 6 class teachers who taught my ESL students (see appendix.) The interviews consisted of questions which asked the teachers to reflect on the rate of SLA of the ESL students and why some had acquired English at a noticeably higher or lower rate than others. The interviews generated a huge amount of data and I used the coding technique to identify repeated key issues. I then counted the frequency of the key issues and this facilitated their representation on a bar chart.



A bar chart to illustrate the key issues affecting SLA of the ESL students identified by their mainstream teachers.

An analysis of the bar graph reveals that the class teachers most frequently mentioned motivation and attitude of the students as a factor affecting SLA of the ESL students. During the interviews, this factor was discussed as being responsible for a high rate of learning as with In Jeong who arrived late in the year and yet made incredible progress and performed better than other students at the end of the year. Importantly however, poor motivation and attitude was cited as the main factor responsible for a low rate of SLA. Ali's teacher said that he "is arrogant and confident and doesn't want to learn" whereas Yesol's teacher said that "Yesol, I haven't noticed much change in her writing at all and she doesn't enjoy it, you can see she doesn't enjoy it" and continued "with writing she doesn't really like it and she doesn't really try, she writes short sentences and her grammar isn't good and the structure isn't correct, no detail, nothing."

Personality and confidence was cited as an important factor; the teachers felt that more confident ESL students make more progress than less confident students who are inhibited and refrain from speaking. Samia's teacher said that, "Samia definitely has a natural

confidence which means that she's more willing to speak than Lena so that helps as well." And later in the interview she claimed that:-

"I think that the first one must be confidence, self confidence. I think when I look back to last year to my other ESL students, the more confident ones definitely progress at a faster rate, I think it's the fact that they have a go and they're not frightened of being laughed at. If that self confidence isn't there, they don't try new things, they're perhaps ridiculed in class by other students who laugh because they mispronounce something and I think that is much more damaging for an ESL student than for a normal student. It's bad enough for a normal student but for an ESL student, especially an under confident one, it can be particularly damaging."

Yesol's teacher referred to confidence in the interview, she said that "In terms of speaking they're both more confident in speaking than at the beginning. Personality is important because Aida is a very shy person and I hardly ever see her talk whereas Yesol is a very talkative person so she'll talk more..."

Interestingly, the teachers have referred to personality and confidence as important for the development of their English language skills but in fact in the interview they related the factor to speaking skills. Although Aida is shy and rarely spoke in her mainstream class, her class teacher was very pleased with her writing skills. Therefore we can possibly infer that personality and confidence is a factor which affects the development of speaking skills but is not responsible for the rate of development of literacy skills.

It is interesting that IQ and learning difficulties were only mentioned twice in the interviews which would suggest that the teachers don't consider it to be an important factor. However, it was a factor cited for the progress of the student who made the most progress during the year and the student who made the least progress. Samia's class teacher attributed a lot of her SLA to intelligence and she said, "I think what came through with them is that the one is much more intelligent than the other therefore the um her progress in English was far greater. They were both similar in many ways, their backgrounds and so on so the different rate of progress must be down to their own inbuilt intelligence."

Ahmed's teacher referred to his learning issues and cited them as a factor for his low rate of SLA and said, "Well with Ahmed he has other learning issues as well but there has been improvement but not much..." Ahmed made the least progress during the year despite repeating the elementary ESL stream with me for a second year. Examining the above bar chart, all the other factors cited by the teachers are positively applicable to him; he has a positive attitude to ESL and always does his work conscientiously, he socialises a lot with English speaking peers, he has a lot of parental support at home, he has received private English tuition since arriving in school in September 2006 and he has had a sympathetic class teacher. Although he is able to effectively communicate orally, his reading and writing skills are very poorly developed and he failed his mainstream class assessments during the year.



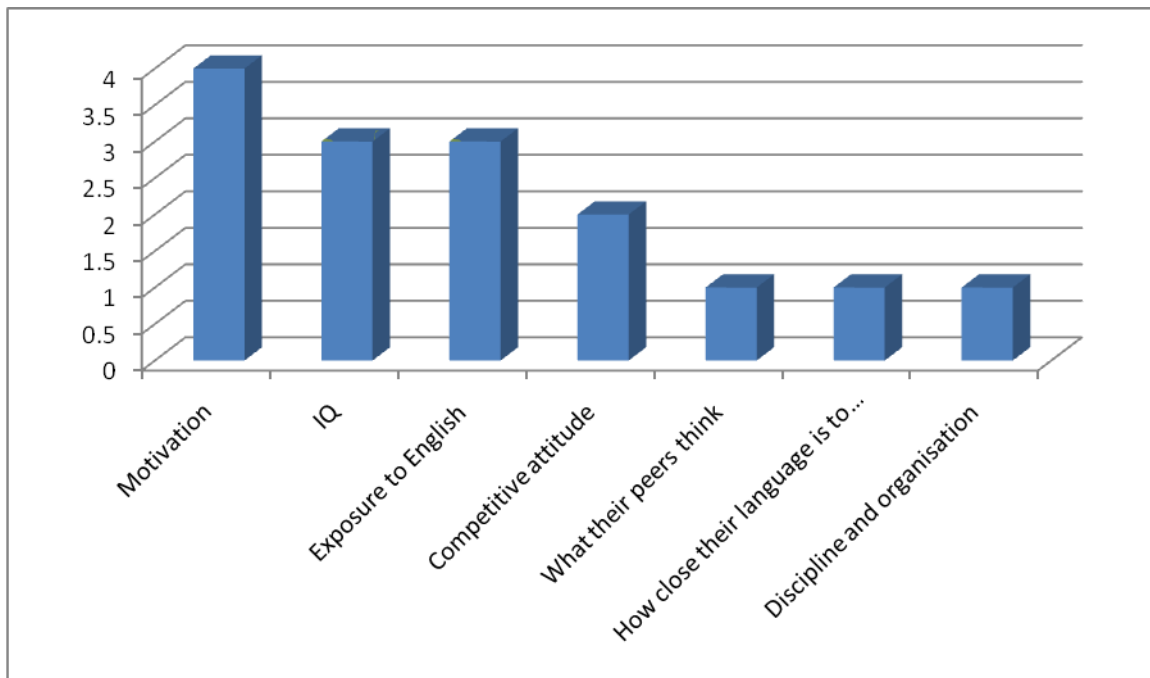
It is interesting to note that so far, the teacher's log and analysis of recorded interviews with the class teachers have both identified motivation and confidence as two primary factors the rate of SLA.

3. An interview with an ESL teacher who teaches the class during French lessons.

I interviewed Shazia, who teaches the ESL students twice a week during French classes in late January 2008, five months after the beginning of the academic year. The elementary students don't attend French while they're in elementary ESL; they commence French when they move to the intermediate ESL stream. Each grade 6 class has French timetabled for different periods so Shazia teaches them in pairs, not as a whole group.

The interview consisted of questions about the progress of the students, who was making the most progress, who were students of concern and what she perceived the reasons behind this to be. (see appendix ). Using the coding technique, I identified themes that occurred during the interview and counted their frequency which enabled me to plot the themes on a bar graph. The themes are illustrated below in a table with their corresponding frequency.

<b>Factors affecting SLA</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Motivation	4
IQ	3
Exposure to English	3
Competitive attitude	2
What their peers think	1
How close their native language is to English	1
Discipline and organisation	1



A bar graph to illustrate factors affecting the students' SLA identified by their second ESL teacher.

#### Analysis of the data.

Motivation was the factor most frequently cited by Shazia and she mentioned it twice when referring to Samia who she identified as the student making the most progress. She said, "Samia is really motivated and she wants to learn and she's competitive." When she discussed the students who in her opinion were making the least progress, and again cited motivation as a contributing factor, she said that Ahmed and Golnaz, "...are less motivated. They are not so inclined to think independently." Interestingly, she comments that Lena is motivated, "...she's very eager, she wants to learn but she struggles."

