AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF ADULT UKRAINIAN IMMIGRANTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCES: EXAMINING THE RELATION BETWEEN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND ECONOMIC SUCCESS IN CANADA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the ways in which the informal and formal English language learning experiences impact the economic performance and integration into Canadian society of post former Soviet Union (FSU) Ukrainian immigrants. This ethnographic study explores and compares the language learning experiences of six adult Ukrainian immigrants in the large urban centre, Toronto, Ontario and the smaller urban cities of Saskatoon and Yorkton, Saskatchewan. Michael Halliday's (1976) and Roman Jakobson's (1990) systemic and structural functional theories of linguistics frame this study and offer the idea that language is used with specific purpose. Through a questionnaire and in-depth interviews, results show that host-country language proficiency is deemed important and essential, although not the sole indicator of economic success or self-sufficiency. Factors such as family support and ethnic networks also have positive effects on the economic outcomes of recent immigrants from Ukraine.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"How deep do they expect my thoughts to be when I know two words of English?"

- Elizaveta, Interviewee, Toronto

The quotation above was expressed by a woman I interviewed in my investigation on Ukrainian immigrants' experiences in learning the English language in Canada. While taking a TOEFL[1] preparation class (Test of English as a Foreign Language) to improve her writing and essay skills in the English language, Elizaveta's teacher was astonished with her progress in the class, noting that the increasing level of depth to her thoughts was incredible, oblivious to the fact that Elizaveta was a musician and was a trained college music teacher, having completed many years of university

[1] This is an internationally recognized test that measures an individual's speaking, listening, reading and writing proficiency in the English language. Canadian universities and colleges most often consider the scores earned on these tests when admitting students whose first language is not English.

study and having taught at the college level prior to arriving to Canada.[2] She was fluent in two languages besides English and read works of philosophy diligently, but had come from Ukraine only three years prior to enrolling in that class and had very little previous experience with the English language, as she was at home with a newborn for most of those years.

Elizaveta is not the only immigrant to arrive to Canada after the year 2000 with little or no English language skills. As statistics for the year 2012 are yet unavailable, according to Citizenship and Immigration Canada's (CIC) *Facts and Figures* published for the year 2011, 63% of the principal applicants for economic immigration were proficient in the English language; 5% were proficient in French and 22% were proficient in both official languages. Less than 9% of principal applicants admitted were proficient in neither official language. The percentage of applicants lacking language proficiency seems trivial; however, it is essential to note that 35% of dependents, which include spouses of the principal applicants, were not proficient in either official language (CIC, *Facts and figures 2011,* 2012).

According to Chiswick & Miller (1995) fluency in a country's dominant language is considered a type of human capital as it satisfies "the three basic requirements for human capital: they are embodied in the person; they are productive in the labor market and/or in consumption; and they are created at a sacrifice of time and out-of-pocket

[2] Some research suggests that people who are highly educated, are able to learn a new language more efficiently because of their greater ability to grasp new and unfamiliar concepts (Carliner, 2000 in Mesch, 2003, p. 46).

resources" (Chiswick & Miller, 1995, p. 248). Various other studies connect proficiency in a country's official language to greater economic success, societal integration and upward mobility of socio-economic status (See for example: Boyd & Cao, 2009; Chiswick, 1986, 1991; Chiswick & Miller, 1995, 1998; Picot & Sweetman, 2011; Satzewich, Isajiw & Duvalko, 2006; Tienda & Nedert, 1984). Further, "language is one of the most important determinants of the speed and quality of labour market adjustment among entering immigrants to any culture" (Picot & Sweetman, 2011, p. 12). Possessing the appropriate human capital prior to arrival and prior to their acceptance to immigrate has the potential to help immigrants experience economic success in Canada.

My intent was to investigate Ukrainian immigrants' learning of the English language and the economic effects thereof. The primary question guiding my research is: what are the informal and formal English language learning experiences that impact the economic performance and integration into Canadian society of post former Soviet Union (FSU) Ukrainian immigrants who have arrived to Canada after the year 2000? This chapter will provide a brief description of Canada's current immigration system, as well as an introduction into the history of Ukrainian immigration to Canada. The second and third chapters will provide an in-depth discussion of the theory framing my research as well as other studies that have investigated the economic standing of Ukrainian immigrants in Canada and some of the reasons for the economic success experienced by members of this immigrant group. This ethnography builds upon Pivnenko and DeVoretz' (2003) study of Ukrainians as a successful immigrant group in Canada and

investigates the effects of English language proficiency in the lives of adult newcomers from Ukraine. In retrieving the experiences of Ukrainian immigrants who arrived in Canada not so long ago, including those who arrived as dependents and those who arrived into well-established ethnic Ukrainian communities, the hope was to gain an understanding of a few individuals' thoughts on the process and effects of language learning in Ukraine and in Canada. This can serve to inform future Ukrainian immigrants to Canada, as well as those arriving from other countries, as they will gain a better understanding of the process and experiences of recent immigrants who have arrived in possession of a range of skills and who have different experiences with services, agencies and communities that have assisted them with economic and social integration in Canada.

The System of Immigration in Canada

Canada's immigration system is organized into a variety of different classification categories into which individuals are welcome to apply in order to immigrate and permanently reside in the country. Six main immigration classification categories, which are constantly being re-evaluated and altered to include different requirements and success criteria, summarize the guidelines for successful applicants. For example, the Family Class refers to the process whereby Canadian citizens sponsor relatives living abroad to come and reunite with them in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Sponsoring Your Family,* 2012).

The immigration policy is based on a points system that was introduced in the year 1967. There are a number of categories outlining qualities and skills that Canada deems of value in a potential immigrant. Age requirements, education levels and type of professional occupation are examples of areas under which applicants gain points in addition to the category of official language proficiency. Applicants are required to complete a test that measures their skills in the English or French language, which determines the number of points they earn based on their level of proficiency in each of Canada's official languages. The official languages category accounts for a maximum of 24 points; 16 is the maximum number of points awarded for proficiency in the first official language and a maximum of 8 points for level of proficiency in the second official language. Currently, in order to gain acceptance to immigrate into Canada, those applying to the Skilled Workers and Professionals program must earn a total score of 67 in order to pass and to receive consideration for immigration (CIC, *Self-assessment test,* 2010).

For the past seven years, the department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada has been welcoming approximately one quarter of a million people into Canada annually. *Facts and Figures 2011* reported that a total of 248,748 people received permanent resident status in Canada in the year 2011, while over 280,000 people received status in the year 2010. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, a Permanent Resident is a person who has immigrated to Canada, therefore, has come with the intention to permanently reside, but is not yet a citizen. An individual is considered a permanent

resident if: he or she has lived in Canada for at least two years within a five-year period; one who has not claimed refugee status[3]; and one who is not in the country temporarily, as a student or a visitor. A Permanent Resident has the right to live, study or work anywhere in Canada, receive social benefits and apply for Citizenship, but does not have the right to vote.

As the focus of the immigration program in recent years is on building the Canadian economy, Citizenship and Immigration Canada is accepting people who will be able to immediately contribute to the country's growth and prosperity, with the majority of people being accepted under the economic classification categories which favour professionals and people with highly specialized skills, whether in certain trades or in other sectors of the economy which are growing. This shift toward building the Canadian economy is making language skills one of the important requirements necessary in order to gain acceptance to immigrate. For example, the Skilled Workers and Professionals class outlines the requirements for people wishing to immigrate to the country based on their education, work experience, and knowledge of Canada's official languages, "criteria that have been shown to help them become economically established in Canada" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Skilled Workers and Professionals,* 2012). The Business Immigration Program is another classification which encourages

[3] The term "refugee" refers to a person who has made a claim for refugee protection in Canada. This is a person who, "would face the danger of torture should they be returned to their country of origin. [...] The individual would have to be subject to a risk to his or her life, or to a risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment. However, the risk would have to be personal to that individual (in the sense that others in the country would not generally face the same risk), and would have to be faced in every part of the country" (Bill C-11: The immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Clause 95-98).

entrepreneurs, investors and people who are self employed to consider immigration to Canada in order to "support the development of a strong and prosperous Canadian economy" (CIC, *Investors, Entrepreneurs and Self-employed Persons,* 2010). The Canadian Experience Class seeks applicants who have worked or studied in Canada, who are thereby "familiar with Canadian society and can contribute to the Canadian economy" (CIC, *Canadian Experience Class,* 2008). Under the classification of Quebec-selected Skilled Worker, applicants must first apply directly to the province of Quebec before being considered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Finally, the Provincial Nominee Program outlines skills, language, education and work experience required in order to make an "immediate economic contribution to the province or territory that nominates them" (CIC, *Provincial Nominees,* 2012). For example, many of the Ukrainian immigrants arriving in Saskatchewan in recent years have been arriving through this program. According to the *Saskatchewan Statistical Immigration Report, 2009-2011,* of the 254 immigrants who, in 2011, arrived to Saskatchewan from Ukraine, 246 people arrived through the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) (*Saskatchewan statistical immigration report 2009-2011,* p. 15-16). Through this program, Canadian employers can directly choose and recruit the professionals who possess the skills and qualities that their organizations or companies require.

Although the immigration classifications largely focus on building the Canadian economy, the criteria for entering the country does not apply to spouses and dependents that arrive together with the principal applicant. In its *Summary Tables – Permanent and*

Temporary Residents, 2011, Citizenship and Immigration Canada tallies the total number of dependents and spouses for each immigration category. The number of dependents and spouses arriving with principal applicants in the family class and in the economic classes totalled 148,143 in the year 2011 and the information regarding the language proficiency for these groups suggests that improving language skills merits greater attention. As mentioned previously, 35% of dependents of economic immigrants were not proficient in either official language, while 25% of applicants wishing to immigrate to Canada under the Family Class were not proficient in either official language (CIC, *Facts and figures 2011,* 2012). This suggests that language, settlement and employment training programs continue to be of vital necessity to Canadian immigrants.

The History of Ukrainians in Canada

As every wave, group and individual immigrant is different, it is unreasonable to generalize experiences and impressions. Through qualitative research and ethnographic study, insight into the lives and experiences of a select few individuals from Ontario and Saskatchewan were obtained, to perhaps inform the goals and expectations of future immigrants. Ukrainians began immigrating to Canada over 120 years ago and are established in many Canadian cities. This is an interesting population to study because of its long history in Canada and because previous studies have charted its growth and success as an ethnic group (Pivnenko & DeVoretz, 2003; DeVoretz & Battisti, 2009; DeVoretz et al., 2009). This study is an ethnographic approach to the question of recent

adult Ukrainian immigrants' economic experiences as affected by proficiency in English in Canada. First, a short introduction of this ethnic group will be provided in order to gain an understanding of who they are and some of their motivations for moving abroad.

In the 1800s the area currently known as Ukraine was divided, with the land west of the Dnipro River ruled by the Austro-Hungarian Empire and land east of the Dnipro River held by Russia. Most of the people who were ethnically Ukrainian in the western regions of Bukovyna and Galicia were peasants at this time. In his article on the background of Ukrainians from the Galicia and Bukovyna regions, John-Paul Himka (in Lupul, 1982) explains that in Bukovyna, 40% of the population were Ukrainian, 30% were Romanian and the remaining was made up of German and Jewish ethnicities. In Galicia, 40% of the population was Ukrainian, 40% Polish, 10% Jewish and a German minority (Lupul, 1982). Notably, the Polish and Romanians formed the upper classes, dominating government; 75% of the urban population was German and Jewish while Ukrainians made up the rural population. With a revolution in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1848 and with reforms introduced by Tsar Alexander II of Russia, serfdom was abolished in Ukraine in 1861 (Satzewich, 2002). In the late 1880s, restrictions on migration within the Russian Empire were alleviated and Ukrainians and Russians were encouraged to settle the Far East. Accustomed to working in agriculture, as opposed to working for wages in large cities, most Ukrainian farmers moved to the Eastern most regions, to Asiatic Russia. Between 1871 and 1916, approximately 1,625,000 Ukrainians settled in Southern Siberia, Kazakhstan and the Far East (2000, p. 32). Between 1891

and 1914, when Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton introduced an immigration policy aimed at bringing in people who were skilled in working land in order to settle "The Last, Best West," or the Canadian prairies, approximately 250,000 Ukrainians mostly from the Bukovyna and Galicia regions of Ukraine (Satzewich, 2002), part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until November 1919 (Krawchuk, 1996) emigrated to Canada.

In 1891, the first documented Ukrainians to have arrived in Canada were Ivan Pylypiw and Vasyl Eleniak who came from a village in the Carpathian Mountains, to settle on northern Alberta farmlands (Krawchuk, 1996). This First Wave of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada were a labour Diaspora, as they were people who emigrated due to economic pressures in their home country, arriving into wage labour and agricultural settlement in order to improve their economic conditions (Satzewich, 2002). Although Ukrainian immigrants often recreated old country ethnic communities in rural Canada, some also settled in urban areas where they worked in railway construction and maintenance or other industries, while women worked as domestics (Lehr in Luciuk & Hryniuk, 1991; Satzewich, 2002). The Crown was concerned with settling western land, placing officials in the field to advise and place immigrants "in locations that would facilitate agricultural progress and ensure permanent and successful settlement" (Lehr in Luciuk & Hryniuk, 1991, p. 37) and thus the "government regarded immigrants who decided to remain in a city as a direct loss to its programme for settling the West" (1991, p. 34). Notably, with the continuation of Ukrainian immigration in Canada, more of the

newcomers were arriving with literacy skills and some education, thus establishing cultural and artistic organizations and participating together in Canada.

The Second Wave of Ukrainian immigration to Canada occurred between the years 1924-39, when approximately 65,000-70,000 Ukrainians arrived. This group was also economically motivated; working in mining or forestry, organizing farming operations in existing Ukrainian communities, or taking up positions in Ukrainian cultural and educational institutions. Those who arrived with higher levels of education were "afford[ed] ... the opportunity to exact a different entry-level status [than succeeding Ukrainian immigrants]" (Isajiw & Makuch in Lencyk Pawliczko, 1994, p. 333).

Between 1947-1955, the Third Wave of Ukrainian immigrants were arriving and settling in mostly urban areas such as Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Montreal. This group was mainly made up of WWII veterans, refugees and forced labourers, many with professional skills. "This influx of Ukrainians into Canada had a great impact on the community, providing an infusion of new energy into the existing organizational structures, particularly at the leadership level and introducing a new set of organizations" (Isajiw & Makuch in Lencyk Pawliczko, 1994, p. 334). During this period, tensions arose among the arriving Ukrainians and the older population existing in Canada because of their differing political views.

During the Soviet era, Ukraine was a closed country in that people were not free to migrate out of the country, only perhaps to move around within the countries of the

United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). Some of the people who moved out of Soviet Ukraine did so for political and nationalistic reasons and were thus, enthusiastically building and upholding their Ukrainian culture in Canada. Sandra Kouritzin provides the example of one woman she interviewed who arrived in Canada from Ukraine in 1989. The woman wanted to come to Canada because, "she felt that only by leaving Ukraine could she help her two sons to be proud of their Ukrainian heritage, and ensure that they would maintain their Ukrainian language and customs" (Kouritzin, 2000, p. 20).

Background to the Study

At the beginning of my research, I gathered information from Statistics Canada about the immigration classifications under which people were arriving to Canada, including information regarding newcomers' official language proficiency. According to Picot and Sweetman, skill in the host country language is necessary for economic integration (2011, p. 18). This sparked my interest to learn about the Ukrainian community in Canada because studies on this community's relative success exist, however, to my knowledge, no existing studies examine more recent immigrants' integration and their economic success in Canadian society through the particular lens of language as the resource, skill or capital. This study looks to adult immigrants who have arrived from Ukraine via the various immigration classification categories, therefore, not singling out any particular category – as to provide a greater picture of the language abilities with which people are arriving within the various classification categories.

In order to create a wider portrait of recent Ukrainian immigrants to Canada, the language learning experiences of Ukrainians living in Toronto, Ontario and those living in Yorkton and Saskatoon in Saskatchewan will be compared. Toronto in Ontario is the largest city in Canada, with a population of over 2.6 million people, while Yorkton, with a population of 15,669 and Saskatoon approximately 239,000 are smaller urban centres in Saskatchewan. This study will investigate not only the personal stories of Ukrainian immigrants, but it will also provide a view of the services available to newcomers in two Canadian provinces. Although this is a project of a small scale, it will provide a general comparison of the differences between the immigrants who choose to settle in Ontario and those who choose to live in Saskatchewan.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Drawing from the field of linguistics, theories on the use and purpose of language including the structural theory of Roman Jakobson and the systemic functional theory of Michael A.K. Halliday will be used. These theories focus on language as a functional system of signs that is critical to communication (Jakobson, 1990) as well as describing the way in which language allows people to make meaning (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). During the earlier half of the twentieth century, Jakobson worked on the structural analysis of language, thus it is possible that Halliday's theory on structure as the "realization of complexes of systemic features" (1976, p. 94) followed the examples set by the earlier works of Jakobson. Realizing the purpose and structure of language leads to an understanding of immigrants' motivation for acquiring the language of the country to which they have moved.

Structural theory of Roman Jakobson

Roman Jakobson was a theorist in the fields of linguistics, philosophy of language, ethnolinguistics, sociolinguistics as well as many others (Jakobson, 1990).

Jakobson was very interested in establishing the "ultimate constituents of language and the powerful structural laws of the network they comprise" (Jakobson, 1985, p. 4). His research and findings essentially hold language as a system made up of many different functions whose purpose is communicative. During the formation of his theories on language, Jakobson found similarities between his ideas and those of Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, one of the founders of modern linguistics. In particular, both agreed upon the notion of language being made up of a system of signs. Each sign contains a signifier, the sound, and a signified, the meaning (Jakobson 1990). In the early 1900s, the renewal in the arts and sciences in Europe greatly influenced Jakobson; he was inspired by Einstein's theory of relativity and the idea that science and art could not be separated; that "everything is based on a relationship" (1990, p. 5). Jakobson later concluded that, "attention must be paid not to the material units themselves but to their relations" (Jakobson 1973, p.27 cited in Jakobson, 1990, p.5).

After moving to Prague and studying at Prague University, Jakobson participated in founding the Prague Linguistic Circle in 1926, where he met other linguists who shared his ideas; and there the structuralist movement began, which emphasized the functional and structural view of language. Communication was identified as the purpose for language and language was a system "with an internal *structure* suited to these communicative tasks" (Jakobson, 1990, p. 6). During his time in the Prague Circle, Jakobson strongly held that structure, language as a "governed whole" (1990, p. 14) could not be separated from function, "language as a tool for communication" (1990, p.

14). In the 1950s and the 1960s, Jakobson's theory evolved to emphasize "language in operation" (1990, p. 14). He highlighted the idea that language was related to the act of communication, which was an exchange of linguistic messages taking place between individual speakers and addressees, or encoders and decoders. He also established that the basic unit of the structural-functional whole of language was the linguistic sign. Jakobson explained that the self-evident truism of language as an instrument or a tool did not exist in the twentieth century, thus the function of language was an innovative topic of research for him at that time. In reflecting on the communication process, Jakobson recognized the depth and richness of communication theory, which he found influential for his own theory on the functions of language.

Jakobson expanded his ideas on language as a "system of systems suited to various communicative goals [...which are] correlated with the act of communication in which language is used" (1990, p. 15). In analysing the act of speaking, he established six factors necessary to verbal communication which include, 1) a speaker or encoder, 2) an addressee or decoder, 3) a reference or context, 4) a message, 5) a code that is fully or partially common to the addressor and to the speaker, and 6) a contact – a channel that enables those communicating to stay in communication, which may also refer to the mode (Kress, 2003) [4] of communication. In analysing the function of language, Jakobson

[4] In discussing literacy, Kress (2003) wrote that it is impossible to be isolated from social, technological and economic factors. Language-as-speech, may remain the major mode (or channel) of communication, but language-as-writing will be increasingly displaced by images, whether moving or still. The mode of image, through the medium of the screen, will change the forms and functions of writing which will affect human, cognitive, cultural and bodily engagement with the world, as well as the forms and shapes of knowledge. The world told is different from the world shown (p. 1).

provided each speech factor with one of six functions which include: 1) the expressive or emotive function which is a focus on the speaker, 2) conative function which is a focus on the addressee, 3) cognitive or referential function which emphasises the context, 4) aesthetic or poetic function which centres on the message, 5) the metalingual which focuses on the code, and 6) the phatic which focuses on the contact or the medium by which the speaker and the addressee are communicating.

The Functions of Language According to Roman Jakobson

In order to provide depth to the idea of function of language and to move away from an oversimplification, Jakobson described the work of the Prague Circle in outlining the diverse functions and patterning of language, insisting that language had many different aims. This showed language as having a "multifarious character" (Jakobson, 1990, p. 59) including different styles and instability, as it was constantly changing – making the functions of its elements important to visualize and to study. For example, as Jakobson listed, the first function of language, the emotive function, allows the speaker to express a particular attitude toward the subject about which he is speaking. At times, this function may take the form of words or sounds to illustrate a feeling, however, as Jakobson (1990) explained, even a phrase made up of two words has the potential to express forty or fifty different emotions or messages, depending on changes in sound shape. This is very similar to Elizaveta's discussion on learning language to the point of understanding sarcasm, jokes and attitude. Elizaveta distinctly spoke about her

pleasant discovery that many of the people she was meeting and speaking to in English, had very positive outlooks on life, which she felt was different from the general sense she had from the people around her in Ukraine. She linked her ability to make this discovery with her improved proficiency in English, focusing on the idea that an in-depth knowledge of the language is necessary in order to hear certain intricacies in the language.

While the conative function is expressed as a command and thus, cannot be challenged "to a truth test" (Jakobson, 1990, p. 74), the cognitive function is used to prolong or to discontinue a conversation. A word such as "well," fits under this function as it may be used to begin, sustain and to arguably end a conversation. When one person in a conversation feels they need clarification, or need to ensure that they understand correctly, they use the metalingual function of language where the speech is focused on the code.

Saussure held that "it is not sound that constitutes language [...] sound is only the instrument of thought and does not exist solely for its own sake" (Jakobson, 1990, p. 87). Jakobson expanded on Saussure's idea by adding that, "neither sounds nor ideas, in and of themselves, constitute language" (1990, p. 87). Jakobson stated that superficial observers of language are correct in holding that language cannot be considered a group of sounds without meaning, nor as simply ideas that have not been expressed; instead, words or signs are expressions of ideas and this, according to Saussure as well, is the most important of the various systems that form language. Jakobson spoke about this

during his lectures at the Free School of Advanced Studies in New York during the 1942-3 academic year. Jakobson (1978) explained that every word is made up of sound and meaning and the "chain of sounds acts as the support of the meaning" (1978, p. 24). Therefore, it is a cycle wherein each word is made up of the functioning sound that supports the meaning and each sound functions in order to allow the speaker to be heard and understood by others. As Jakobson spoke about the actions of humans' phonatory organs, he stated, "these actions aim at producing, *for we speak in order to be heard;* and in order to be able to interpret, classify and define the diverse sounds of our language we must take into account the meaning which they carry, *for it is in order to be understood that we seek to be heard*" (1978, p. 25). This very clearly illustrated the human need to be literally heard and understood by others; thereby offering insight into the reasons why many immigrants wish to quickly learn the language of the country to which they have moved. It is usually essential for newcomers to acquire the words that will allow them to feel that they are a part of the new society that they have chosen. In order to feel that they belong in the new place, they must feel understood, especially when the goal is to satisfy basic needs such as establishing employment, housing, transportation and sustenance.

Systemic Functional Theory of Michael A. K. Halliday

Linguist Michael Halliday developed the systemic functional theory of language by working off of the ideas of Firth's system-structure theory and the Prague school,

which Roman Jakobson took part in founding. Halliday's writing follows Jakobson's earlier theories on the function of language which also focused on function as the foundation and fundamental property of language, stating that language helps people achieve various goals (Halliday & Hasan, 1985), stressing also that function of language is different from use of language. Language may be used in many ways which have not been enumerated, but the term 'function' allows language to be organized into a set of generalized components illustrating that language has the potential to serve many purposes (Halliday, 1976). Linguistics is the study of meaning; where language is possibly the most important way to make meaning among other modes such as painting, music or dance (1976, p. 4). In studying the relationship between language and experience, Halliday argued that language is, "involved in the manner in which we construct and organise experience [...] it is never neutral, but deeply implicated in building meaning. [It is] a resource for meaning, centrally involved in the processes by which human beings negotiate, construct and change the nature of social experience" (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. v). Thus, Halliday established that language is multifunctional in that a single sentence has the potential to represent many different meanings.

Halliday worked with the theories of Malinowski, Bühler, Britton and Morris who recognized that language was functional in that it was: 1) narrative, informative and representational as it was used for talking about things; 2) expressive and conative, in that it was a way to express one's self and influence others; and 3) imaginative or

aesthetic. Although Halliday recognized those functions, his theory nevertheless combined a total of seven functions of language to first include the experiential meaning which allows people to "represent [...] the real world as it is apprehended in our experience" (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 19). The second is interpersonal meaning, which is an interaction between the speaker and the listener. Halliday equates it with "language as action" (1985, p. 20). Logical meaning is the third function of language as it is the fundamental logical relations that make up formal logic. Fourth, textual meaning is made up of thematic structure, rhythm and information focus, which represent the texture of the sentence (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). The ideational function allows people to use language for specific purposes and situations in order to communicate an experience (Halliday, 1976), which can be interpreted as language as reflection (Halliday, 2007); sixth, the interpersonal function is when language is used in personal and social interaction (Halliday, 1976), or language as action (Halliday, 2007); and finally, textual function is a prerequisite to the ideational and interpersonal functions (Halliday, 1976), or "words and structures through which the meanings are expressed" (Halliday, 2007, p. 250).

Considering the emphasis placed on using language as a system to construct meaning, Halliday also stressed the importance of the relationship between language and the social system, writing that learning is a social process where "knowledge is transmitted [...] through relationships" (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 5). In this case, a text is a social exchange of meanings. Regardless of the way in which it is represented,

whether coded or expressed in the medium of speaking or writing words or sentences, in reality, the text is made of meanings (1985, p. 10). In answering the question, 'what are the social functions of language?' Halliday began describing the implications of language as serving a function. In addressing the question, Halliday considered the different specific instances where language was used, establishing that meaning and function cannot be separated and that language is a set of alternatives; instead of focusing on the abilities or knowledge of the speaker or hearer, language is "meaning potential" (Halliday, 1973, p. 25). In clarifying the concept of language as a system of meaning potential, Halliday explained that as a system, it consists of a set of options. The option to construct sentences leads to options in creating meaning, which consecutively leads to realizing options in behaviour (Halliday, 1973).

Inevitably, the system of language creates an environment or context for each option (Halliday, 1973) allowing for a shared potential between the speaker and the addressee who learn the appropriateness of different words in different contexts. Halliday clarified that this is not to be interpreted as a "'good manners' view of language" or learning how to behave linguistically in social situations (Halliday, 2007, p. 185). In the example provided by Halliday; saying "four hearts" in the proper place, at the correct time – such as during a card game – illustrates the recognition of context (Halliday, 1973, p. 25). Halliday explains that many daily speech encounters occur in quite restricted contexts. Errands such as purchasing at a store may not necessarily restrict language or topic of conversation in any way, but they do contain certain patterns

and certain typical options (Halliday, 1973). He explains that thinking about the different contexts for speech leads to the realization that there are "social functions of language; they illustrate what we use language for and what we expect to achieve by means of language that we should not achieve without it" (Halliday, 1973, p. 26).

Like Jakobson (1990), Halliday also mentioned the instability of language, explaining that it, in nature, is a system that evolves to serve various functions, which in consequence, is the importance of a functional theory of language (Halliday, 1973). He continued to explain that, "language acquisition is, basically, the acquisition of the social functions of language and of meaning potential associated with them" (Halliday, 1976, p. 17). It is vital to understand that language is learning to mean, which is "a mode of action that has some further context from which it derives its value and significance" (Halliday, 2007, p. 182). The meaning system is divided into the cognitive and the social. Focusing on social meaning, Halliday (2007) explained that learning to mean occurs while learning to interact which leads to the idea that social construction of reality and socialization occur at this time (2007, p. 182-3). Language is a shared system of meaning potentials as both the speaker and the listener have a part in understanding the communication. Therefore, when a person learns a language, they learn the uses and the meaning potential of the language in and of itself, as well as in specific context, culture or community (Halliday, 1976). When learning a foreign language, this theory holds that people also learn "a new reality, a reality in which people exchange different meanings, and [one] has to learn both the relevant contexts of situation, together with how to

identify them, and the particular meanings that are likely to be exchanged in any type of situation [one] may encounter" (Halliday, 2007, p. 192).