Shazia cites IQ as an important factor; she teaches Samia and Lena together because they are in the same Grade 6 class and when comparing their different rates of SLA, she says, "Lena is struggling... I think it's IQ – I think it must affect the rate of acquisition." She comments that "Lena has probably made the least progress; she's been doing elementary ESL for two years. In fact she's very eager, she wants to learn but she struggles." This would suggest that although motivation is a key factor, motivation alone isn't enough. Lena is motivated to learn English and yet her rate of SLA is slow and she struggles. This was identified by her class teacher NB, who also noted the disparity between their progress and attributed some of it to IQ. It is interesting that Shazia identified Lena as the student with the least progress because my main concern was for Ahmed who I identified as the weakest student and indeed who obtained the lowest ESL grades during the year. However, she taught Ahmed alone and Lena with Samia so Lena would have been unfavourably compared to Samia which might have made her appear even weaker than she was. However, she does express some concern for

him. She comments that, “Ahmed has made progress but I think it’s not the same way as Samia, he likes the controlled stuff, he doesn’t think as much. He is less motivated and not so inclined to think independently.”

The third factor is exposure to English and interestingly, she mentions two effects from it. One is that some of the students would benefit from more exposure to English with English speaking friends. She comments that “Golnaz seems to stand around in the playground by herself.” And that “Lena hangs around in the playground with a German girl, Alexandra.” She then continues that Ali has friends but that, “...his English is “social” English and he hasn’t had much formal English and he writes as he talks.” Thus, the students benefit from more exposure to English through mixing with peers but exposure to formal English is important for them to produce formal output in the classrooms, social English by itself is not enough.

A competitive attitude was mentioned twice but both times when referring to Samia’s progress. Shazia felt that her motivation plus her competitive attitude together were important factors contributing to her success. She also felt that teaching Lena and Samia together increased the competition between the two which helped their learning (although this must have been discouraging for Lena at times who always performed less well than Samia.)

“What their peers think” was mentioned as contributing factor and this is an interesting reason, the ESL students were all placed in grade 6 mainstream classes with students who were proficient in English and thus the ESL students were seriously disadvantaged in the mainstream class. By grade 6, students desperately want to “fit in” and integrate with their peers but the ESL students are unable to do so at the beginning. This can motivate them to learn so that they are no longer as disadvantaged in the class and can communicate with their peers as equals.

Discipline and organisation of work materials was cited once when referring to Ali. Shazia quoted him as a student whose SLA was developing at a slower rate and she said, “Ali isn’t disciplined and organised and this has an effect on his work. He’s easily distracted and doesn’t get on with his work.”

### IQ Tests given to the ESL students.

I was intrigued by Shazia’s strong conviction in the interview, “I think it’s IQ... I think it must affect the rate of acquisition...” One of the hunches I have developed over the years as an ESL teacher is that students with a higher IQ tend to have a higher rate of learning than those with a lower IQ. In particular, my hunch is that their writing skills often develop at a faster rate. This is not to suggest that students with lower IQ’s can’t learn a language but rather that they may learn at a lower rate and that their language skills, especially their literacy skills, may ultimately be less proficient. This was an area that I was especially interested to investigate and an educational psychologist suggested that the ESL students sat the SPM IQ test, 1988 edition. The literature about the test states that, “The SPM is a test of a

person's capacity at the time of the test to apprehend meaningless figures presented for his observation, see the relations between them, conceive the nature of the figure completing each system of relations presented, and, by so doing, develop a systematic method of reasoning."

Furthermore, the SPM "was designed to cover the widest possible range of mental ability and to be equally useful with persons of all ages, whatever their education, nationality or physical condition." The test was designed to be used by both adults and children although it is more effective with older children (11+). The fact that the test was a non language test also made it ideal for the students involved.

The SPM results obtained by the students are as follows:

<b>Name of Student</b>	<b>SPM Result</b>
In Jeong	Grade 1
Yesol	Grade 2
Ali	Grade 3
Samia	Grade 3
Golnaz	Grade 3
Aida	Grade 3
Lena	Grade 4
Ahmed	Grade 4

(Siti did not sit the test because she arrived at the school in late March 2008; two months after the other students sat it.)

Below is a key of the SPM results.

Grade 1 = "intellectually superior."

Grade 2= "definitely above average in intellectual capacity."

Grade 3= "intellectually average."

Grade 4= definitely below average in intellectual capacity.

Grade 5= intellectually impaired

The data provided by the test was extremely interesting; in particular In Jeong's grade 1 result which indicated that she has a superior intellect. She had only been at the school for a week when she sat the test and although she arrived with very few English language skills, she appeared to be a very motivated learner with independent learning strategies. For example, she referred to an electronic Korean/English dictionary at all times and often made notes in Korean in her copybook to explain grammar rules and structures.

Yesol obtained a grade 2 which means that she is "above average in intellectual capacity." This is intriguing data because she arrived at the school in May 2007, eight weeks before the end of the academic year. Despite having a poor relationship with her class teacher, she made

remarkable progress in those eight weeks. She received English tuition three times a week during the summer holiday and returned to school in September 2007 with noticeably more developed language skills. An entry in the teacher’s log illustrates this,

“Yesol has made fantastic progress over the summer. She is much more focused in class and her comments/answers/communicative work has been very accurate. Apparently she had six hours of English tuition per week – hence the progress! I would like to see her interact with the other students, last year her class teacher was concerned about what appeared to be low spectrum autistic characteristics.”

However, later in the year entries about Yesol’s SLA expressed concern over a lack of progress and this was reinforced by her class teacher. One entry suggested that she was demonstrating signs of “fossilisation” whereby her rate of SLA had plateaued. Furthermore, she demonstrated signs of low motivation and complacency.

The SPM results for Lena and Ahmed were interesting; both students repeated elementary ESL for a second year and both obtained a grade 4 in the SPM test which indicates that they both are “definitely inferior in intellectual capacity.” Furthermore, Ahmed’s end of year ESL result was the lowest in the group, lower even than Siti’s and In Jeong’s who arrived late in the academic year. Lena’s end of year grade ranked fifth which although higher than Ahmed’s, was still low considering that she had repeated the elementary year of ESL. This might suggest that their lower intellectual abilities were hindering their rate of language acquisition. Although their oral skills had developed and Ahmed obtained 60% and Lena 80% for these skills in their end of year oral test, their performance in their written work was weak with frequent simple, repetitive mistakes, Ahmed more so than Lena, but he had been diagnosed with additional learning problems in January 2008.

The three students who obtained the highest ESL grades, Samia, Golnaz and Ali all obtained grade 3, “average intellectual capacity” in the SPM test which might suggest that a higher than average intellectual capacity is not necessary for successful SLA.

A table to illustrate the SPM results and the end of year ESL results.

<b>Name of student</b>	<b>SPM Grade</b>	<b>End of Year ESL grade(%)</b>
In Jeong (1)	1	76
Yesol (2)	2	75
Samia (3)	3	91
Golnaz (4)	3	86
Aida (5)	3	79
Ali (6)	3	82
Lena (7)	4	78
Ahmed (8)	4	64

However, the table of results illustrates a noticeable cluster at the SPM grade 3 level. Four students (50%) of the subjects obtained a grade 3 level which is deemed as “intellectually average” and yet these four subjects also achieved the four highest ESL results at the end of the year. This would suggest that an above average IQ is not necessary to acquire and learn a language and that other factors are involved.

It is worth commenting on the fact that Lena and Ahmed both scored a 4 in the SPM test which indicates a less than average intellect and they both repeated their elementary year ESL due to a distinct lack of progress during their first year. This would appear to suggest that a less than average IQ hinders the rate of SLA.

4. Questionnaires completed by the parents of the ESL students.

The parents of the Grade 6 students were given a questionnaire to complete at the end of the academic year. (see appendix.) The aim of the questionnaire was to try to determine the level of the parents’ English, whether English was spoken at home, whether the parents assisted their children’s learning of English and the level of motivation of the parents in order to determine whether there is a relationship between the rate of SLA of the students and the amount of support and help they receive at home. A lot of the data generated from the questionnaires indicated that the factors involved were not relevant to the study and the students’ rate of SLA. Hence, I have attached the analysis of this data in the appendix and left the pertinent data in this section.

Question three asked whether the parents speak English at home. Only one parent, Samia’s mother, replied in the affirmative. Being a native English speaker, this would be entirely natural for her to do so whereas the other students’ mothers are non native English speakers which would make it more contrived to speak English at home. Samia achieved the highest end of year grade in the class and it would appear that she is exposed to more spoken English at home which has probably helped develop her speaking skills.