In explaining the process of learning a language, especially from the child's perspective, it becomes evident that the language system consists of options since meaning is coded in language (Halliday, 2007). The language system of a young child, "is, effectively, a set of restricted varieties [...] the structures that he [the child] has mastered are direct reflections of the functions that language is being required to serve in his life" (Halliday, 1976, p. 10). Although the process of language acquisition by a child is different from that of an adult acquiring a foreign or a second language, it is nevertheless interesting to consider the statements made by some of the participants in the current study who equated lack of language proficiency with the metaphor of the child, supporting this with the idea that young children who cannot yet verbally communicate are helpless and reliant on adult support and newcomer adults who cannot communicate with others in their society lack independence in a similar way. In being unable to speak in English, the newcomers identified a feeling of helplessness at the inability to verbally express a meaning. This was most clearly evident in Ivanna's anecdote on shopping for a humidifier, where she spoke about becoming quite talented in using the international language of gestures. In Halliday's discussion on children's language acquisition, newcomers and foreign language learners must also first master the structures of language that they most immediately require to serve a specific function or purpose in their lives. With time, the social functions of language and the meaning

potential associated with this expand into the more highly organized, abstract and complex adult linguistic system (Halliday, 1976, p. 17-19).

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

> "Canada issued a record 9,000 visitor visas to Ukrainian applicants in 2012, an increase of 67 percent compared to 2004. The approval rate for temporary resident visas in 2012 was 85 percent. [...] The record 787 study permits approved in 2012 represents an increase of 496 percent since 2004" - (CIC News Release: *Canada issues record number of visitor visas and study permits for Ukraine in 2012*. March 4, 2013).

The economic outcomes of immigrants to Canada are a concern for Canadian policy makers, as the relative success of the immigrant groups reflects the organization and the structure of the system in place, as well as predicting the economic and settlement outcomes of future immigrants to Canada. For the purposes of this investigation, economic success is defined by the extent that the individuals engage in economic life that is paid employment, capital purchases and consumerism. As the focus of this study is on the effects of knowledge of an official language on the economic success of Ukrainian immigrants in Canada, this chapter presents a variety of existing literature to facilitate an understanding of the different factors that can influence immigrants' economic outcome and success. The chapter will first look to previous studies on Ukrainian immigrant success and their classification as overachievers

(Pivnenko & DeVoretz, 2003). Next, some of the factors other studies have found to be influential in positively affecting language acquisition will be outlined. Lastly, studies published by Ukrainian scholars on foreign language learning in Ukraine dating back to the Soviet era will be examined. These studies will illustrate the learning opportunities available to individuals in Ukraine through a period of time and will provide a better understanding of some of the backgrounds of the participants of the current study who will be further introduced and discussed in the fourth chapter.

A number of studies exploring the factors that influence the economic successes of immigrant groups have been conducted (Chiswick, 1986, 1991; Chiswick & Miller, 1995, 1998; Mesch, 2003; Tienda & Niedert, 1984), including that of ethnic Ukrainians (Pivnenko & DeVoretz, 2003; DeVoretz & Battisti, 2009). Most studies however are largely quantitative and focus on the human capital model (Bourdieu 1984, 1992), which considers the resources or qualities that immigrants possess prior to arrival and prior to their acceptance to immigrate. Past studies investigating the economic integration of Ukrainians have singled out Ukrainians as an economically "overachieving" and successful group among immigrants (Pivnenko & DeVoretz, 2003) especially those who arrived prior to 1995 (DeVoretz & Battisti, 2009). To date, the economic performance of recent Ukrainian immigrants to Canada and to the United States of America has been documented directly and indirectly (Pivnenko & DeVoretz, 2003; DeVoretz & Battisti, 2009; DeVoretz et al., 2009), yet little research has focused on the role English language learning has played in the comparative success of Ukrainian immigrants. To my

knowledge, studies have not thus far been conducted on the Ukrainian immigrant community comparing the two Canadian provinces of Ontario and Saskatchewan, specifically the effects of language learning experiences on individuals' economic outcomes.

There are many factors that can build or hinder individuals' financial success in a new environment. Underachieving, or not receiving the desired economic outcome after immigration may occur as a result of certain unobservable factors, such as individuals' reservations to "self-select into the labour market, employer discrimination of the immigrant's human capital characteristics [...] and discounting their foreign labour market experience" (DeVoretz & Battisti, 2009, p. 6). In their article on the economic performance of Ukrainian immigrants, Pivnenko and DeVoretz (2003) defined overachievers as those who "earn a positive premium upon arrival and subsequently outperform their native-born cohort" (2003, p. 1). They investigated a variety of reasons affecting the economic success of this ethnic group, including factors such as a positive integration process[5], whereby Ukrainian immigrants were found to possess a high degree of transferability of skills across the two countries as well as relatively high "earnings-enhancing characteristics" (2003, p. 13) acquired in Ukraine. In analysing education and skills as factors affecting economic outcome, the authors found that Ukrainians also fit the description that generally all immigrants arrive with high levels of education. Although possessing a high level of education is favourable in Canadian immigration

[5] For immigrants, being white affected earnings more positively than being a visible minority (Pivnenko and DeVoretz, 2003, p. 2).

policy, Pivnenko and DeVoretz (2003) found that educational attainments did not necessarily affect earnings. Instead, the type of occupation as well as the number of weeks the individual worked affected earnings more significantly for immigrants, while level of educational attainment affected the earnings of Canadian-born individuals.

The transferability of skills, type of occupation and economic success are interrelated because it is apparent that those immigrants who come into Canadian jobs that require the same set of skills would sooner integrate economically than those who start jobs that do not have a high transferability of skills and require individuals to obtain Canadian credentials and licensing, such as for example, lawyers. Don DeVoretz and Michele Battisti (2009) argued that those immigrants who acquire Canadian-specific human capital would be able to earn the "labour market rewards" (2009, p. 5). It is needless to say that individuals who choose to acquire the Canadian-specific accreditations and skills will become economically successful later than those who immediately settle into occupations that require the skills that they already possess, because of the time and monetary commitments required.

In examining the 1990 U.S. Census and the 1991 Canadian Census, the comparisons made by Pivnenko and DeVoretz (2003) in terms of the economic outcomes of Ukrainian immigrants entering both countries led to the finding that Ukrainian immigrants were more successful in the United States than in Canada. This led the authors to conclude that American immigration policies are more effective in attracting "Ukrainian immigrants with the more productive human capital" (2003, p. 17).

Compared to other immigrant populations in the United States, Ukrainian immigrants were older, thus had more years of work experience; they were the most educated, where 34% compared to 23% of non-Ukrainian immigrants possessed a university level of education; and they were often employed in skilled or professional occupations. Pivnenko & DeVoretz (2003) found that although the Ukrainian immigrants in America were more economically successful than their counterparts in Canada, the Ukrainian immigrants in Canada were demonstrating "above average economic performance" (2003, p. 20) among all immigrants entering Canada. To explain the difference between the economic outcomes of the Ukrainian immigrants in the U.S.A. and those in Canada, the authors concluded, "more skilled immigrants self-select to enter the U.S. regardless of the immigrant screening device employed by Canada" (2003, p. 21). Canadian immigration policy changes were introduced at the end of the year 2012 in order to ensure that new immigrants collect the full economic rewards of the Canadian employment market. The adjustments will concentrate on the international recruitment of individuals with skills and credentials that will allow them to enter the Canadian workforce swiftly and successfully, in order to address the labour shortages experienced by some Canadian employers (Kenney, 2012).

Although they analysed some of the factors affecting Ukrainian immigrant success in Canada and in the United States, Pivnenko and DeVoretz's (2003) study was not focused on providing specific detail concerning the economic effects of official language proficiency, only stating that Ukrainian immigrants "demonstrate a greater

tendency to speak an official language at home" (2003, p. 7). To deepen the understanding of Canadian Ukrainians' general language tendencies, archives from Statistics Canada showed that in 1971, 145,000 individuals reported that they spoke Ukrainian at home; in 1991, this number was at 50,000 indicating a decline in this home language (Statistics Canada, 1991, p. 42). In 1991 the Canadian Census was taken when the population of Canada was 27.3 million individuals and it showed that 249,535 individuals reported the ability to speak Ukrainian; 201,315 identified Ukrainian as their mother tongue (1991, p. 48) of whom 29.2% resided in Ontario and 14.7% in Saskatchewan (1991, p. 24). The 2006 Census showed that 1,209,090 of Canadians claimed Ukrainian ethnicity either fully or partially (Statistics Canada, 2006). From a section of the Census distributed to 20% of the population, 134,505 people claimed Ukrainian as their mother tongue; 28,060 reported speaking Ukrainian most often at home while 174,160 provided multiple responses (Statistics Canada, 2006). According to the Canadian Census for the year 2011, nationwide, 120,270 individuals reported Ukrainian as their mother tongue, while 25,565 reported speaking Ukrainian most-often at home. The data for the city of Toronto indicated that 15,640 people's "mother tongue" was Ukrainian; 7,635 people said that they used the Ukrainian language most often at home; and 4,755 said Ukrainian was the "other" language they regularly spoke at home (Statistics Canada, 2011). In Saskatoon, 3,530 people declared Ukrainian to be their "mother tongue"; 570 people said they spoke Ukrainian most often at home, while 1,240 said Ukrainian was the other language they often used at home (Statistics Canada, 2011).

The Canadian Census data illustrates that the percentage of individuals who continue to speak Ukrainian in the home is declining, perhaps leading the assumption that more Ukrainian immigrants are acquiring and using an official language at home. When focusing on official language proficiency as a vital skill, existing research argues that it is necessary in order for immigrants to be successful in Canada (U.S. Department of Education, 2003; Picot, 2008; Picot & Sweetman, 2011). Some studies argue that language and communication skills affect productivity and therefore wages (Picot, 2008). Picot and Sweetman (2011) argued that immigrants who are proficient in either English or French are better able to convert their existing skills to earnings. The authors further argued that this is in part due to Canada's immigration policy, which essentially requires immigrants to come prepared with the skills necessary for success. This is similar to Monica Heller's (2003) study focused on francophone Canada which emphasized the notion that the new globalized economy has created a commodification of language and has allocated a degree of importance to people's linguistic resources. The Canadian Points System encourages immigrants to come to greater earnings faster, because those immigrants who arrive to Canada with the necessary skills such as language are prepared to begin working. They are thus pushed into the labour market faster. In a speech given by the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism in December 2012, the Honourable Jason Kenney announced that due to the 2002 changes to the Points System, which called for increased credit to be given to those individuals with skills in an official language; immigrants with greater official language abilities were found to be more

successful during their lifetimes in Canada due to their increased ability to establish better types of employment and better paid positions.

Language is not the sole determinant of immigrant success. In addition to language ability, organizing employment prior to immigration also had a positive effect on immigrant outcome. In his speech, Kenney stated that, "people who have pre-arranged employment when they get to Canada, or Canadian work experience, do better than those who don't. In fact, those with pre-arranged employment who arrive in Canada earn twice as much in terms of income as those who arrive without a pre-arranged job" (Kenney, 2012). An update on the ministry website in 2011 indicated that the pre-arranged employment section of the Federal Skilled Worker program offered many benefits for potential immigrants; awarding an immediate 15 points as well as allowing newcomers to earn up to 79% more three years after arrival, compared to immigrants without pre-arranged employment (CIC, 2011, *Proposed changes to the Federal Skilled Worker program*).

Furthermore, skills in an official language are not the only way in which immigrants can earn a living in Canada, as according to an article published by Statistics Canada in 2009, senior analyst with Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division for Statistics Canada, Derrick Thomas, found that a significant number of immigrant workers often use a language other than English or French in the workplace. Since ethnic enclaves, or large groupings of people of a particular ethnic identity concentrated in a geographical area exist in Canadian cities (Qadeer, Agrawal & Lovell, 2010), it

makes it possible for businesses to function at least partially in minority languages. Thomas (2009) supposed that there were certain areas in large Canadian cities with adequate numbers of individuals who spoke a particular non-official language to allow businesses to function and to allow people to earn a living through the use of a non-official language. Using data collected during the 2006 Canadian Census, Thomas (2009) found that slightly more than 100,000 people solely use a language other than English or French at work; slightly over 150,000 individuals mostly use a non-official language while almost 350,000 immigrants use another language in addition to an official language in the workplace. One of the reasons explaining immigrants' use of non-official languages at work was the presence of large communities that use the same non-official language. This study perhaps illustrated one of the effects of enclaves as hindering immigrants' rate or purpose for learning an official language. In as much as ethnic enclaves provide immigrants with support in the form of employment opportunities, the findings of Roth, Seidel, Ma and Lo (2011) in a longitudinal analysis of immigrants' economic integration indicate that there are patterns over time between the workplace type, ethnic social ties and income gains. Citing Nee and Sanders (2001), Roth et al (2011) build on the idea that individuals who "rely on their ethnic-based social capital for mobility are likely to become more isolated from the economic and social mainstream, while those who rely on investments in their human capital for mobility are more likely to integrate into it" (2011, p. 7).