The next questions, 6 and 7, asked whether English speaking children are invited home on a regular basis to play with the student. The data is represented in the table below with the students’ end of year oral skills result.

<b>Name of student</b>	<b>How often the student invites friends home who speak English.</b>	<b>Students end of year oral skills grade. (%)</b>
In- Jeong	Never	60
Yesol	Never	80
Golnaz	1-2 times per week	80
Siti	1-2 times per week	75
Lena	1-2 times per week	85
Aida	1-2 times per week	80
Ahmed	1-2 times per week	75
Samia	5 times per week	90
Ali	Every day	95

Two students, In Jeong and Yesol, never invite English speaking friends home. Although In Jeong's rate of SLA acquisition was quite remarkable considering her late arrival in the class in January 2008, she achieved the lowest speaking skills grade (60%) and would have benefitted from practising speaking in English out of the classroom and school. Yesol's English skills stagnated during the year and exposure to English outside the class might have helped her notice the gap between her output and a more proficient output and hence improve her spoken and written English. However, her oral skills grade was high (80%), thus it would indicate that not inviting English speaking friends home did not adversely affect her oral skills. One student, Ali, plays with English speaking friends on a daily basis and he achieved 95% for his oral skills grade. Samia also socialises a lot with English speaking friends outside school, five times a week, and she likewise achieved 90% for her speaking skills. Of course, she has the added advantage of having a mother who tries to speak English at home with her. Thus, the two students who obtained the highest oral skills grade at the end of year, Samia and Ali, both frequently socialise in English outside school.

Question 12 asked parents for the reasons behind sending their child to an English speaking school. Eight of the respondents said their motive was to facilitate their child learning English in order to improve their education and job prospects later. One parent answered that they wanted their child to learn in a multicultural environment. This illustrates how the vast majority of parents are highly motivated for their children to learn English. Again, this data is supported by the data obtained from the student interviews where the students all said that their parents wanted them to attend an English speaking school. They said that their parents had explained it was increasing their prospects for the future, that they would be able to study at an English speaking University and would have better job prospects. This is significant data because it would suggest that if the parents are highly motivated for their children to learn English then this enthusiasm should in turn effect their child's motivation. They should view learning English as a positive thing and should receive support and encouragement at home from their parents.

In conclusion, the data revealed by the questionnaires demonstrate that the parents mostly have intermediate and advanced English language skills. All the students receive some form of English language support, whether from their mother or through private English tuition and thus this factor did not produce any disparity to comment on. Interestingly, the students who performed the weakest during the year received private tuition but possibly the stronger students might have made even more progress with extra tuition. Most of the students are encouraged to mix with English speaking children outside school except the two South Korean students.

All the parents revealed a highly positive attitude towards English in the questionnaire. This should have a motivational effect on their son or daughters attitude towards learning English, especially so in the case of Ahmed and Lena whose mothers are setting a positive example by receiving English tuition themselves.

##### 5. Recorded interviews with each ESL student.

This data collection tool provided an opportunity to have an individual, informal discussion with the students to determine their attitude towards learning English and how they perceived their own progress. Some of the data was repeated in the questionnaires given to the parents (for example, relating to how much parental help they receive, private tuition) so this data has already been discussed in the previous section. New data provided by this research tool included data concerning attitude, socialisation and motivation.

An analysis of the transcriptions revealed that all nine students expressed feelings of fear and anxiety when they first arrived at the school. They expressed both fear of not speaking English but also fear of the teacher, that the teacher would be impatient with their lack of English skills. Furthermore, they were worried that they would find it difficult to make friends. However, it should be emphasised that these concerns were only felt at the initial stage and were short lived in the smaller ESL classroom. The students were unanimous that they understood very little in their mainstream class initially but that by the time of the interviews (March 2008), they comprehended more and were able to access some of the literacy work although they still found English difficult. Although shyness and anxiety were quick to dissipate in the smaller ESL classroom, it still remained in the mainstream classroom and with some students continued to the end of the school year. This was apparent from the interviews with class teachers when they mentioned that the ESL students were “lost” in the mainstream class and were hesitant to talk among their peers. In fact, the one student who this did not apply to is Samia who has a confident and extrovert nature and was unperturbed at making mistakes in front of peers.

Only three of the students, Samia, Ali and In Jeong, admitted to wanting to attend an English speaking school, six students said that it was their parents’ decision and they were initially unhappy about attending an English speaking school. Interestingly, Samia claimed that it was her own decision, not her parents, and that because she speaks fluent French and Italian, she wanted to learn English, especially because her mother is English. This is worth commenting on because she learnt English at the fastest rate, was highly motivated and confident.

However, all nine students said that given the choice of returning to a school where they could study in their own language or continue to study English, all nine students would prefer to remain at EIS-Meadows. This indicates their motivation, whether it is intrinsic motivation or a form of “brain washing” from their parents is debatable but the fact is that they would all now prefer to continue to study in English. New, pertinent data emerged from the interviews. Five students, Ahmed, Ali, Golnaz, Yesol and In Jeong, those from Iran and South Korea respectively expressed relief that the system at EIS is easier than the system in their own country and for that reason would not want to return to an Iranian or South Korean school. Ali and Golnaz in particular said that their parents were concerned that the system seemed so much easier and that they had threatened to return them to an Iranian school if their marks didn’t improve. This provides another form of motivation for them, the fear of returning to a school system that was more difficult and not so much fun. Golnaz said that:

“I really like to stay in this English speaking school and study to get my marks up because my dad say that if you don’t get your marks good I will bring you to the Iranian school



because in the Iranian school the subjects are really really hard the maths was two times harder than this so I already know the maths of grade 7 and grade 6 because I wrote them and there were geography and history and lots of other books. We had 9 subjects and for each one we had a textbook and we had history stuff which we do in this school in grade 4 and 5 so I found this school really easy and here lots of entertainment but in Iranian school there are not.”

Ali remarked that, “I want to study here not go to Iranian school, you know it’s hard work there, you study more and they give so much homeworks.” This demonstrates his fear of returning to a more difficult system.

Although Yesol and In Jeong both expressed relief that the system at EIS-Meadows is easier than the one they were used to in S.Korea, the fact that there isn’t a Korean school in Dubai means that they can be more complacent, their parents simply can’t threaten to return them to the Korean school system. Possibly, this explains some of Yesol’s complacency since attending EIS-Meadows. Maybe she perceives it as an easier school system, there is no threat of her being withdrawn and sent to a Korean school in Dubai and hence she doesn’t have the intrinsic motivation to further advance her English language skills. In Jeong, by contrast, is a more conscientious and intrinsically motivated student.

Socialisation is another factor that emerged from the interviews. All nine students commented that making friends at first was difficult and that their first friends were ESL peers. They all continued to say that they now had other English speaking friends from their mainstream class. However, Aida is prominent as the only student who appears to have little socialisation within her class. When she was asked whether she plays with anyone from her classroom she replied, “Not really, sometimes.” Earlier in the interview she said that, “Now I have a boyfriend, I play with him every lunch and break with my sister.” When asked what nationality the boyfriend was, she replied that he is German and when asked what language they speak together she replied, “In school we speak German.” Aida’s teacher described her shyness in the mainstream class in her interview when she said that, “Aida doesn’t say much in the class, she’s shy...”

Lena also indicated signs of socialising with fellow German speakers; she referred to her friend Alexandra, a German student during the interview and said that she played with her. Her teacher had also discussed this issue in her interview and said that whereas Samia tends to have a wider pool of English speaking friends, Lena socialises a lot with Alexandra and they speak German together. Her end of year oral skills grade was 75% whereas the class average mark was slightly higher, at 77%. (see appendix ) Possibly, increased socialisation with English speaking students at school would have improved their speaking skills and ultimately their confidence which in turn might have increased their motivation.

It emerged from the interviews that both Lena and Ahmed’s mothers have English language tuition and thus are motivated to learn English themselves and hence provide motivated role models for their children. In Jeong’s mother speaks virtually no English but In Jeong indicated that she is motivated to learn when she said, “My mother want English lesson but

we have a houseworker and my father said you talk I think you need a talk in English with housewife.” Yesol said her mother doesn’t speak English and although the three daughters receive English tuition twice a week, their mother isn’t having English lessons so she isn’t providing a motivated role model.

It would appear that the interviews with the students indicate once more that motivation is a key factor; all the students expressed a desire to continue to study in English. The interesting form of motivation provided by the Iranian parents of two students, that if their children don’t perform better they will return to a tougher Iranian school system is a further form of motivation.

### Chapter 3. Summary of results from the analysis of the data.

The recurring prominent factors revealed by the analysis of the data collected by the multiple research tools are listed in the table below.

The research tool employed.	The two main factors identified by the research tool.
1. Teacher’s log.	Motivation Confidence Anxiety
2. Interview with NB at end of term 1.	Motivation IQ Personality variables (confidence versus anxiety.)
3. Recorded interviews with four mainstream class teachers at end of academic year.	Motivation Personality variables (confidence versus anxiety.)
4. Interview with another ESL teacher.	Motivation IQ Exposure to the English language.
5. IQ Tests.	Indicated that an above average IQ is not

	needed for successful SLA.
6. Questionnaires completed by parents.	Higher exposure to the English language increases SLA. Motivation in the form of parental motivation.
7. Interviews with the subjects of the study.	Motivation Socialisation Anxiety

The analysis of data cited motivation as a recurring prominent factor affecting the SLA of the students. Indeed each research tool indicated that motivation was considered the most important factor, whether it was the students' motivation or motivation from the parents which in turn motivated the students. Motivation was cited to explain the students who made the fastest progress in the group and lack of motivation was cited to explain the lack of progress of some students.

Secondly, personality and confidence was a recurring factor in the research tools. The research indicated that the more confident students integrated quicker in the mainstream class and this helped their rate of SLA. The less confident and introverted students were slow to integrate and remained on the periphery of the classroom and this hindered their rate of SLA.

Thirdly, anxiety was frequently cited which is of course linked to personality and confidence. The research indicated that anxiety prevented students from making progress, it made them reticent to speak in the class and overly cautious in their output. Although anxiety was quickly dispelled from the smaller ESL group, it was a continuous hindering factor within the mainstream class. Students who were more anxious were less integrated and less inclined to participate in mainstream class activities. Furthermore, the anxiety hindered their socialisation both within and outside the classroom and caused them to find social contact with native speakers of their mother tongue. Socialisation was also a frequently recurring factor and the research indicated that students who socialised within the class and outside the class tended to make greater progress.

IQ was a relevant factor; it was mentioned several times by NB, the mainstream class teacher of Samia and Lena. She attributed some of the disparity between their different rates of SLA to IQ. Shazia, an ESL teacher who also taught the students expressed a strong conviction that IQ was responsible for different learning rates. Furthermore, the data provided by the IQ tests indicated that the students who were learning at the slowest rates had below average intellect which suggests that this was affecting their SLA.

Reflections on using the research tools.

I found the procedure of regularly writing entries into my teacher's log difficult; my grade 6 class was followed by three other classes and I was concerned that I had forgotten a lot of salient points by the time I had free time to write an entry. It was also difficult to ensure that my entries were relevant to my field of research and I had to resist merely recounting the lesson. By March 2008, after eight months of writing two entries a week, I felt that I had reached a point of saturation and was repeating similar comments about the same students and shortly after this I ceased writing entries. However, despite my negative attitude towards the process of writing it at the time, I have found it to be rich in data and retrospectively, it has been a very useful research tool, supplying a lot of pertinent information about my students and their rate of language acquisition.

The research tool of recording interviews with the class teachers at the end of the academic year provided very valuable data; it was hugely insightful to hear the class teachers' perspectives of my students and their progress in their mainstream class. However, it required a lot of hours; transcribing the interviews and sifting through the comments looking for key issues was extremely time consuming and the resulting bar graph does not reflect the hours of work involved to retrieve the key issues on the horizontal axis.

The recorded interviews with the students likewise provided a lot of pertinent data, noticeably with regards to their motivation and their feelings towards the process of learning English. Recording the interviews was extremely valuable; it allowed me to focus on asking the questions and putting the student at ease without having to write their responses as they talked. This is in contrast to the interview I had with another ESL teacher and with a class teacher, NB, where I wrote down the responses during the interview. This process is undoubtedly quicker but it facilitates the possibility of important data getting lost. The researcher is put in the position of summarising the interviewee's responses under time pressure and it increases the risk of the interviewer doing this subjectively. The process of replaying recorded answers allows the researcher to calmly and accurately code the data and ensures that all data is collected. It is however, extremely laborious and a lot of the recording is invalid.

In contrast, the data from questionnaires completed by parents were simpler to analyse than the interviews because of the nature of the closed questions which facilitated quicker statistical analysis.

Chapter 4. A review of studies on motivation and their relevance to the current piece of research.

It is at the point of theoretical saturation that hypotheses are formulated to answer the initial research question. In the current study the hypotheses that were emerging from the data were that different rates of SLA can be attributed to motivation, personality variables and IQ.

The factor that emerged time and time again in the data was motivation; all the research tools indicated the importance of motivation in SLA. Motivation is a pivotal factor for any form of learning to be successful and Brown writes that, "...countless studies and experiments in human learning have shown that motivation is a key to learning in general." (Brown, 2005; p.168) Dornyei writes that "Human motivation to learn is a complex phenomenon involving a number of diverse sources and conditions. Some of the motivational sources are situation specific, that is, they are rooted in the student's immediate learning environment, whereas some others appear to be more stable and generalised stemming from a succession of the student's past experiences in the social world." (Dornyei & Schmidt, 2005; p.399)

This relates to the ESL students in the study because the situation specific sources are the classrooms. Although the smaller ESL classroom should be able to provide ample motivating activities with work targeting the students' level of English skills, the mainstream classroom could be a demotivating source. The work is above the students' level and students are in danger of becoming severely discouraged because the learning task is simply too big for them. The ESL students' past experiences in the social world will also affect their rate of learning. The implication would be that those students with successful past experiences will be motivated and therefore more likely to make faster progress than those with less successful social experiences.

Research reveals that there are three theories of motivation. The first is from a behavioural perspective which sees all effort expended to complete a task being derived from the expectation of a reward. Brown (2005; p.168) writes that "In a behavioural view, performance in tasks and motivation to do so is likely to be at the mercy of external forces: parents, peers, education requirements, job specifications etc."

The second perspective is a cognitive perspective which views the source of motivation as an internal one deriving from individuals' choices. Keller (1983) in Brown (2005; p.169) writes that motivation stems from "the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect."

The third perspective of motivation is a constructivist view which "places even further emphasis on social context as well as individual personal choices." Williams and Burden (1977) in Brown (2005; p.169) This view regards the source of motivation to be two fold, stemming both from internal needs and desires and one's interactions with society.

The three perspectives of motivation can all be related to ESL students in the context of the study. The behavioural perspective implies that students are motivated by rewards; this suggests that ensuring the students are frequently rewarded in terms of having a reward

system in place and giving them verbal praise for successful language production will facilitate motivation and hence more successful SLA. The cognitive perspective is relevant to the subjects in the study because it relates to the internal drive of the students. This suggests that those students who played a part in the decision to attend an English speaking school and are driven to learn English will possess stronger motivational forces. Samia is an example of such a student, she wanted to attend the school because she wanted to learn English whereas other students such as Lena and Yesol were unhappy with the decision initially and thus they started the learning process with less motivation to learn.

The constructivist perspective, if applied to the context of the subjects in the study would suggest that those students who had a strong desire to interact with their peers plus had strong internal motivation would have strong motivational forces. Thus the more extroverted students who also had a strong desire to learn English would be more motivated. Again, this explains the motivation of Samia who wanted to socialise within her class and who was very driven to learn English.