Although fluency in an official language may not necessarily be the most important factor to receiving gainful employment in Canada since ethnic communities can be of great assistance in guiding people, proficiency in an official language is nevertheless important to helping people join Canada's unique multicultural society. From the field of psychology, Gardner (2009) studied individuals' motivation to learn another language, demonstrating that those individuals who had a high motivational factor, or had a desire to become a member of the language community, were more likely to be successful in learning the language. In considering societal factors that affect immigrants' economic success, Mesch (2003) found that those immigrants who came with the intention to remain in the country were motivated to learn the official language in order to feel that they were a part of the society. This is precisely the idea expressed by respondent Oleksandr during his interview. Besides talking about the need to feel independent in the new country, Oleksandr also spoke about the wish to comfortably communicate with all people, thus, to participate in the process of social integration which was also discussed in Mesch's study (2003). In using the concept of integrative motivation Gardner (2009) found that those individuals who had high levels of language learning "integrative motivation participated more actively in language class [...] respond[ed] correctly more frequently [...] were more likely to continue language study [...] were more active in trying to maintain their language skills [...and sought] contact with members of the language community" (2009, p. 7). Gardner (2001) explained that in this model, integrative motivation is assessed as the reason a person wishes to learn a

different language; examples include the desire to learn about speakers of the language and the desire to socialize and become friends with speakers of the language. In addition to acquiring language skills in order to integrate socially, single adult immigrants were found to have a great incentive to learn the language because, although they may receive support from their ethnic community or by family members, they are nevertheless solely responsible for the maintenance of daily chores, errands and responsibilities which all require to some degree, the ability to communicate in the official language (Mesch, 2003; Chiswick & Miller, 1998).

Immigrants who were both highly educated and who arrived at a younger age (Mesch, 2003; Chiswick & Miller, 1995) had higher economic aspirations and were motivated to achieve "high earnings for a longer period" (Mesch, 2003, p. 55). In line with the goal of acquiring language for the purpose of increasing earnings, Gardner (2001) found that those individuals who wished to learn another language in order to acquire a job, to improve their career or to earn a higher education, all possessed an instrumental orientation to motivation. This orientation is different from the integrative model because when an individual is instrumentally motivated, he or she is not particularly interested in learning about or becoming a member of the society that speaks the particular language, but is more interested in satisfying personal goals. Assuming that those with official language skills would achieve higher earnings than those who did not have proficiency, Mesch's (2003) study of immigrants who arrived at a younger age, were highly educated and were employed at the time of the study reported higher levels

of local language proficiency. Mesch concluded that those immigrants who were employed, understood the way in which the "labor market functioned and understood that better knowledge of the language could help them to obtain better jobs" (2003, p. 55).

For those immigrants who arrive at their destination without fluency in the official language, various factors affect language acquisition. Chiswick and Miller's studies (1992, 1995, 1996) looked at a variety of scenarios and their potential to influence language attainment. In a study conducted in 1995, they compared the results for Canada, the United States, Australia, Israel and Germany, finding that immigrants to these countries with the highest language fluency were: those who had exposure to the destination language prior to arrival; those with higher levels of education; those who immigrated at a younger age; and those who lived in the destination country for a longer time (Chiswick & Miller, 1995). Mesch (2003) also used the model of exposure to guide his study, assuming that language skills would increase as length of residence increased. He found three measures of exposure to support his hypothesis, stating that: 1) being employed, 2) attending language classes and 3) length of residence in the country positively affected language proficiency.

Although length of residence in the country had the potential to positively influence language acquisition, it did not guarantee consistent language usage, especially when ethnic factors existed. Chiswick and Miller's quantitative study based in Australia (1996) found factors including ethnic press, radio and television and the existence of

same language relatives and spouses to be significant in negatively affecting the acquisition of an official language. The authors determined that group effects altered language fluency rates and that individuals who lived in ethnic enclaves, thus, amongst speakers of their own language were less likely to be fluent in the dominant language of the country in which they were living. The group effects were in a way connected with access to ethnic-language media and press, because mother tongue resources in the form of televised programming or access to newspapers reflected immigrants' limited interaction with the English language, resulting in poorer official-language fluency and slower rates of language attainment. Although reading, writing and speaking skills were analysed in relation to the minority-language concentration measure, Chiswick and Miller (1996) also concluded that education had a great effect on immigrants' reading and writing proficiency, but did not explain speaking proficiency.

Thus, immigrants can achieve positive economic outcome in a variety of ways. Fluency in an official language has the potential to create a high degree of economic stability for immigrants (Kenney, 2012; Mesch, 2003; Chiswick & Miller, 1995), however, ethnic enclaves also provide immigrants with invaluable opportunities to adjust and to work in the new society by using their mother tongue or a non-official language (Thomas, 2009). Although government policy may encourage potential immigrants to acquire a degree of language skill prior to arriving to Canada, it is nevertheless evident that not all immigrants are fluent in an official language upon arrival. In order to better understand the Ukrainian immigrant community in Canada, an understanding of the

linguistic and educational landscape of Ukraine will be discussed.

History of Foreign Language Studies in Ukraine

Little research exists in the English language on the introduction of foreign language curriculum in Ukraine, as well as its current progress. In searching both English language and Ukrainian language databases, the exact time in history in which foreign languages were introduced into the curriculum of Ukrainian schools was not discovered. However, it is apparent that foreign languages have been a part of the school curriculum for some time because of the turbulent history Ukraine has had with different occupiers. For example, as explained in the first chapter, Ukraine had been divided into several territories: Russian Ukraine, Austrian Ukraine, Transcarpathia, Bukovyna and Galicia; therefore, among others, Polish, German and Russian languages existed in the foreign language curriculum of select schools in Ukraine.

Although the Ukrainian language was repressed actively since at least 1876 during the Tsarist Russian regime (Grenoble, 2003), in 1922, during Soviet rule in Ukraine, the Ukrainian language gained status and was declared an official language alongside Russian after being prohibited in education and official capacities and after being considered the language of the non-educated classes (Grenoble, 2003). In 1958, the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the USSR in Moscow published the theses entitled, "On strengthening the relationship of the school with life and on the further development of the system of public education in the

country." Thesis 19 stated that the native language would be used in Soviet schools, where students study that language as well as Russian and one foreign language. The Russian language was very important and to be, "studied seriously. This language is a powerful means of international communication, of strengthening friendship among the peoples of the USSR and of bringing them into contact with the wealth of Russian and world culture" (Counts, 1959, p. 45). Thesis 18 stated however, that, "The study of foreign languages in all schools of the country should be drastically improved. The network of schools in which instruction in a number of subjects is conducted in foreign languages should be expanded" (1959, p. 45). Thus, although the exact year in which general foreign language instruction was introduced into Ukrainian schools is uncertain, it is clear that it existed and that it was the subject of government attention.

One study, conducted by Inna Kyjan (2009) at T.G. Shevchenko National Pedagogical University in Chernihiv, Ukraine, outlined foreign language reform in Ukraine and significant dates and events in the process of introducing foreign language curriculum into Ukrainian schools. The year 1961 was noted as historically meaningful regarding the effects on foreign language education in the USSR and in Soviet Ukraine, as it was a time characterized by the influence of Soviet ideology on different spheres of social life in Ukraine. In the month of May of 1961, a resolution of the Council of Ministers on the Improvement of Foreign Language Learning was introduced which initiated active reform of the content of foreign language education. In addition, this year saw the creation of a subdivision on foreign language methodology at the National

Academy of Pedagogical Study in Kyiv, which positively influenced reforms in the content of foreign language education. In the year 1967, English as a foreign language course programs were created, courses were introduced experimentally for six-year old students and as electives (Kyjan, 2009). In 1983, experimental study guides in the English, Spanish and French languages were created for grades four to eleven which completed a positive probation period in several Ukrainian provinces. By 1988, in-depth foreign language instruction classes were legitimized by law, thus, curriculum guides were created and the content for foreign language classes was finalized (Kyjan, 2009).

In a 2001 issue of a publication by the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NAN), the Minister of Education and Sciences, Vasyl Kremen' (minister from 1999-2005), emphasized the necessity to modernize education in Ukraine, as it was an important catalyst for the social, economic and political development of the country. Although he brought up many areas of interest such as technology and pedagogical practice, he also stressed the role of foreign-language education, stating that in the past, concentration was placed on mastering knowledge of the language as opposed to mastering the active use of the language (Kremen', 2001). He highlighted the importance of learning either "English or another western language", because without this knowledge, individuals and therefore the nation, are unable to be active and competitive in the current globalized world (Kremen', 2001, p. 2).

Kosa (2012), the head of the educational-methodological office for foreign languages in the Kirovohrad Provincial Institute for Post-diploma Pedagogical Study in

the name of Vasyl Suhomlynskyj, wrote that when foreign language instruction is introduced in the earlier grades, a great communicative potential opens up for the young student, allowing for the creation of: 1) a separate linguistic representation of the world in each language; 2) multileveled thinking; 3) the opportunity to view the world from the prism of each language; 4) the opportunity to find the thought that cannot be expressed identically in each language. However, in order for this potential to be realized, positive motivation needs to be developed in the children, as this is deemed the most important psychological factor to successful acquisition of a foreign language (Kosa, 2012). More recently in history, in November 2011, the Minister of Education and Sciences in Ukraine, Dmytro Tabachnyk,[6] declared that beginning on September 1, 2012; one hour per week of foreign language classes including English, German, French or Spanish would become mandatory in all general education institutions for students starting in the first grade (Kosa, 2012). A positive relationship between length of study of a language and proficiency was observed in Mesch's study. Although his study found a relationship between length of residence in a country and attendance in language training classes, nevertheless the conclusion observed was that "the longer the exposure to the local language, the higher the language proficiency" (Mesch, 2003, p. 55). Beginning in the new school year of 2013, the Ministry is implementing mandatory second foreign-language classes for all students starting in the fifth grade. Although some experts were adamant that English should be mandatory as one of the foreign languages that students

[6] Dmytro Tabachnyk was appointed Minister of Education and Sciences in the year 2010, and currently holds the position.

learn, this idea did not pass, as 20% of Ukrainian schools have German and French as their core foreign language (Tonkonoh, 2012, p. 1). The full curriculum guides for each grade are available on the website for the Ministry of Education and Sciences in Ukraine.

Although language is a skill that is identified as necessary for positive outcomes to be achieved when moving to a new destination, the question remains whether it is necessarily the major skill that is contributing to recent Ukrainian immigrants' economic success in Canada. This review of the existing literature has provided an introduction into the types of studies that are available to illustrate the factors affecting immigrants' foreign language learning. It has also provided insight into the historical and current foreign language education system in Ukraine in order to create a general understanding of the school environment in which the participants of this study have experienced as students in Ukraine. In chapter four I will outline the methods used in collecting and analysing the data. Then, in chapter five, I will discuss the findings of my research in interviewing immigrant individuals in Ontario and in Saskatchewan and their responses about the factors that have contributed, or they expect will influence their positive economic success in their futures in Canada.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

"As in all foreign-language learning,
there are no simple measures of success;
I know no way of evaluating the results in
terms that are quantifiable and still significant"
(Halliday, 1978/2007, p. 181).

This is an ethnographic study on the language learning experiences of immigrant adults coming to Canada from Ukraine. A qualitative method has been used to explore Ukrainian immigrants' language learning in Ukraine and in Canada in order to find ways in which this connects to their relative economic successes in Canada. As this is not a quantitative study, the accuracy of the respondents' communication or proficiency in the English language has not been measured; instead participants' self-assessed proficiency in English has been gathered. Halliday noted that language proficiency is challenging to measure (1978/2007) and beyond this, my interest in this study was to speak with individuals and to hear about their personal journeys in learning the English language in Ukraine and in Canada. As Halliday (1978/2007) stated,

> Whether in first- or in second-language learning the aim is to succeed; and it is success rather than perfection that I think we need to emphasize [...] our language is never error-free, and I think there is too much emphasis on the avoidance of linguistic errors. Success goes with the conception of 'language as a resource'; it is a native-like concept, which highlights the similarities, not in the **process** of first- and second-language learning but in the nature of the achievement and in our evaluation of what has been achieved (p. 191).

In the context of this study, language proficiency was not quantitatively measured, but, in considering Halliday's ideas of success it was instead viewed as a type of resource to reaching personal goals in a new environment. Although this study looks at the process of language learning for the purpose of gaining knowledge about the structure and availability of services in two Canadian provinces, the study also analyses individuals' views of personal achievements, including financial gains that followed in consequence of language learning. Thus the following chapter will further describe the way in which I approached this research; the recruitment and investigative process, as well as the collection and analysis of data from some recent immigrants of Ukrainian ethnicity in

Ontario and Saskatchewan and the ways in which they characterized their own language learning and its influence on their personal ideas of success in Canada thus far.

Recruiting Participants

As a participant in the Ukrainian community; having lived, studied and worked within the community for many years, I enlisted the assistance of some of my Ukrainian colleagues in Ontario and in Saskatchewan, in order to connect with acquaintances or friends of theirs who had arrived from Ukraine as adults after the year 2000. After receiving approval for this project from the York University Office of Research Ethics, I began to plan the research process. I first considered using the databases of large Ukrainian social service organizations in order to send out mass e-mails inviting many people to participate in the study, however due to time constraints, I did not do so, opting instead to gain a few in-depth, quality and sincere responses, as opposed to running into two potential problems; one the problem of not receiving any responses and the second: gathering many short interviews that may not have provided me with enough information with which to reach conclusions. I chose to interview a small number of individuals in order to establish a rapport with individuals and to solicit an in depth narrative of their life histories. There is a possibility that recruitment efforts on a larger scale may have provided me with a greater number of potential interviewees, but it is also possible that few would have volunteered their time and their personal life stories. For example, in the province of Saskatchewan, an acquaintance provided me with a list of individuals who fit

the criteria of the study and who could have been potential participants. In one Saskatchewan city, only one individual replied to the request and even so was reluctant to sign the Letter of informed consent.

In the case of this particular research, it is important to understand the community that is being sought for interview. These are individuals who lived in Soviet Ukraine in the immediate period following Soviet rule. Their immediate family such as parents or grandparents lived under Stalin, thus they are very much aware of the history of censorship, intense surveillance (see Darden, 2001; Mitrokhin, 2002) and lack of certain freedoms including cultural, language, religious (see Johnston, 1993; Vynnychenko, 1993). It is thus understandable as to why many individuals have feelings of unease, distrust and suspicion toward anybody who "wants something from them", including researchers.

Thus, it was more efficient to enlist the assistance of individuals whom I knew, who could subsequently connect me with people who would in turn be more understanding and open to participating. Along with this, it should be noted that all of the individuals participated voluntarily and did not receive monetary payment in exchange for their participation. As a researcher, I wanted to make certain that the participants knew that I was grateful for their time and participation, but I did not want a monetary reward to be the motivation for participation. As the study relies heavily upon semi-structured, in-depth interviews of individuals' life stories, I wanted to ensure that

participants were comfortable in sharing their experiences, thus by not offering monetary remuneration. Those who did participate did so with the intent to share honest accounts.

Once I was connected with people who would be interested in participating in the study, the participants: Ivanna, Andrij, Oleksandr, Nicholas, Elizaveta and Olena (all pseudonyms) were initially contacted by telephone or through electronic mail; whereby I explained my research and invited them to participate in the study. The individuals who consented to participate all received an official letter of information, which provided further details about the study (Please see appendix A for the official letter. A version was available in Ukrainian as well, in order to provide participants with optimal understanding). Participants were asked to sign this letter, confirming their consent to participate. In this investigation, I was not assessing respondents' English language skills, thus to further ensure participants' comfort during the study interviews were conducted in the language that participants preferred. Most of the interviews were conducted in Ukrainian while some contained a mixture of Ukrainian and Russian. Interestingly, English words or phrases were used when participants felt that they wanted to emphasize something or to make certain that I included certain information in my notes.

The ethnographic method was chosen as it allows researchers to describe a "human group – its institutions, interpersonal behaviors, material productions and beliefs" (Angrosino, 2007, p.14). This method would allow me to learn about a particular ethnic group by gathering descriptive detail about individuals' self-assessed

language skills as well as their personal notions of economic success and whether or not they feel they have achieved it in Canada. These findings were then combined to create explanatory theories and ideas as opposed to testing hypotheses from pre-existing models. The gathered descriptions were analysed to draw out social and cultural patterns to provide readers with a better understanding of the particular group. As a member of this particular ethnic group, having lived my entire life among first generation Ukrainian immigrants, I may have begun this study with assumptions and expectations because of the many immigration stories I had heard previously. This identity was advantageous however, in that I was able to converse with the participants in the language with which they were most comfortable, whether Ukrainian or Russian, which may have provided more depth and detail to their responses.

The main requirements of the study were that participants be of Ukrainian descent, and have arrived in Canada as adults no earlier than the year 2000. Participants were recruited from the specific geographic areas of Toronto, Ontario and two cities in the province of Saskatchewan in order to provide insight into the experiences found in two Canadian provinces. The individuals who participated in the study all fit the criteria of the research and provided a wide range of different life experiences and life outcomes. In the large city of Toronto, three individuals were interviewed, two of whom were female and one male; while in Yorkton and Saskatoon two interviews were conducted with one female and two males. The participants came to Canada between the years 2004-2008, and were between the ages of 28 and 35. I collected data through the process

of interviewing participants over a period of four months, from December 2012 to March 2013.

Once the participants granted permission to participate in the study, I telephoned each participant to set up a time and place that was of convenience and comfort for them in order to conduct the interview, which would last one hour. Included in the interview process was also a short questionnaire for participants to answer in written form (please see Appendix D). In Toronto, two of the interviews were conducted over the phone, while one was conducted at the individual's home. I interviewed both individuals from Saskatchewan through the online software application, Skype. After setting up the interview times, I sent each individual an electronic copy of a short questionnaire as well as the interview questions approximately two days prior to the scheduled interview. The individuals with whom I spoke over the phone and over Skype, e-mailed the questionnaires back to me before the start of their interviews.

I chose to send the individuals a copy of the interview questions I would be asking (please see Appendix E), as the questions required individuals to think back to their schooling experiences and the subjects that they learned. I wanted the participants to have a chance to recall their experiences and perhaps plan the information that they would like to share. It is possible that this may have created an over-censoring of the answers, but it also may have allowed participants to recall more than they would have, had they learned the questions on the spot. Even though, as the researcher, I provided prompts to guide the conversation and to help individuals to recall events, it is

nevertheless possible that being asked to think on the spot may cause individuals to feel nervous about what they should say or how they should say it. For example, one interviewee, anxious to know whether or not they were providing the correct answers, or the answers I was looking for, specifically asked me what I wanted them to say. In this case, I ensured the participant that this was not a test and that I was not looking for them to tell me anything specific; that I was only curious and interested in hearing their personal story. I was not going to judge them based on whether or not they were "good students" in middle school; I simply wanted to know how the system was structured at their schools and the sort of learning opportunities that were available to them in both Canada and in Ukraine. Even though I did electronically mail the questions to the participants before the interview, some nevertheless had difficulties remembering schooling experiences, especially those experiences prior to university or college. It remained challenging to recall exactly what was taught and how languages were learned during elementary school years.

After the interviews, I asked all of the participants to provide me with a pseudonym that would be used to protect their identities. All of the individuals gave me the freedom to complete this task and as a result I hope that the names that I have chosen do not offend the participants in any way or lead to any misinterpretation of their identities. I also asked individuals whether or not they would like to receive updates on the analysis process of the data they provided. Once again, all of the participants felt that they were clear in their responses and chose to trust me with providing an accurate

account in my writing. The individuals were very helpful throughout the research process as they were available to answer any additional questions or requests for clarification that I had after the initial interviews. The follow-up interviews were conducted over the phone or over Skype.

Ethnography / Interviews

Before starting the interviewing process, I read about ways in which to conduct ethnographic interviews and ways to approach participants. James Spradley (1979) wrote that an effective way of conducting ethnographic interviews is by considering the interview as a friendly conversation. This helped me be less nervous about interviewing people about their personal lives. By speaking in the form of a conversation, in an almost casual manner and introducing ethnographic elements slowly, I hoped to decrease for participants the feeling of being interrogated. Shifting back to friendly conversation throughout the interview is crucial to building and maintaining rapport with the interviewees and helps in ensuring that they do not discontinue cooperation. As a matter of fact, I believe that this played an important role in helping participants feel comfortable not only during the interview process, but before it as well. For example, when I was writing my introduction to the participants in Saskatchewan, I was very conscious of the words that I was using so that they would not feel intimidated to participate. Apart from describing the purpose of the study and reassuring them that there are no risks to participation, I also described the process of data collection as an

interview in the form of a friendly conversation, for the purpose of not intimidating the participants. A friendly question such as, "how did you decide to come to Canada?" was a way of helping the interviewee become more relaxed and more comfortable.

Ethnographic elements are features that are necessary in order for the researcher to achieve his or her goals during the interview. The three important ethnographic elements are its explicit purpose, ethnographic questions and ethnographic explanations (Spradley, 1979). Although informants have a basic idea of what is expected of them during the interview, it is nevertheless crucial for the researcher to regularly remind the participants about the purpose of the study and the value of their information. The interviewer has a set purpose and goal for the interview and although the interviewer directs the conversation through prompts and guiding comments or questions, the interviewee must be aware of the explicit purpose (Spradley, 1979) in a manner that causes them to recognize that they are participating in a discussion that brings valuable knowledge to the researcher. For example, at various times during the interviews I reminded the participants of the goal by stating things such as, "Telling me about your English class in Ukraine will help me better understand the English learning opportunities you chose in Canada." Ethnographic explanations provide the interviewee with information about the project, the interview and the questions (Spradley, 1979). After the initial greetings I began by thanking the participants for their time and for their willingness to speak with me. I also let the participants know about the project goal, "I am interested in learning about the way in which you learned the English language. I

would like to hear about your language learning opportunities in Ukraine and in Canada." I gave an ethnographic explanation that let the participant recognize that they will be talking and provided them with information on what they would be talking about (Spradley, 1979).

In order to lead the conversations to receive the answers to my project questions, I read about the types of ethnographic questions, such as those that are descriptive and structural (Spradley, 1979). A descriptive question I asked Elizaveta was about one of her English language classes in Toronto, "Could you describe the LINC class you attended?" This type of question allowed the participant to provide a longer, more descriptive answer, providing me with a sample of the interviewee's language – not to analyse it for accuracy, but instead to hear the tone and attitude toward that particular life event. A descriptive question requires the researcher to know some information about the informant; to know about settings in which they have some experience (Spradley, 1979). Thus, after Elizaveta told me about attending a LINC class, I decided to ask her more about that particular environment or cultural scene, as I have never attended a LINC class and was interested in knowing more about the organization and content of such classes.

The second type of question I used, the structural question, allows the researcher to learn about the way in which individuals have organized their knowledge. For example, I asked Nicholas, "What were the stages of your application to immigrate to Canada?" This type of a question not only explores the things that the informant knows,

but also leads the interviewer to discover cultural terms and the way in which cultural knowledge is organized by the participant. By asking Nicholas this question, I learned about other "guys" who began their immigration process using the same method; namely a youth program run out of the capital city of Ukraine, which informed, trained and prepared young people for work opportunities abroad. This particular question led me to learn more about Nicholas' social environment, his personality and his values. The relay of information about the application process revealed that Nicholas had a rich social support system, in that there were colleagues or friends from whom he could receive advice and more information about working in Canada and about ways in which to apply to foreign programs that recruit workers from Ukraine. Listening to Nicholas recount the story of his application process provided me with insight into the parts of the application that he found to be interesting or exciting and the parts that he found to be annoying or a waste of time and other resources.

Ultimately, my intent was to tell a story by using the experiences of a few individuals. In order to achieve this, I focused on asking open-ended questions which would lead to more descriptive responses as opposed to yes or no. To view a sample of the questions that the participants were asked, please see Appendix E.

Data Analysis

According to Silverman (2000), it is never too early to begin analysing the data. Thus, after the very first interview I conducted, in December 2012, I immediately began

planning a system to organize the information I had gathered up to that point and a place where I could add information that I would acquire in the future. I created a folder on my computer for the primary research data that I would collect; and under this heading, I created a folder for each individual using their designated pseudonym for confidentiality. In each person's folder I added the transcribed document of the interview. Directly after each interview, I typed up the entire interview including the questions and responses as well as any side notes of my own such as anything I noticed regarding the person's tone or attitude toward certain situations about which they were speaking, or any other notes regarding the speed and the degree of enthusiasm with which they were speaking.

Before I began collecting data by interviewing individuals I reviewed the existing literature around topics of professional immigrants' labour market integration and economic integration in Canada (Satzewich, Isajiw, Duvalko, 2006); the processes by which highly educated people immigrate to Canada; the history, availability and organization of foreign language learning in Ukraine (Kyjan, 2009); and the history of Ukrainian immigrants' economic and social outcomes in Canada (Pivnenko & DeVoretz, 2003). This background reading of related topics provided me with a basic idea of the types of themes that might emerge in my own research, as well as an idea of the conclusions that other researchers were making in order to inform and broaden my own personal understandings of the data I would be collecting. Generally, qualitative data analysis tends to be inductive, meaning that the analyst forms hypotheses about certain events and compares these ideas to other events: "the analyst identifies important

categories in the data, as well as patterns and relationships, through a process of discovery. There are often no predefined measures of hypotheses" (Schutt, 2012, p. 322). In order to form hypotheses about the experiences of the study participants, I reread the interviews many times after transcribing them, in order to establish themes in each account. Some of the themes that emerged regarding language learning included: the refusal to be "child-like," found in the accounts of two people, prior schooling experiences and social support systems in Canada.

My analysis techniques further follow the hermeneutic perspective, in that the information provided by the participants allows for the creation of an interpretation which cannot be judged true or false. Perhaps another researcher, coming from a different educational background, may find different themes of interest in the available data and therefore create a different final idea, conclusion or hypothesis. As my interests lay in knowing about the process of language acquisition and individuals' personal perceptions of success, the themes that I extracted would help me to develop conclusions about the data. This perspective further gives greater attention and value to the experiences of the individuals, assuming that "multiple, socially constructed realities exist and that the meanings individuals give to their experiences ought to be the objects of study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992 and Eichelberger, 1989 cited in Hatch, 2002, p. 30). The hermeneutic tradition or the interpretive perspective, therefore does not assume the research to be replicable as quantitative research; nor does it assume the researcher to be "objective," but instead allows the researcher to be "an active participant, along with the

research subjects, in the building of descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory knowledge" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.15).

After I had recorded all of the interviews in Word documents, I colour coded the different themes that came up in each individual's account and went on to comparing the experiences: first within each province, then across provinces. After this, I applied the structural theories of Roman Jakobson (1990) and the systemic functional theories of M.A.K. Halliday (1978/2007) to the data. The following chapter will provide an insight into the lives of six Ukrainian immigrants who have come to Canada since 2004.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

In an online publication by the department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, language is identified as "just so fundamentally important to make it in Canada, especially for newcomers" (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Language Remains Key to Success*, 2012). I interviewed participants from both Ontario and Saskatchewan in order to learn about individuals' experiences with the English language and their perspective regarding the role of English language proficiency on economic outcome in Canada. The following chapter will present the stories of six individuals in narrative form. In thinking about the way in which to organize each individual's story, I decided to use the interview questions as a guide (please see Appendix E) as these provide an opportunity for the life stories to be told in sequential order, beginning with participants' self-assessed English language speaking skills; their lives in Ukraine and the opportunities they had to learn the English language, moving to individuals' experience in learning the English language in Canada including any learning challenges. Finally, the stories conclude with the participants' opinions on the role of the English language in their lives in Canada, especially economically.

5.1 Olena's Experience

After initially communicating over e-mail, Olena and I set up a time on a weekday morning to conduct the interview over the telephone. Prior to the telephone interview, Olena completed the written questionnaire and sent it back to me over e-mail. Through this initial questionnaire, I gained a short introduction into how much time she had already spent in Canada and the types of experiences she had in learning the English language. The interview, which quickly turned into a casual, easy conversation, would provide more details into the role of language in the immigration process, as well as English language learning in Ukraine and in Canada.

Olena came to Canada in the year 2007 at the age of 28. Although her parents had been living in Canada for many years, she and her husband had filled out the necessary paperwork and had applied to immigrate to Canada under an economic classification and did not arrive in Canada as sponsored dependents. This is important because it automatically implies that the English language was a factor in the success of the application. All applicants who are not sponsored by relatives residing in Canada, but choose instead to apply to immigrate on their own, must go through the Points System where skills and qualities that Canada finds to be favourable in potential immigrants are awarded a certain number of points. If a sufficient number of points are earned to pass, then the applicants gain entry to come to Canada. In this particular case, Olena's husband was the principal applicant and his wife and child were his dependents. At the time of their application, Olena said that Canada was in need of computer

programmers and since her husband was trained in this profession and she was a trained doctor; their combined educational capital, along with their being under the age of 35, and the fact that they had family in Canada, helped their application gain the number of points needed in order for them to come to Canada. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), those applicants who are between the ages of 18-35 are awarded the highest number of points possible (12) under the category of age. Potential points decrease as the age of the applicant increases (*Points for Age*, 2007). I asked whether language played a role in their immigration application, to which Olena said that she did not remember whether or not there was a question on the application regarding the official language proficiency of the primary applicant's spouse and dependent. She said that that her husband did partake in an English language proficiency test prior to immigrating, but that she did not.