The history of research of motivation in SLA shall be discussed against this backdrop of the three perspectives of motivation in general. Research reveals that there have been three distinct phases of L2 motivation research. The first phase was the social psychology period and its work was characterised by Robert Gardner and his research in Canada. This phase was relatively long lasting from 1959-1990 and dominated the scene of motivation in SLA. The second phase was during the 1990's and integrated work on cognitive theories in educational psychology into the issue of motivation in SLA. The third phase from 2000 until present stemmed from "an interest in motivational change and in the relationship between motivation and identity/self." ([www.1ww-cetl.ac.uk/seminar\\_1/Dornyei%20](http://www.1ww-cetl.ac.uk/seminar_1/Dornyei%20))

Robert Gardner, a social psychologist, researched the role of motivation in SLA and his views were founded on Mowrer's (1950) concept that a child's success in L1 acquisition was attributable to his/her desire to integrate into the larger speech community. Gardner and his colleague Lambert adapted this concept to the field of SLA in their research into the learning of French by English speaking learners in Canada. They adopted a social psychology approach which was based on the concept that learners will be more successful at learning a language if they display positive attitudes towards the language group. Gardner and Lambert (Skehan, 1989; p.53) "suggested that those people who would like to resemble the foreign peoples concerned, to understand their culture and to be able to participate in it" would have a stronger "integrative orientation" which would result in a higher learning outcome. They believed that this form of orientation was especially important to learning because "it is firmly held in the personality of the learner. As such it is likely to exert its influence over an extended period and to sustain learning efforts over the time that is necessary to attain language success."(Skehan, 1989; p.53)

Gardner and Lambert's integrative orientation can be related to the ESL subjects. It suggests that those students who would like to become involved with their class and interact with their peers will have a higher learning outcome and a faster rate of SLA. Samia immediately springs to mind here, she chose to learn English and had a respect for the language because

her mother is a native English speaker. However, other students such as Golnaz, Yesol and In Jeong possibly felt less integrative orientation, the classroom culture was alien to what they had come from and they possibly experienced a culture shock in the initial stages.

However, Gardner and Lambert also identified another form of motivation which he termed an “instrumental orientation” to language learning. This stemmed from the advantages for a learner from learning a language in terms of rewards professional advancement etc. They maintained that this form of motivation was of secondary importance to integrative orientation because it was not so firmly embedded in the learner’s personality and was reliant on external forces which could diminish it. Instrumental orientation is highly applicable to the subjects in the study because it would be a source of motivation for those students who believe that learning English is a key to future success. This belief was expressed by most of the students although it is highly likely that they were echoing their parents’ beliefs. It might explain the strong motivation of students such as Lena and Ahmed who, despite making limited progress at times, remained conscientious in their learning tasks. It would appear likely that those students who had strong integrative orientation plus instrumental orientation would have a higher learning outcome and this possibly explains Samia’s successful rate of SLA.

However, the above theory, model and research findings can be applied to the context of ESL students at EIS-Meadows. It would appear that the learners should display a strong integrative orientation because they are on the periphery of the mainstream class when they arrive and their lack of English language skills prevents their social integration. The students are motivated to learn to start to belong to their class and become a member of the group. Furthermore, the students should exhibit a strong instrumental orientation because their entire curriculum is in English and they will be graded and tested in English and they are required to learn English at a fast rate. Noels (2001, p.59) writes that Gardner and Lambert (1972) suggest that an instrumental orientation may be particularly useful when there is an urgency about mastering a second language” as in the case of the students in this study. Indeed, this observation is borne out by the majority of the subjects with the exception of Yesol and Ali.

The parental instrumental orientation should also be a variable at work due to the fact that the research indicated that the students’ parents wanted their children to learn in English and perceived English as a necessary tool in their future education and working life and that this influence had been passed onto the students who wanted to please their parents. Noels (2001; p.56) writes that, “Other individuals who may foster or undermine students’ motivation are family members, particularly parents.” She continues that, “Gardner emphasised that parental support is not directly related to achievement in the L2 but related to the willingness to persist at language study.” Hence, EIS-Meadows ESL students should be highly motivated with the joint forces of integrative and instrumental orientations. Although most of the students exhibited strong motivation, Yesol and Ali were noticeable exceptions. Yesol’s initial motivation evaporated once her language skills reached a level whereby she was able to access the curriculum and communicate with her peers and this phenomenon is supported by Swain’s statement in Mc Laughlin (1985; p.64)

“Once the children reach a point in their SL development where they can make themselves understood to their teacher and classmates, there is no strong incentive to develop further towards native speaker norms.”

However, Ali appeared to be poorly motivated from the onset when he arrived at school with good oral skills and poor literacy skills, indeed he wrote as he spoke. He showed no inclination to improve his literacy skills and possibly he, like Yesol, felt that because he was able to communicate within the class there was no need to become more proficient in English.

This would support the work of Clement (1980) who developed a model to suggest that the social setting of the learner will affect the type of orientation of the individual. He developed a model in response to the conflicting results from studies using Gardner’s S-E model. He tried to “...account for motivation in the individual but in clear relationship to the social setting.” (Skehan, 1989; p.68) Clement and Kruidenier (1986) carried out research to investigate the possibility that type of orientation might be the result of the learner’s social setting. Their research indicated that learners of languages with official status in the community were influenced by an instrumental orientation. This should be applicable to the context of EIS-Meadows where students are learning the language which is the official language within the school context and would suggest that a strong integrative orientation is at work. However, this was probably not the case for all the subjects, in particular Yesol, whose language skills fossilised at an early stage.

However, although Gardner’s work on motivation in SLA has not been disputed, the 1990’s witnessed the debate about motivation being reignited. As Dornyei states, researchers were saying, “There must be more to motivation” ([www.1ww-cetl.ac.uk](http://www.1ww-cetl.ac.uk)) and the motivation agenda was in need of being reopened by two factors. The first was a desire to “catch up with advances in motivation psychology and to extend our understanding of L2 motivation by importing some of the most influential concepts of 1980’s” and secondly by the desire to narrow down the macro perspective of L2 motivation.... to a more situated analysis of motivation as it operates in learning situations.” (Dornyei, 2005; p.74) The 1980’s brought about an attempt to examine the motivational influences of the learning context itself, that is, within the classroom where the learning occurs and hence to a more micro perspective view. This new approach and its added dimension to motivation and SLA are illustrated by Mc Groaty (2001; p.75) who wrote that:

“Existing research on L2 motivation, like much research in educational psychology, has begun to rediscover the multiple and mutually influential connections between individuals and their many social contexts, contexts that can play a facilitative, neutral or inhibitory role with respect to learning, including L2 learning.”

Studies have demonstrated that situation specific factors can influence the motivation of learners and that in cases where learners may exhibit positive attitudes and integrative orientation, the classroom practices may erode the positive attitudes and contribute to unsuccessful language learners. Likewise, the opposite may occur and high quality language



teaching and a successful learning experience may override a negative attitude towards a language as in the case of Israeli students learning Arabic quoted by Mc Groaty (2001). This is of particular concern for ESL students at the school; if students with strong integrative motivation can be demotivated by the classroom experiences then mainstream and ESL teachers need to take special care of the students in the early months when the output in the classroom is incomprehensible to ensure that their positive attitude remains constant which will have a positive effect on their rate of learning. Likewise, interesting, structured lessons which target the students' needs can motivate even those students who come to the learning task with a negative attitude. Thus, teachers need to ensure that the teaching context is a positive and enriching one to obtain optimal learning rates.

The past decade has witnessed new approaches to the role of motivation in SLA which are characterised by an interest in the dynamic nature of motivation and in the relationship between motivation and the self. A key element is the notion that motivation is not constant and that, "...one of the prime characteristics of motivation is that it ebbs and flows." (Garcia, 1999; p.231) Learners who are able to remain motivated and who focus less on the negative setbacks involved along any learning experience will have a better learning outcome. Those who are less able to maintain their motivation risk a lower learning outcome. This has a strong application to language learning where learners will frequently meet obstacles and feel that their acquisition rate is slow. Those learners who manage their motivation levels will be more likely to be successful learners. Ushioda (2003, p.98) writes that, "learners must be brought to view their motivation as emanating from within themselves, and thus to view themselves as agents of their own motivation and their own learning."

This is relevant to the context of EIS-Meadows where the ESL students' motivation might ebb more than flow in the early stage of the learning process when the level of work in the mainstream class is considerably higher than the students' level of English. Teachers, both mainstream and ESL need to encourage students to remain motivated by differentiating the class work and providing appropriate tasks. If the students can be encouraged to think about the role of motivation and its influence on their learning they might be able to maintain motivation levels.

The latest model of motivation and SLA is Dornyei's "L2 Motivational Self system" which is a new approach to the understanding of motivation in SLA and attempts to combine recent L2 theories with new discoveries of self research in the field of psychology. The model; consists of three dimensions; firstly, the Ideal L2 Self, secondly the Ought-to L2 Self and thirdly the L2 learning Experience.