5.1.1 Learning the English language in Ukraine: Olena.

One of the very first questions I asked Olena, was "how would you describe your English language proficiency now as compared to when you first arrived to Canada?" Olena said that she feels there is a noticeable difference in the way she knew English when she first arrived and the way in which she knows it now. I asked her about the opportunities she had to learn English in Ukraine, as I was curious to know whether or not English language learning was easily accessible. She described her early life and

growing up in the village, living with her sister and her grandparents, as their parents were in Canada:

> I did not have much of an opportunity to learn English in Ukraine. I lived in the village with my grandparents – and there was only one school for the whole village. I went to that school from grade 1 to 11, and I studied German as a foreign language there, but not English. I studied German; I had As, but I never studied it deeply. I just completed the basic requirements that were needed. I can't even say that I knew German well. I knew how to say my name, where I lived ... and now I have forgotten all of those things.

She went on to tell me more about the opportunities found in more populated cities, where there was more variety; there were more options for schooling and a greater population to serve.

> Maybe, if I had lived in Lviv, in the larger city, I would have had the chance to study in a school that had English. I lived in a small village; I only had one option. Maybe if someone had told me back then that English would be useful to me now, then maybe I would have studied and

lived differently. Maybe I would have gone to school in Lviv.

Olena continued to tell me about the years she spent in Lviv as a young adult while studying at the Medical University. Since she was required to take one foreign language course in order to complete her program, she chose English, instead of French and German, the available alternatives. Olena mentioned that it was her own choice to take English in university. It was a year-long course and she had the opportunity to learn "very basic things" including the alphabet, simple tenses, sentence structure and some basic vocabulary. Later on, after she found out that her family's immigration application was accepted; she deliberately sought out additional opportunities to learn English, in order to prepare herself for her journey to Canada. For the three months before coming to Canada, Olena had a private tutor: a young woman who had majored in English at university and had become an English teacher, help her learn English. She participated in tutoring once every week for approximately 30 or 40 minutes, for three months. She explained that she had received basic books to read and textbooks from which to study basic grammatical rules. The time was short however, before she had to leave for Canada and she did not have time to complete the curriculum in the textbook, but had gained a repertoire of some very simple words, the letters and reading simple sentences before her arrival.

5.1.2 Opportunities to learn the English language in Canada: Olena.

Since I had learned that Olena had very minimal opportunities to learn and practice English in Ukraine, I wondered whether the situation would be different in Canada. Although she was a young woman, with a young family, she was nevertheless able to participate in formal English classes in Canada. Olena describes the very beginning of her time in Canada:

> You get a notice, I don't remember where ... at the airport, or maybe at the place where you go to pick up your SIN. I don't remember. That was so long ago, and I had no idea where I was – I didn't know the city yet and didn't recognize the streets. The notice has a phone number which you need to call to make an appointment to have a person assigned to you at one of these centres that test how well you know English, so that they can find out what level you should be put into to start LINC. There are designated places all over Toronto. You call the one that is in the area where you live, and you go, with an appointment, to do your exam.

Olena described her experience of going to the assessment centre where her language skills were tested. I asked her how she knew about the procedure and she told me that her sister had done it before her and helped her set up the appointment and work out all of the details. At the exam centre, each teacher was assigned a group of five to six people for whom they would lead assessments that checked speaking, listening and reading skills. During the test of the writing skills, the smaller groups joined in a large room filled with more people. First, the teacher showed some pictures of different scenarios and Olena was supposed to orally respond by describing the things she saw in the images. Olena said that she looked at each picture and described the things she was seeing as best she could, by basically saying all of the words that she knew; for example: lady, shopping. After the oral exam, the teacher gave everybody a set of headphones and turned on a simple dialogue on tape. The goal was to summarize the subject of the conversation, or to answer some questions relating to the dialogue. After this, they were asked to write down a sample telephone message that they would leave on an answering machine or to write a paragraph about a special event or a story in the news. Olena recalled the written exam:

> I remember writing the telephone message, the important event paragraph; and only a couple of sentences for each. I didn't write a lot because I didn't know how to, at the time. In the end, I was surprised I got a level 3, because I felt I

made a lot of mistakes.

After completing the initial language tests Olena was informed of the level at which she was deemed prepared to begin her studies at LINC, the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program. This is a French and English language-training program, initiated by the Canadian government in the year 1992, with the goal to provide "*basic* language instruction to adult newcomers" (Han, 2003, p. 646-7). The LINC program continues to be funded by the federal government and it is open to all adult immigrants who have not yet obtained Canadian citizenship. Since 2005, the LINC program has been expanded to consist of seven levels based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), which are a set of national standards compiled through a joint effort by organizations and programs providing English as a Second Language services, as well as a Board at the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2000). These standards provide clear curriculum goals for English and French as a Second language expectations in relation to language acquisition; considering the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. In order to progress to the next level in the LINC program, students must demonstrate mastery of the content in the previous level. In Ontario, the LINC program is made up of seven levels (CIC, *Evaluation of the LINC program,* 2011), while there are twelve CLB levels. A chart compiled by Grazyna Pawlikowska-Smith (2000) demonstrated the LINC levels as corresponding to the CLB levels and expectations. For example, in order to exit Level 5 of the speaking skill in the

LINC program, students must meet the requirements of CLB level 7 in their speaking skills. The writers of the documents have considered the curriculum and skill requirements within each level and these are clearly outlined in the CLB document.

Olena explained that after her language assessment, she scored a level 3 and was thus advised to go to a LINC centre and begin studies at that level. However, Olena explains that when she began her LINC class, she felt extremely shocked at the skills necessary to function at level 3. She felt very unprepared and wanted to begin at a lower level. When she went to the director, to ask to join a lower level, she was denied this request and was told instead that once a level had begun, it had to be completed before the individual could change to a lower or to a higher level.

> Although I did not want to quit after I had barely started, I felt that I had no other choice. I was not learning anything in level 3 because it was not so simple; I did not understand anything that was going on, the teacher was talking very fast, the sentences were very complicated, and I was very shocked.

After deciding to leave the LINC program, Olena was advised by her sister to find different English as a Second Language classes. I asked Olena how she knew where to go and what to do at that point; realizing that she was new in Toronto, with very

minimal language skills. I wondered how she was able to find a different program; and one that would be of use to her needs. Olena explained that she heard about a particular language school, the Bickford centre, from her Ukrainian colleagues at work and from her sister who had also heard about it from work colleagues and had attended six levels before Olena came to Canada. Olena wanted to attend a place of formal learning, because she felt that this would be the only way for her to learn English properly and at a decent pace. She explained that she had very little opportunity to practice her English communication skills because she worked in an environment where all of the employees spoke Ukrainian and she had no contact with customers, while at home, her family only spoke Ukrainian. She said that it would have probably been easier for her to learn English in school, if she had had more opportunity to practice out side of school, but since she knew that formal learning in a school environment was her only option, she made sure to find a school that would suit her needs.

For five levels, Olena attended the Bickford centre which was run by the Toronto District School Board, each level costing approximately $500. She left during the sixth level because she felt that the teacher was not "serious," in that Olena felt she was not learning as much as she should have been at that point.

> While I was at Bickford Centre, I realized I was not getting any results from the applications I was sending in for the nursing program at George Brown College. The girls at

> work told me about COSTI, so I decided to start there. I was on the waiting list for three months, but then I took a level of intensive language learning, a TOEFL preparation course, for six months. I was desperate. I had to learn English somewhere, and I needed to learn a higher level of the language. I applied to the TOEFL classes to improve my language skills.

Olena also explained that people took the TOEFL preparation course if they were hoping to write the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), which would grant them access to apply to university studies. Olena did not need to write the test, because she knew that she wanted to attend the nursing program at George Brown College and that the college only accepted the results of their own English proficiency exams.

> I took the TOEFL preparation course, not to write the TOEFL test, but just to learn to write essays quickly. This class taught grammar, sentence structure, verbs, transitive or non-transitive ... I learned the structure of essays, I learned to write essays – and to write them fast, because we had time limits. The teacher gave us templates; sentences we could use for any essay, we just needed to fill in the

> blanks. For example, we learned introduction sentences like, 'in the following essay ...' and we learned sentences that could fit any situation, like, 'let's begin our discussion by looking at...'

Olena enthusiastically reminisced about her teacher, who gave the students various impromptu scenario questions that were to be answered and explained with evidence, orally in class, under a one-minute time limit. Olena laughed that the teacher would randomly choose a student, ask them to start talking and usually the students did not have enough time to finish their thoughts. At this, they learned phrases such as "I like ... for two reasons" which taught the students to be concise with their thoughts and to organize ideas in sequential order.

> He just prepared people for the TOEFL. He taught us the structure of the writing, and gave us a hint on what to write. This course helped me a lot because it taught me to write seven paragraph essays, fast! And it helped me write the George Brown nursing entrance exams - I just used all his general phrases.

5.1.3 The purpose of language proficiency in Canada: Olena.

As I was listening to Olena talk about trying to learn the language quickly, I wondered why this was important to her. I had heard a bit about her goal to attend the nursing program at a college in Toronto, but I wondered whether there was more to her story. Since from the outside, employment did not appear to be a vital issue, as Olena held a job in a Ukrainian establishment, I asked her why English was so important to learn right away. Olena explained that her mother had been in Canada for twenty years, understanding the general idea when spoken to, but unable to sustain a dialogue for a longer period of time, on a deeper subject. Olena explained that it irritated her that her mother answers English-speaking people's questions "however she likes," whether correctly or incorrectly in terms of grammar and sentence structure. Olena seemed to express a sense of regret in that her mother could have achieved more in Canada had she learned English when she first arrived. For instance, she worked as a member of the cleaning staff at a nursing home for many years, where she was able to observe and learn the types of work that other people performed, such as nurses or personal support workers. In thinking about "*what could have been*" Olena says that her mother could have easily completed the PSW (personal support worker) program, as she was familiar with what the profession entails and thus could have collected higher earnings as a result. The barrier in the situation however, was language.

Olena explained that she did not want language to be a barrier to her own success in Canada. The main reason why she was learning English was to be able to support her

son in his transition to Canada, but of great importance was also the purpose of studying in the nursing program to eventually provide her family and her child with financial stability.

> In general, you can be okay in Canada without knowing English. You can live and survive, but if you want to do better for yourself and for your family, you need to know the language.

I asked Olena what factors she thought to be most important for an immigrant to gain economic success in Canada and what she meant by "doing better for your family." She explained that education was very important in order to gain a Canadian license or a diploma, as her foreign qualifications were not regarded the same way in Canada. The deciding factor to earning a degree or a qualification of some sort was language.

> I think that for me, I need education in order to support my family. As a woman, I can't physically work in construction where the pay is best. The unskilled jobs available for women do not pay enough to support a family.

I asked about her feelings toward living in the Ukrainian community and the types of opportunities that were available within. I wondered whether or not English was absolutely necessary to living in Canada. To this, Olena said,

> I could just work at a Ukrainian pharmacy, in a Ukrainian store, or cleaning houses, but this doesn't pay a lot, so education is key for me. Sure, you can live and work within our Ukrainian community, and you can earn enough to vacation once a year, and to buy the basic things you need, but this kind of work will never be enough for you to support your whole family, it will not be enough for a nice car or to buy a house. This type of work doesn't provide security for the whole family.

It was possible to live within the Ukrainian community, but she had hopes and was determined to achieve more. I asked her about her expectations in life and how she imagined the ideal situation to appear.

> In a family, at least one person has to have a good education and a job. The man can do the physical and work in construction, but it's hard for a woman to make good

> money in Canada without education. It is important for the woman to complete her education to get a job that will provide security for the family.

Thus, Olena found English language proficiency to be important to completing her education and in a sense, finding herself in her new country. She explained that in order to live a comfortable life, a family needed two working adults. While her husband could immediately provide for their family by working in construction, she felt that she needed to be the one who would provide stability for the family by obtaining a degree, which was something that could never be taken away from her.

5.2 Oleksandr's Experience

I contacted Oleksandr through relatives who were so kind as to help me locate people who would be willing to participate in my study. Initially, we spoke over the phone, where I explained the purpose and goal of my project, as well as my expectations of him. I explained the time commitment and asked whether he would be willing to speak to me about his experiences and goals as an immigrant to Toronto. After Oleksandr provided his consent to participate, I e-mailed him the questionnaire, which he e-mailed back to me with his responses. Shortly thereafter, we set up an early 7:30 a.m. interview at his home one Saturday morning, prior to which I had e-mailed him a set of the questions that I would be asking.

Oleksandr came to Canada in the year 2004, at the age of 28. He initially arrived as a visitor to Canada, but then decided to remain in the country, to join his siblings who lived in Canada with their families. This was an interesting situation, as Oleksandr had relatives who were able to support him in the new environment, by guiding him around the city of Toronto, especially introducing him to the Ukrainian community including the Ukrainian church they attended and the places where Ukrainians held establishments such as grocery stores, banks and social services. I asked him about the role his family played in his English language learning experience to which he explained that they were very instrumental in guiding and advising him, as they had been living in the country for many years and were able to provide him with stories as examples from their own lives. He said that they encouraged him to learn English above all, viewing this as the very first goal to be accomplished since he was to be living in Canada.

5.2.1 Learning the English language in Ukraine: Oleksandr.

I went on to ask Oleksandr about his prior experiences with the English language, especially before coming to Canada. I wondered what opportunities he had to learn the language while living in Ukraine. Oleksandr explained that he lived in a relatively large city in Ukraine, in the oblast (province) of Ternopil, where he had the opportunity to study English as a foreign language in his regular day school beginning in the fourth grade. He explained that students in large cities had the opportunity to choose from schools with a wide variety of foreign languages including Spanish, French, German and

English, while smaller cities only had one choice of language, usually English or German. Oleksandr explained that the Ministry of Education made the decision as to which language the various schools offered. In his school, he learned English from the fourth to the eighth grade, where he felt that he gained an extraordinarily large vocabulary. He said that the foreign language class took place either twice or three times per week, for approximately 45 minutes. During that time, students learned things such as the rules of grammar, sentence structure, verbs, adjectives and vocabulary. Oleksandr had many fond memories about the eighth grade, which he felt was a time in his life in Ukraine when his English language skills were at their peak.

> During that time, I had the best knowledge of English out of my whole life in Ukraine. I wasn't conscious of it at the time, but I know that it was there. We wrote many tests in English; we learned all sorts of texts by heart, such as poetry, which was very important and beneficial to developing memory.

Oleksandr further recalled studying classic texts,

> We studied excerpts from Twain, and all with a Soviet undertone. They were talking about Twain's socialist

views, atheism and propaganda about the proletariat revolution in America.

Oleksandr then went on to talk about his time in university in Lviv, where he once again had the opportunity to learn English, after the period of time in high school when he was not studying. He was at university for five and a half years, majoring in electronics. He explained that at that time, the English language that was available to him was one specifically designated for his subject major. For example, the students learned grammar and vocabulary that related to electronics. All of the students with the major of electronics took their mandatory courses together and were only separated for the foreign language classes, where students learned information specific to electronics in French, English or the language in which they were most comfortable – which was for most people the language with which they had most experience; the one studied in elementary school.

Since it appeared as though Oleksandr had many opportunities to study the English language in Ukraine, I wondered whether he was able to retain all that he had learned in order to have less difficulty once he arrived in Canada. Oleksandr explained that had he come to Canada after the eighth grade, then he would have had no problems with English whatsoever, but, since many years had passed since he felt confident with the language to that extent, he did not feel adequately prepared in the language after arriving in Toronto. I asked him how he felt about his language skills now, as compared

to when he first arrived. He said that if he were to refrain from being too self-critical, then he would classify his skills as "really good" explaining, "Of course, it's much better because I'm in the English language speaking community, so I have more opportunities to speak – which is important to really learning and maintaining language."

5.2.2 Learning the English language in Canada: Oleksandr.

Oleksandr spoke about having to relearn English after arriving in Canada; I asked him how he began this process. He explained that he began by attending formal English language classes at an adult school, which was recommended to him by Ukrainian immigrant acquaintances who had previously attended the program. He said that many visitors to Canada and recent immigrants attended those classes, which consisted of a variety of levels that provided basic and simple introduction to the English language. He relayed to me the testing process, which was conducted at registration at the school. Oleksandr was asked to write a few general sentences and at the end of the assessment. He had earned a level 3, stating that the individual testing him was very impressed when Oleksandr correctly used the word "windless" in a sentence for the written portion of the examination. Oleksandr reckoned it was a coincidence that he earned a level 3, because he did not have practice in speaking English, but felt that he had a high vocabulary, which he acquired in Ukraine. He recalled simply remembering the word "windless" at the time, and thinking it would be impressive to use.

In addition to these introductory classes, Oleksandr also took a class on the Microsoft Office program, Excel. He explained that he attended this class in order to learn terminology that was specific to topics in the computer program, as well as to provide himself with more experience in listening to instruction in English with the goal of increasing his own vocabulary. After Oleksandr received landed immigrant status, he was able to enrol in a LINC class. I asked him about what he remembered of the language exam, to which he explained the procedure of attending a testing centre in downtown Toronto where his listening, speaking and writing skills were tested. He remembered listening to a scenario on tape and then writing a summary in his own words. At the end of the assessment for the LINC program, Oleksandr earned a level four or a five. After the initial test, he attended LINC classes for approximately three or four months,

> I probably didn't finish because it was too easy. I didn't learn anything, or at least, I wasn't consciously learning anything. The class was full of pensioners, coming to kill time, as well as other Ukrainians and Russians, so I was meeting people, but I was not learning.

It was interesting to hear Oleksandr speak about feeling that he was not consciously learning English in his LINC classes, but then doubting whether or not his learning may have been subconscious. He did explain however, that at that point in his life, he became

tired of studying in a formal setting with a teacher and preferred instead to try learning independently. He said that he had a lot of experience with the language after the combined number of classes he had taken throughout his life and felt that he had a strong grasp on the grammar and structure. He decided that he would start watching more American movies, in English, first with written text and gradually without Ukrainian or Russian subtitles. In addition to this, he began reading more newspapers and listening to the radio which was more challenging than watching movies in English because it required him to pay closer attention as there were no images to help him understand the topic under discussion. He also self-taught by immersing himself among English-speakers, which he felt was the most important and the best thing he could do. He explained that during that time, he was employed at a place where he was constantly speaking in English, whether with the managers, co-workers or with customers. He was constantly communicating and felt that work was very instrumental in helping him learn English because it forced him to speak, which meant he was consistently and constantly practicing his skills. I asked Oleksandr to explain why he felt that the formal learning environment was not suited to his needs. Oleksandr explained that he strongly felt that the school environment was missing the conversational aspect of the language. He did not however regret attending classes,

> School is definitely necessary before being able to go and practice and communicate outside. School gives you the

basis: sentence structure, vocabulary – the fundamentals.

Then you have to go and practice outside of school.

5.2.3 The purpose of language proficiency in Canada: Oleksandr.

The sense of independence was a running theme in my interview with Oleksandr. I now realize that his leaving the LINC classes prior to finishing all of the levels was an example of his need to feel independent. To my question regarding the role of the English language in his life, he later explained that,

> In an English-speaking country, the role of the English language is huge. No matter who you are, you must know it. You are either dumb or lazy if you do not learn English. It comes down to this: you live among people, in a society, so you need a language that is common between you and the people who live around you. This is Toronto, you need to speak English. It is the language of our country.

Although Oleksandr may have been blunt in his response and in his reasoning, he was however, honest, especially with the idea of becoming independent in the new country. Oleksandr continued by providing specific examples to illustrate his point that it is

absolutely necessary to learn English so as not to become a burden on others,

> Knowing English absolutely helps me be independent. I can call wherever I want, and I can take care of all of my business. I don't have to feel like a big child. Sometimes people come to Canada and don't feel the necessity of learning English. To me, they start to look like big kids. They appear to be adults, because they are able to come here, but in reality, here they are unable to learn the language, which is something that would make them adults in this society.

It was evident that for Oleksandr, being able to take care of one's self was important and could realistically be best accomplished by learning the language of the country. I then asked Oleksandr to expand on what he meant by saying that those who do not learn the English language are like "big kids." He said,

> I wouldn't feel my full worth or my full potential if I did not speak English. This way, I can call to set up my Internet or a phone line; I can take care of anything I need. I can communicate with anybody I want.

Thus, to Oleksandr, the most important reason for learning English in Canada was to gain a sense of self-worth in his new country and to achieve the feeling of independence, not to feel burdensome, like a child, to other people including his family and his community.

5.3 Elizaveta's Experience

The third person I interviewed in Toronto was Elizaveta, a woman with whom I communicated over e-mail prior to our telephone interview. Elizaveta arrived to Canada in the year 2003, at the age of 27 through the Family Sponsorship immigration program, whereby she came to Canada to join her husband. Immediately, I found it quite simple and enjoyable to converse with Elizaveta, as she was very open in talking about her experiences and her life thus far. After speaking briefly about her immigration process, I went on to describe to Elizaveta the goal of my project, which was to learn more about immigrants' English learning experiences in Ukraine and in Canada. I began to ask her general questions about herself, such as whether or not she had the opportunity to have a higher education and about her home in Ukraine. She spoke about her highly educated family, her many years of university, especially the years of studying to be a college music educator.

5.3.1 Learning the English language in Ukraine: Elizaveta.

I wondered whether or not she had any experience with the English language in

school, prior to meeting and marrying her husband, who was sponsoring her and would be financially supporting their family. I asked her whether or not she had been involved in any language preparations prior to coming to Canada and whether she had opportunities to do so in Ukraine. Elizaveta told me that,

> Yes, I had many opportunities to study English in Ukraine. But I never took them! Wherever you glance, there are schools offering English classes. I could have had a private tutor, because I lived in a big city which had many trained professionals. It's very popular to learn English now, so there are all sorts of centres that teach English, and they are very specific too. You could go to learn British English or American English; there are teachers from all over. These are very expensive though! There are courses for business professionals; conversational levels of speech, academic English, all sorts of very specific courses are available.

Therefore, since Elizaveta lived in a large city, she described the many different opportunities that are available to people who are interested in learning English and who are able to finance their lessons. Since there were so many opportunities available, I asked Elizaveta whether she attended any courses prior to coming to Canada. She told

me that she did not attend any of the formal learning centres because she was very busy with her career at the time. However she did speak about hiring the services of a tutor with whom she met at her home, to study English.

> Before I left for Canada, I got a tutor for three or four months. She taught me the basics: regular verbs, things like that, but I didn't think it was enough to learn anything, so I didn't have a very big vocabulary when I left.

We spoke in Russian, Ukrainian and English during this interview and it was difficult to believe that Elizaveta had once arrived quite unprepared for the English-speaking environment in Toronto as she spoke very beautifully in English. I asked her how she felt about her speaking abilities now as compared to when she first arrived. Without hesitation, or modesty, Elizaveta stated that she felt her English proficiency was, "almost perfect!" She feels very fluent, because she understands absolutely everything. "Now, I have high proficiency because at the beginning, my proficiency was zero! My vocabulary was made up of 50 words. Now, I'm fluent, I understand everything, I can read and write decently well." I, myself was very impressed with the way in which Elizaveta spoke and asked her to describe to me the process of her learning English once she arrived in Canada.

5.3.2 Learning the English language in Canada: Elizaveta.

Elizaveta explained that her husband helped her locate the LINC assessment centre where she scored a level 2 and began taking formal English as a Second Language classes. After the birth of her daughter, she discontinued classes for three years, but when she returned to focusing on learning the language, she was able to complete three LINC levels in one year, eventually ending at the fifth level. Elizaveta explained that it was very important to her to become a contributing citizen in Canada by realizing the career for which she had gone to school for so many years in Ukraine. She said that she wanted to become a teacher, but after contacting the Ontario College of Teachers, she learned that her degree and qualifications were only partially recognized by the College. After receiving instruction and advice on the action she should take in order to become a teacher in Ontario, she decided that she needed to attend a teacher-training program in university. With this bold dream, she decided to take the TOEFL. At that point, she explained that she felt frustrated with the instruction at LINC, saying,

> All day you sit there, learning rules and filling out true or false bubbles on worksheets! They only concentrate on grammar and listening; there was no practicing at all. Nobody teaches speaking. Once in a while, they told us to talk to one another; to tell each other general things about ourselves. But this way, we were just learning each other's

> accents! You never get the chance to apply what you learn; there's no context. I didn't want to waste anymore time; I just took a chance and took the TOEFL exam. I passed and enrolled into a TOEFL preparation class. After four or five months, I started writing nice essays and write-ups. Without effort, my English immediately got so much better in this class. And, we learned to speak! Which was so important.

Elizaveta explained that she enrolled in a TOEFL preparation course after she had passed the TOEFL because she felt that she required additional guidance and preparation for the longer, more structured writing expected in university. In order to prepare for university, Elizaveta studied English for nine months at an ESL school, which prepared students specifically for the TOEFL examination. Elizaveta described having a TOEFL preparation textbook from which they studied and she fondly reminisced about her teacher who taught the students speaking, writing, reading and listening. Elizaveta described to me in detail the way in which she was taught in that class explaining that the teacher provided them with exercises in the four skill types; writing, listening, reading and speaking, all with time limits, to imitate the test, to consequently better prepare the students for the examination. Elizaveta described the writing section, which included a twenty-minute time limit in which the students were to write a well-organized short

essay, on one page. The listening section required the students to listen to a text read aloud, a radio broadcast, a short conversation and then answer questions in written form. There were also multiple-choice questions, which were answered by using a computer – all of which was completed under a strict time limit.

I asked Elizaveta about the TOEFL exam and whether she remembered what it was like to write it and to be in that atmosphere. Elizaveta explained that it was an exam lasting 3.5-4 hours, where she remembered being given a theme and answering many questions, for which she explained, "I had 30 seconds to think and then move on, because there was no time." For other questions, she recalled writing out a few sentences to explain her reasoning on certain topics. Generally, Elizaveta felt that she was able to do well on the TOEFL because of her extensive schooling experience.

> I think if you are not well educated, it is hard to pass the TOEFL because there are a lot of very specific texts, university level texts, with professional language. I think some sample texts were from university and college textbooks, some had medical terms, for example. I think everyone in the class was getting ready to go to university and was already internationally educated.

After Elizaveta was accepted into university, she attended the teacher-education program. She had been a college music teacher in Ukraine, but needed to obtain a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Fine Arts; therefore, to major in music, as well as another subject in order to be able to teach at the intermediate and senior levels in Ontario. In thinking about my earlier question regarding her feelings toward her own language skills, she then told me, with sarcasm, "Yes, my English is really good now. I have enough English skills to understand that I will not get a teaching job!" After turning a dim situation into a light-hearted moment, I felt that I could go into asking Elizaveta about her thoughts, in hindsight, about the decisions she had taken – in learning English, attending university, all of which proved her to be a very brave person, determined to accomplish her goals.

5.3.3 The purpose of language proficiency in Canada: Elizaveta.

Elizaveta explained that the role of the English language in her life was extremely large, she explained,

> If you don't know English, then you are like a child. You don't communicate with people, or understand your surroundings. You don't even understand any basic information. As a result, you have nothing. You don't know where to find work, and don't communicate with

> people, which is most important because you are cut-off from opportunities that you might have. You don't know where you can go study or upgrade courses; you have no information about educational or work opportunities. You can't communicate with native Canadians - English-speakers, who would be able to help you, give you advice or recommendations. You don't build relationships or make connections, which is very important to getting somewhere here.

Elizaveta thus placed social connections as a very important aspect to success in Toronto. She felt that without English communication skills, she would have been unable to learn how to function in her society. Elizaveta explained that it was important to refrain from acting ignorant, or child-like by ignoring the opportunities available around – especially those found in knowing other people, who could share knowledge and information about their own experiences and lives in Toronto. Elizaveta explained that her husband already lived in Toronto and had studied English which is why he was able to help her find the appropriate schools, as well as teach her that studying and upgrading her credentials was her only viable option for success in Canada.