The Ideal L2 Self stems from recent personality psychology which has replaced previous static vision of self representations with a dynamic nature of the self system. It suggests that we have possible selves that, "might include the successful self, the creative self, the rich self, or the loved and admired self, whereas the dreaded selves could be the alone self, the depressed self, the incompetent self"... (Markus and Nurius, 1986; p.954) If one's ideal self is associated with L2 mastery then he/she can be described as having an integrative disposition.

The Ought-to L2 self refers to “the attributes that one believes one ought to possess in order to avoid negative learning outcomes” (Dornyei, 2005; p.106.) and corresponds to instrumental orientation. The L2 learning experience concerns factors specific to the learning which might have a positive or negative effect on the learning outcome and this corresponds to attitudes towards the learning situation in Gardner’s S-E model.

With regards to the context of ESL students at EIS-Meadows, the Ideal L2 self is the vision the students have of themselves as proficient English learners who are able to participate in the mainstream class and meaningfully access the curriculum. The Ought to L2 Self refers to effort and time that the ESL students invest in their L2 learning to avoid not acquiring the language at a desired rate and not being able to participate in the mainstream curriculum. The L2 learning Experience relates to the ESL classroom and the mainstream classroom. If the experience in these classrooms is a positive one then the students L2 motivation will be maintained. However, should the experience be a negative one due to classroom context factors such as anxiety, poor teaching, tedious course work then this will have a negative impact on the L2 outcome.

Chapter 5. A review of the role of personality variables including extroversion, introversion and anxiety on SLA and its application to the current study.

The research indicated that teachers believed there is a correlation between SLA and extroversion. N.B. commented that she noticed the more outgoing ESL students seemed to become more proficient in English than the less outgoing students. Larsen-Freeman and Long write, “Folk wisdom is that extroverted learners at a faster rate than introverts...” (Larsen-freeman & Long, 1991; p.184) Extroversion is “the extent to which a person has a deep-seated need to receive ego enhancement, self esteem and a sense of wholeness from other people.” Conversely, introversion “is the extent to which a person derives a sense of wholeness and fulfilment apart from a reflection of this self from other people.” (Brown; 2007; p.166) However, the results from studies in the SLA field do not conclusively

demonstrate a positive relationship between extroversion and good language learning; indeed, results have been very mixed.

Some of the earliest research was carried out by Metraux in 1964 in France. His subjects were English speaking children learning French in France and he reported that, “the more successful English speaking children learning French were talkative, outgoing and adaptable. The quiet, reserved, conformist children were slower learners.” (Larsen-Freeman & Long; 1991, p.186.)

Research carried out in the 1970’s produced mixed results. In 1975 a study by Chastain obtained inconclusive results. His research used the Marlowe-Crowne scale of reserved versus outgoing personality and his subjects were foreign language students in U.S. universities. However, the results found a positive relationship between extroversion and grades for students studying German and Spanish but not for French. (Larsen-freeman & long; 1991, p.186)

The following year, 1976, witnessed contradictory results from three studies. Suter “studied pronunciation skills of foreign students studying in U.S universities and found no correlation with extroversion.” (Larsen-freeman & Long, 1991, p.185) A study by Swain & Burnaby using Canadian kindergarten children learning French revealed no correlation between, “traits of extroversion, sociability and talkativeness and children’s performance on French tests.” (Freeman-Larsen; 1991, p.186) However, in the same year, Rossier studied Spanish speaking adolescents who were learning English. He found that there was a positive relationship between English oral fluency and extroversion. This result was not supported by Naiman et al’s study in Toronto where they found “no significant effect for extroversion in characterising the good language learner.” (Brown; 2007, p.167)

The 1980’s produced two studies by Busch in 1982 and Skehan in 1989. The former study’s subjects were adult Japanese learners of English in Japan and she investigated their English pronunciation. Her hypothesis was that the extroverted students would “be more proficient than introverted students.” However, her results were interesting because they indicated that the introverted subjects were more proficient language learners than the extroverts. (Brown, Robson and Rosenkjar; 2001; p.362) Skehan’s research led him to conclude that, “...with regard to L2 learning, both extroversion and introversion may have positive features, depending on the task in question.” (Dornyei; 2005, p.27 )

In the 1990’s, a study was carried out by Dewaela and Burnham who concluded that extroversion “may be a factor in the development of general oral competence which requires face to face interaction but not in listening, reading and writing.” (Brown; 2007, p.167) In their study they correlated extroversion scores with linguistic variables extracted from verbal tasks and they surmised that “Extroverts are found to be more fluent than introverts both in L1 and L2 and particularly in formal situations or in environments characterised by interpersonal stress.” (Dornyei; 2005, p.26.) More recent research by Dewaela in 2004 indicated that more extroverted L2 students used colloquial words more frequently than their more introverted peers. (Dornyei; 2005, p.27.)

Thus, in conclusion, the empirical research has not supported the myth that extroverted L2 learners are better language learners than their introverted counterparts. However, some of the recent research does indicate that extroverted L2 learners may be more orally competent than introverted learners. There is no evidence to suggest that extroverted learners are better language learners overall, however. Thus, it would appear that NB's observation that the more extrovert ESL characters learn at a faster rate which she used to partly explain Samia's faster rate of SLA is not borne out by research.

Anxiety.

Anxiety is another personality trait and one that was frequently cited in the study for having a negative effect on the rate of SLA of the subjects; indeed, one of the subjects abandoned his L2 learning altogether six weeks after the beginning of the school year. His parents cited his anxiety caused by the enormity of the language learning task as a factor for his return to his homeland.

Dornyei states that, "There is no doubt that anxiety affects L2 performance"... and he suggests that most scholars would support Arnold & Brown's conclusion that, "Anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process." (Dornyei; 2005, p.198) However, anxiety is a complex affective factor and its effect on SLA can be schizophrenic; at times having a positive influence on language learning and at other times having a negative impact. Alpert and Haber (1960) distinguished between facilitating and debilitating anxiety. Scovel (1978; p.139) comments that:

"Facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to fight the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approval behaviour. Debilitating anxiety, in contrast, motivates the learner to flee the new learning task; it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behaviour."

Dornyei writes that "worry" the term given for the cognitive component of anxiety "has been shown to have a negative impact on performance, whereas the affective component, emotionality, does not have detrimental effects."

There are two distinctions of anxiety, trait anxiety and state anxiety. The former is a "... a more permanent predisposition to be anxious"... whereas "state anxiety is experienced in relation to some particular event or act." (Brown; 2005, p.161) research on language anxiety indicates that state anxiety is the form that has an effect on SLA. Indeed, Horwitz et al (1986; p.125) defined a term "foreign language anxiety" they said was unique to the task of language learning due to the linguistic deficit of L2 learner and said that anxiety was characterised as a "subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry as well as having difficulty concentrating, becoming forgetful, sweating and having palpitations." (Dornyei; 2005, p.199) His research suggested that:

... "language anxiety turned out to be a relatively independent factor, displaying only low correlations with general trait anxiety. This indicates that this factor is not merely a transfer of anxiety from another domain.... but is a uniquely L2 – related variable."

The learning context of the subjects in the study was anxiety ridden particularly in the mainstream classrooms. The subjects began the academic year with weak or no English language skills and yet were exposed to a curriculum that required high level language skills. Although the ESL teacher withdrew the subjects for eight lessons a week during mainstream English lessons, they were required to access the remainder of the curriculum in English. Thus, the levels of “foreign language anxiety” experienced by the subjects would have been high, especially at the beginning of the school year. This was borne out by the study which indicated that anxiety had a negative anxiety on the students in the ESL classroom but the mainstream teachers discussed the anxiety of the subjects later during the year in the mainstream classrooms. For example, NB said that Lena was anxious about contributing to discussions in the class and Aida was reluctant to talk in her class room.

Earlier studies on the effect of anxiety and SLA were conducted by Chastian in 1975 in The U.S. He correlated students’ anxiety scores with their final course grades in a foreign language. His results were mixed, sometimes indicating a positive correlation between anxiety and SLA and that anxiety facilitated language performance and at other times, a negative effect, illustrating how anxiety can hinder second language performance. In 1977, Kleinmann’s study indicated that learners who exhibited high facilitative anxiety “were emotionally equipped to approach the very structures that their peers tended to avoid.” (Larsen-freeman & long; 1991, p.187) This was supported by Bailey’s study of competitiveness and anxiety in SLL which illustrated that facilitative anxiety “was one of the keys to success...” (Brown; 2005, p.162)

Bailey also cited her own language learning anxiety in a diary she recorded whilst learning a foreign language. She realised that sometimes anxiety was responsible for motivating herself but at other times was responsible for having a negative effect on the learning process, once again illustrating the Jekyll and Hyde nature of anxiety.

Empirical research conducted by MacIntyre and Gardner in 1991 concluded that “foreign language anxiety can be distinguished from other types of anxiety and can have a negative effect on the language learning process.” (Brown; 2005, p.162) They later conducted empirical research in 1994 to investigate the relationship between anxiety and language performance. Their study involved filming studies inside the language classroom in a vocabulary learning activity to observe any increase in anxiety and a correlated negative impact on language production. They observed that, “significant increases in state anxiety were reported in all three groups when the video camera was introduced and concomitant deficits in language acquisition were observed.”

More recent studies have indicated a link between anxiety and perfectionism. Gregerson & Horwitz (2002) suggested that language learners who display perfectionist traits and set “unrealistically high standards are more likely to display greater anxiety.” (Brown; 2005, p.162-3) A study by Dewaele in 2002 led him to conclude that:

“Because L2 use depends on the effectiveness of the employment of attentional resources and of the working memory in particular...high anxiety, especially when linked with high

introversion, can lead to breakdowns in automatic processing and therefore can seriously hinder L2 fluency.”

(Dornyei, 2005, p.199)

This has serious implications for the context of the current study and all the subjects involved but especially Lena and Ahmed. They made slow progress and both were conscientious yet anxious students. The above conclusion would suggest that if they were learning in less anxiety provoking situations their L2 might have developed at a faster rate. Their mainstream learning context would have contributed to high anxiety which would have reduced their working memory.

In conclusion, the review of empirical studies on the effects of anxiety on SLA indicate that anxiety does not always exhibit a negative effect, indeed, facilitative anxiety can increase second language performance. However, as with the trait of extroversion, where negative effects have been documented in SLA, they tend to be in oral production of a second language.

Chapter 6. A review of the literature about the role of IQ in SLA and its relevance to the current study.

Research of the literature reveals that until the 1980's the traditional definition and measurement of intelligence was Intelligence Quotient (IQ) which tested two abilities, linguistic and mathematical. IQ tests, created by Binet measured the two abilities and it was generally assumed that a person scoring a high IQ would be more successful in terms of academic performance and in life in general. (Brown; 2005, p.108)

However, research indicates that SLA researchers were reluctant to attribute successful language learners to IQ and preferred to attribute successful language learning with "aptitude" instead of intelligence. Skehan writes that SLA researchers such as Henmon and Symonds attempted to create language aptitude tests in the late 1920's but they were largely unsuccessful. Their correlations with language achievement scores were weak and they were dependant on the grammar translation methodology which was declining in popularity. (Skehan; 1989, p.25) However, in the 1950's, psychologists Carroll and Sapon put forward a new notion of language aptitude which consisted of four different abilities; phonetic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, rote learning ability and inductive language learning ability. They developed an aptitude test known as the Modern Languages Aptitude test (MLAT) in 1959 which consisted of five sub-tests designed to predict the success of a language learner. Another aptitude test designed by Pimsleur in the late 1960's, the Pimsleur Language aptitude Battery, was designed for children aged between 13-19 years. Skehan comments that "It is striking now, more than two decades after the MLAT and LAB appeared, how little impact these batteries currently have, and how little additional research has been conducted.... no-one has really challenged the overall framework established by Carroll and Pimsleur." (Skehan; 1989, p.29) Teepen speculates in his article (2004, p.2) that the dominance of communicative teaching methodologies and their focus on oral communication and acquisition orientated approaches led to a decline in interest in aptitude. He writes that "If anyone could succeed with oral communication, the study of intelligence may seem superfluous."

Although success in education in general is related to intelligence, how much IQ influences the success in language learning is of interest to the SLL researcher. A lot of SLA research has focused on "aptitude" rather than IQ which suggests that some learners have abilities that are language learning specific and that these are not related to IQ. However, other researchers argue that the term IQ can be used synonymously with aptitude. Neufeld (1978) states that, "...all humans are equipped to master basic language skills, but that humans vary with respect to their mastery of the higher-level skills and that the extent of the mastery of these latter skills is determined by an individual's intelligence." (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; p.170) Other SLA researchers, Oller and Perkins likewise agree that intelligence is responsible for a person's language proficiency. (Larsen-freeman & Long, 1991, p.170) Brown (2005, p.110) quotes Oller's claim that "language may not be merely a vital link in the social side of intellectual development, it may be the very foundation of intelligence itself."

Teepen writes about the case of an exceptional language learner, CJ, to argue that an “exceptionally high IQ, or even one above average, is not necessary for successful language acquisition.” Furthermore, he advocates that aptitude “should be considered synonymous with intelligence.” (2004, p.5) CJ learnt five languages after the age of fifteen, some through formal instruction and others through a mix of formal instruction and immersion. Researchers were keen to investigate CJ’s IQ to determine the relationship between IQ and SLA. He scored highly in the areas of vocabulary and code learning, completing patterns with a piece missing and pattern recognition. However, CJ’s results in other areas were average which lead to the conclusion that he was highly intelligent in some areas that are used in SLA but average or below average in other areas.

Teepen argues that the tests were “part of his intellectual profile and that had he not performed as well on these tests then his overall score would have dropped.” (2004, p.5) He suggests that this refutes Skehan’s proposal that aptitude is a concept separate to intelligence. Furthermore, Teepen uses the case to express the view that “...an exceptionally high IQ, or even one above average, is not necessary for successful SLA.” (2004, p.5) This is the conclusion reached in the context of the grade 6 ESL students after the IQ tests indicated that there was not a positive correlation between IQ and English language skills. The student who was most proficient in English by the end of the year (as judged by the end of year ESL assessment, see appendix x for results) scored an average intellect in the test. Yesol scored an above average intellect and yet she ranked fifth in the results, lower than Lena who scored “less than average intellect” in the IQ test. However, the study indicated from different perspectives that Lena displayed strong motivation after a slow start to the year whereas Yesol was highly motivated at the beginning of the learning task but her level of motivation dwindled considerably during the year. The student who obtained the highest score in the IQ test, In Jeong, ranked fifth in the group at the end of year. Although this was a low rank, put into the context of her arrival in March, seven months after the beginning of the year, her result was quite remarkable.

However, psychologists became dissatisfied with the traditional definition of intelligence which focused on academic abilities and the literature reveals that psychologists such as Howard Gardner, Goleman and Sternberg have broadened the definition of intelligence from the areas of linguistic and logical-mathematical abilities to include multiple intelligences such as interpersonal, spatial, intrapersonal, “smartness” and emotional intelligence (EQ). (Brown; 2005, p.108) Work by Goleman suggests that EQ is “at the seat of intellectual functioning.”(Brown; 2005, p.109) He defines EQ as “abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration, to control impulses and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to emphasise and to hope.” (Fahim and Pishghadam; 2007, p.2) Goleman (1995) in Brown (2005, p.109) argues that “the emotional mind is far quicker than the rational mind, springing into action without even pausing to consider what it is doing. Its quickness precludes the deliberate, analytic reflection that is the hallmark of the thinking mind.” This is supported by the work of Aaronson, a social psychologist, who writes that “Studies have determined that EQ and



academic intelligence are separate qualities, and that emotional intelligence is a better predictor of success in education.” (Fahim and Pishghadam, 2007, p.9)

This broadening of the term intelligence is of particular interest in the field of SLA. Whereas traditional IQ did not appear to have a big role in SLA, the “new” intelligences may be responsible for different learning rates of a second language. Brown (2005, p.110) writes that Christison (2005, 1999) and others ... “have been successfully applying the concept of multiple intelligences to teaching English as a second or foreign language by showing how each intelligence relates to certain demands in the classroom.”

A study conducted by Rahim and Pishghadam ([www.asian-efl-journal.com](http://www.asian-efl-journal.com)) on the role of emotional intelligence (EQ), IQ and verbal intelligence (VI) on ESL students at Tehran university found that the “only subscale of IQ which is strongly correlated with academic achievement was the vocabulary section (verbal intelligence).” Their results indicated that the students’ grades and EQ were “strongly associated with intrapersonal abilities assessed at the end of the year. Collectively, these variables were found to be strong predictors in identifying both academic successful and unsuccessful second year students.” (Rahim and Pishghadam; 2007, p.8) They concluded that their results supported the view by Aaronson that EQ is a better predictor of success in education. They suggest that “acquiring high levels of emotional and verbal intelligences can lead to success at university.” (Fahim and Pishghadam; 2007,p.9)

The recent broadening of the definition “intelligence” to encompass multiple intelligences and EQ are of particular interest to this study. The tests which determined the traditional IQ of the subjects indicated that an above average IQ is not necessary for successful language learning. However, it would be interesting to determine whether the more successful language learners in the study possess other intelligences as defined by Gardner which might be more relevant to successful SLL. Furthermore, EQ tests might demonstrate that they possess high levels of emotional intelligence which is a better predictor of success in learning.

A piece of research by Duckworth and Seligman over a two year period into the significance of IQ in academic performance with eighth grade students indicated that self discipline was a better predictor of academic performance than IQ. ([www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com)) This research is pertinent in the field of SLA, it suggests that successful language learners don’t need a high IQ, rather they need self discipline and tenaciousness. It can be argued that self disciplined students spend more time on task and more time at the learning process. Anderson’s ACT model of skill learning would support this hypothesis; the model “has been put forward as an explanation of the way that we learn routines of skilled behaviour and the way that these become automatic.” ( Randall; 2007; p.134) Randall explains that the model explains that “Learning skilled behaviour gradually moves from conscious control, where verbally explicit sets of instructions need to be accessed from the Declarative Memory, to a situation where a stimulus from the environment directly accesses automatic procedures from the Production Memory.” (Randall; 2007, p.134) Thus, the skill is proceduralised and becomes automatic and a key factor in this process is repetition of the skill which determined by the amount of time a subject spends practising the skill rather than his/her IQ. The

combination of Anderson's ACT model and recent studies into the contribution of IQ into academic success are highly crucial for second language learners; they suggest that determination and the amount of time spent learning are more responsible for success than IQ. In the context of the present study, this might explain some of the different rates of learning among the subjects. Yesol displayed little determination and generally spent little time on learning tasks, whether in the form of ESL tasks or literacy tasks in the mainstream class and despite her higher than average IQ her SL skills stagnated. Lena, however, obtained a below average IQ score and yet her rate of SLA improved dramatically after the first term when she displayed a more determined attitude and even had extra ESL tuition. The most successful language learner of the group, Samia, displayed determination to succeed from the outset and spent a considerable amount of time on language tasks, frequently asking for additional work to further practise her skills and yet the IQ test indicated she had an average IQ.

## Chapter 7. The implications of the research for the ESL teacher and conclusion of the study.

In terms of motivation, Gardner maintained that integrative motivation is essential for learning a new language, even more so than instrumental motivation although studies have demonstrated the important role of instrumental motivation in SLA. Dornyei's "Ought-to Self" form of motivation inspires a second language student to continue acquiring the language and envisages him/herself at the end of the learning process. In the case of the majority of the ESL students at EIS-Meadows, levels of motivation in all forms appeared to be high and this probably explains how they cope with a system that submerges them totally in the mainstream classroom with ESL instruction only once a day on a withdrawal basis. Hence the ESL students are unable to meaningfully access the mainstream curriculum where input is incomprehensible. However, the students have high levels of integrative motivation; they are outsiders at the onset of the learning process because they are unable to communicate with their class peers and teacher and want to become participating members of the class and form friendships.

Instrumental motivation levels are probably also significant among the ESL students. They understand that their initial level of language skills is insufficient to access the mainstream curriculum and they are instrumentally motivated to improve their language skills in order to perform in the classroom and achieve better assessment scores. Furthermore, the ESL students typically have highly motivated, supportive parents who encourage and assist their children in the second language learning task and who convince their offspring of the benefits in learning English.

Thus, it would appear that motivation levels are high among the ESL students. However, this research did indicate that motivation alone is not always enough. In the case of Ahmed, his progress was slow despite his seemingly motivated attitude towards learning English and despite the support system put in place for him at school and home. His case would suggest that motivation alone is insufficient in the SLA process if there are learning obstacles which will hinder the rate of SLA. Despite Ahmed's high levels of motivation, his learning disability was severely hindering his language acquisition rate and although he was learning English, the learning rate was insufficient to access the mainstream curriculum. It is probable that his below average intellectual capacity (as indicated by his SPM test result) also hindered his rate of SLA.

The case of Yesol, who displayed high levels of integrative motivation initially but who then became less motivated during the school year would suggest that once she had achieved her goal of becoming a participative member of the ESL and mainstream classroom and had forged friendships and was coping with the curriculum, her aim had been achieved. Possibly she was not instrumentally motivated and thus achieving higher assessment grades and performing better in the classroom was not on her agenda, hence the indications that her language skills were fossilising.

However, the case of Lena, who initially displayed low motivation and high anxiety in the ESL and mainstream classroom, indicates that teacher intervention to help increase the

student's motivation levels can have a positive impact on the student's rate of SLA. Once her teachers took extra interest in her and actively encouraged her in her learning process she became noticeably happier and more confident and began to produce more of the target language in both her oral production and in her literacy skills. This defied her class teacher's initial assessment of her that, "....she wasn't a bright student who was going to struggle and make little progress."

The strong implications for the ESL teacher, in particular for ESL teachers working with totally submerged ESL students, is that the students need continuous support, nurturing and encouragement in order to maintain and possibly increase their levels of motivation, both integrative and instrumental. High levels of both forms of these motivations should result in an optimal rate of SLA. As mentioned earlier, Garcia stated that motivation isn't a static variable but one that ebbs and flows and the ESL teacher needs to work with the students to raise levels of motivation when it ebbs and to give support and encouragement along the arduous journey of learning a new language. An empathetic approach coupled with frequent praise, reward systems and interesting ESL materials will facilitate this. Furthermore, the ESL teacher should work from the onset to relieve detrimental feelings of anxiety which hinder the SLA learning process. In the case of EIS-Meadows, the class teachers likewise need to reduce levels of anxiety felt by the ESL students in the mainstream classroom and to maintain motivation levels of the students who are unable to access the mainstream curriculum until their English language skills are more developed. The ESL teacher needs to work in conjunction with the mainstream teacher to provide ESL materials for the students so the task of differentiation does not fall solely on the class teacher.

The review of research conducted on the role of personality and SLA indicates that results have been inconclusive but where there has been a positive correlation between personality variables and SLA is in the area of oral production. Thus, ESL teachers must ensure that all ESL students receive the same amount of input from the teacher and that the more extrovert students are not allowed to dominate speaking activities, thus denying less extroverted characters from practising their output. Studies indicate that less extroverted students can be highly successful language students and they must be encouraged to reach their potential.

In conclusion, the results of this small scale study suggest that high levels of motivation, both integrative and instrumental will facilitate successful SLA. The ESL teacher has an important role in supporting and raising levels of motivation in a stress free and secure environment to facilitate optimal rates of SLA to take place. New research indicates that IQ is not an important factor in second language acquisition and determination and time on task is more likely to lead to successful learning. These coupled with studies on the role of EQ and its correlation with successful SLA, takes the ESL teacher into exciting new areas and indicate that language teachers need to find ways to encourage students to improve their EQ and to increase the determination of language students to facilitate optimum rates of SLA. However, it must be remembered that the data provided by this study is context specific and cannot necessarily be applied to other contexts. Hayes in Bell (2000; p.19) reminds us of this:

“The theory which is produced using a grounded theory analysis may sometimes be very context specific, applying only in a small number of situations; but because it is always grounded in data collected from the real world, it can serve as a very strong basis for further investigations, as well as being a research finding in its own right.”

Lastly, research indicates that multiple factors, both affective and cognitive, play a role in SLA and care should be taken to attach too much significance to any one factor in the complex task of second language learning. Barry Mc Laughlin aptly cautions that “the interplay of variables in the classroom setting is so complex that one must be wary of universal statements about the language learning process or general solutions to the question of second language teaching.”