> I didn't waste time thinking about what to do when I got here [Canada]. I already knew I had to go get an assessment done, go to LINC, and go to school. When you already know English, you learn about the Bridge programs. There's no course that teaches you how to live here, but sometimes little things may come up in your classes, your teacher might tell you something – but it is not their job to do so. It is your job to look around on websites, and find opportunities for yourself. Nobody will help you, and it is not anybody's responsibility to help you.

Elizaveta thus explained the blunt reality of moving to a different place and adjusting to the different way in which things worked there. Her positive and determined attitude led her to being able to navigate her new environment in Toronto. She shared with me a negative experience as well in one of her classes, when she was speaking with other teachers who were internationally trained, "I told them I would go to teachers college. They thought I was so ambitious. They looked negatively on me." Despite some negative comments, Elizaveta continued to pursue becoming a teacher. She had a daughter, a family and thus, ample motivation to continue with her efforts to take part actively in the society around her. Regarding the way in which English affects her daily life, Elizaveta said that, "the level of education that my child earns depends on my own

level of education, speaking and understanding abilities. If I learn English, I will learn about school ratings and the existence of French immersion schools! Communication is information! With no information, you know nothing." From her conclusions, I gained the sense that Elizaveta felt it very important to truly become a member of the wider society, in order to be able to succeed in her own life, as well as provide opportunities for the future of her child. I asked Elizaveta about her involvement with the large Ukrainian community in Toronto, to which she replied that,

> When you come with your own language, you sit in your own community. But, living in a multicultural place, you learn English and are able to explore different cultures and different opportunities around you. When your language skills are better, you can better immerse yourself in local culture – you understand people's mentality better, you notice their positive mentality; and understand their tradition and ways of living. You become better prepared to make an adjustment.

This explanation showed me that Elizaveta was truly a life-long learner, very keen on constantly learning new information and improving herself. It showed that she felt strongly about gaining the initial support from a community that is familiar, but found it

of extreme importance to also gain independence from that community in order to truly become independent and to feel pride at accomplishments earned on her own, through effort and error conducted on her own, for her own behalf and for that of her family. Ultimately, Elizaveta desired to feel accomplished and to feel independent as an immigrant woman.

5.4 Ivanna's Experience

I had the opportunity to speak over Skype with Ivanna and her husband who reside in Saskatoon with their two children. During this interview, I was very disappointed with the way in which time vanished, as it was such a pleasure to converse with Ivanna, so talkative and friendly in nature and generous in sharing her stories and experiences. At the beginning of our conversation, I asked Ivanna to tell me a little bit about her family's arrival in Canada – their immigration experience as well as their decision to immigrate. Ivanna explained that she and her children arrived in Canada in 2009; precisely one year after her husband came to Canada. Her husband Andrij came to Canada through an employer recruitment program, assumed to be the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program; as he explains, he was given a two-year contract opportunity with a trucking company in Saskatoon and was able to arrive on a work visa. After working in Canada for half a year Andrij decided to invite his family to join him. At that point, Ivanna began filing the paper work for entrance visas into Canada for

herself and for her children; and they joined Andrij in Canada at the beginning of October 2009.

When Andrij first told me about the contract opportunity he had through a Canadian employer, I was curious to know about the way in which they had learned about this program. Andrij and Ivanna explained that it was a complete accident that one evening, an acquaintance of their's told them about her husband's contract opportunities abroad, which led them to ask her about the agency with which she dealt. Ivanna told me that immediately the following morning, she and Andrij telephoned the agency, the Kyiv Youth Labour Centre, explaining that Andrij had ten years of truck driving experience in both Ukraine and in Argentina and they were granted an interview within a week, which Andrij and Ivanna both attended. During the initial interview, which took place in Kyiv, the interviewer asked them a wide range of different questions; about their driving experience in Ukraine, whether or not they owned a vehicle, whether or not they thought they would be driving in Canada and also questions about the cost of bread in Ukraine, the number of children they had and whether Andrij would indeed be working in Canada. After the initial interview Andrij attended mandatory English language classes for one year in Kyiv, for which he paid $2,500. Andrij said that after the mandatory lessons, he was able to learn enough to speak and to "get by" in English. He explained that when he came to Canada and began working as a truck-driver, he needed to speak with the dispatcher, write in log-books, and to listen to messages about where to take the cargo and what to pick up. He felt that when he began his job, he was prepared to do all that

was expected of him, and credited his abilities to the course he took in Kyiv. He explained also, that after the yearlong course, a second interview at the Canadian Embassy in Kyiv, where, to get a sense of Andrij's skills in the English language, the interviewer spoke only in English and asked Andrij general conversational questions about himself and about his family, which he was able to understand and to answer to the satisfaction of the interviewer.

On reflection, Ivanna thought that many people probably applied to such programs because she felt that the process by which she and the children arrived in Canada was quite intense, in that they were not asked about their language abilities, but were instead very strictly scrutinized in terms of their health and physical state. Ivanna explained that they were specifically asked about any illnesses, medical operations or procedures that they might have had. In addition, many tests were run, including blood work and they were physically examined with a great deal of scrutiny.

5.4.1 Learning the English language in Ukraine: Ivanna and Andrij.

After learning about the strict exams Ivanna and the family passed before entering Canada, I asked them about their preparations for the journey while still residing in Ukraine. I wondered whether Ivanna had any opportunities to prepare her language skills, or whether she needed to learn the language. Ivanna explained that her sister-in-law was American and was able to casually teach her a few English words, but that generally, it was very different learning English in Ukraine as compared to learning it in

Canada. Ivanna spoke about her son, who attended the village elementary school which offered English. However, she explained that the students were not taught "seriously" or "intensely;" that it was quite rare for a student of English to actually "know English." Her daughter began school at the age of five which is early for children in Ukraine as most families do not send their children to kindergarten, but opt instead to start in grade one at the age of six. Ivanna explained that her daughter was a very fast and eager learner; that she learned to read and to write in Ukrainian before leaving for Canada. She was simply very quick to pick up new information and Ivanna said that she feels that the basis her daughter received in the Ukrainian language was very beneficial to her for beginning school in Canada, in the English language. Ivanna found that immediately, her daughter, who began grade one in Canada at the age of six, loved school and learned the English language extremely quickly.

To learn more about the role of language in the lives of newcomers in Saskatchewan, I explained to Ivanna that I had never been to that part of Canada and that I have never moved to live in a country where I did not know the language. I asked Ivanna to tell me about her family's first days in Canada. As I had realized thus far in our conversation, only Andrij was proficient in English to the degree that he understood others and they understood him, however, even though Andrij had a decent English proficiency, I wondered how Ivanna felt in Saskatoon upon her initial arrival. Jokingly, she explained to me that at the beginning, they bluntly began watching television and had no choice but to pay attention and try to understand. She then told me a story about

when she took the children to the community pool; she laughed about how they were shocked to be surrounded by English speakers.

> They were all babbling! It sounded so foreign, I could not hear where one word began and another ended. I could not understand anything! This is when I learned, 'why listen if you don't understand?' Now at work, when the women in the kitchen are talking, I am always tuned out. They ask me, 'why aren't you laughing at my joke?' I say, 'sorry, I wasn't even listening!' They ask me, 'how? We were talking loudly.' I tell them 'you may know how to talk loudly, but I know how to tune out and think about my own things!"

After this light-hearted moment, Ivanna explained to me more seriously that in Kyiv, she was informed about an organization called the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) and that on her second day in Canada, she immediately sought the assistance of this agency, which she considered of vital importance at the beginning stages of her life in Canada. Ivanna explained that they worked with Vasyl[7] at UCC who helped the family with absolutely all of the questions they had, including registering their son into

[7] This name is a pseudonym.

high school – calling the school on their behalf and acting as a translator for them. Their daughter was starting the first grade and since there was a Ukrainian school in Saskatoon, Ivanna and her husband were able to register her into school on their own, without help; however, whenever they received documents or paper work that they could not understand on their own, they asked Vasyl for assistance. Ivanna said that,

> Instead of struggling over those ten words on our own, we would just ask them [the individuals at UCC] and they would translate for us. It's good; they speak Ukrainian there and so they help us fill out paper work, such as for the health card or social insurance number. They can also help you find work if you ask them, because sometimes people tell them about jobs that are available and they can let you know if you are looking for one.

Andrij also mentioned that Vasyl accompanied him to court on account of a traffic ticket he had received for not wearing a seat belt, however, he felt that he understood everything even without Vasyl, but that his presence perhaps made Andrij feel more at ease with the proceedings.

5.4.2 Learning the English language in Canada: Ivanna.

In Saskatoon, there existed a Ukrainian organization and people who spoke a language that she understood, Ivanna nevertheless registered into LINC classes, which were available free of charge to newcomers. Ivanna attended the classes for approximately three months and was very happy with the school, saying that it gave her the "push" that she needed to learn English. After those few English classes, Ivanna began her first job, "I went to work in a hotel without knowing any English, so in those few days at work, I learned all I needed to know." I asked her about her life outside of her work, to which Ivanna said that she could confidently walk into any store, even a clothing store and possess the minimal amount of English required to know how to greet the salesperson, go to the fitting room and even pay at the cash register without any problems because the sum was displayed in numbers; therefore she could do all of her errands with very minimal, if no proficiency in oral English. Compared to when she first came to Canada, Ivanna now feels that she understands "80%" of what others are saying, explaining,

> Maybe I can't say full sentences, but I can put a few words together. After we bought the house, I left the school. I began working at a pizzeria where I learned words I didn't know at the hotel. Now I work at a Ukrainian nursing home where I learn more new words. There are many Canadians at the nursing home, so with them, I have to

> throw around a few words. At the beginning, I worked in the laundry where I didn't understand anything. Now I work in the kitchen; here they talk about all sorts of different subjects. At the beginning I was guessing at what they were saying, when I caught a word, I would go home and look it up. I remember I heard the word 'complain,' so I came home, looked it up in the dictionary and realized that I probably understood one in ten words.

Even though Ivanna was not learning English in a formal educational setting, she created a method whereby she could make the most of the opportunities that surrounded her. She told me that she likes to have a dictionary "under hand" if she feels that she wants to look up a new word and this helps her feel that she is keeping up with her language learning instead of falling behind. She was insistent that even though she may not be able to speak fluently, without first thinking about what she will say, she nevertheless feels that she is well able to hear and to understand what others are saying.

I asked her whether or not she planned to take English in a formal classroom setting once more, wondering how important it was for her to know the language. She told me that generally, English is a difficult language for her to learn and at the beginning she felt very "mentally drained" at hearing so many languages around her. She explained that at the pizzeria where she worked, she had a co-worker who spoke Spanish and

constantly wanted to speak with her in Spanish. Since she and her family lived in Argentina for some time, she had become fluent in the language and was able to converse with her co-worker freely. However, the manager at this workplace preferred to speak with Ivanna in Russian, while other co-workers spoke to her in English. Ivanna explained that, "you can imagine my brain at that time! I had such a mix up with words, with everyone speaking to me in different languages. Even now, when I am talking at work, I notice that if I don't remember a word, or probably don't even know it, I try to say it in Spanish and hope for the best! It [the Spanish language] just comes out easier, more immediate, without thinking." Although Ivanna felt overwhelmed with the languages at her workplace, I wondered whether knowing Spanish helped her understand English. Ivanna told me about the way in which she was able to learn Spanish by listening and by speaking and that without difficulty, reading followed shortly after.

> Spanish was very easy for us to learn; it had a similar structure to Ukrainian and it was directly translatable, unlike English. Spanish we just learned orally, but English is different, for example, the word 'people.' There is no letter 'i' in that word, so if you don't know how it is written, you can't read it! If you can't read in English, you can never read an instruction manual or anything like that."

Ivanna also explained that since she was fluent in Spanish, she became very confused when she started learning English, as she could say a three-word sentence with mostly Spanish words. She felt that instead of acting as an advantage, knowing Spanish only helped to confuse her and "feel a mess in [her] mind."

5.4.3 The purpose of language proficiency in Canada: Ivanna

I asked Ivanna about her feelings toward the role of the English language in her day-to-day life. She told me that she felt it is very important to learn the language. According to her LINC examination, she scored a level 2 and is confident in her basic speaking abilities but not in her writing abilities. She explained that she feels lucky that her daughter speaks English very well, as she can act as her translator, "especially when salespeople come to the door!" I asked Ivanna what she meant by that, to which she explained that, "When the salesman comes to the door, I know how to say, 'we are selling our home, we don't need your security system.' But I prefer not to say it, because I know he will then start asking me more questions. Instead, I ask my daughter to tell him that we don't need it and he goes away faster!" Ivanna said that when her daughter is not around her, then she uses her mastered skills in the language of gestures. She said that she has some vocabulary, but may not always be able to put the words together in order to explain what she needs. She told me about an incident at a store where she went to purchase a humidifier; laughing, she explained to me that she did not know the word for "humidifier" and that she was gesturing with her hands to explain that she needs this

product to stop her daughter's nosebleeds. Ivanna told me that she understood everything the sales person was telling her about the dry climate and that nosebleeds were a common problem for children. She said though, "you feel like a dog. You understand everything you are being told, but you cannot say what you want to say. Even though we understood the salesperson, instead of getting a humidifier, we bought [nasal] spray, because we could not explain what we needed." Ivanna used this story to explain to me that proficiency in English is important to her and that although she was able to complete simple errands with minimal language usage, more complicated questions required her to truly be able to speak the language.

In concluding our conversation, I was curious and asked Ivanna how she and Andrij were able to be so successful in Canada, in organizing their lives roughly the way they wanted and achieving so much in such a short period of time, such as purchasing a car and a home. Ivanna said she and Andrij had a purpose when they came to Canada: they wanted to provide themselves and their children with a better life.

> Even though the jobs I can do as a woman here pay less and even though I do not get full-time work, I can still take this money and buy my children good quality food. In Ukraine, I could make $100, go to the store and not get much for that price. Also, of course, we wanted to have our own house, our own car – we wanted to be independent and we wanted

> to do well. We just support each other; I support my husband and he supports me. We live as best as we can.

I asked her whether or not she felt that their success would have been different if there were no Ukrainians around them at the beginning. From my experience in living among Ukrainians in Toronto, I wondered how the Ukrainian population in Saskatoon communicated – whether there were services other than the UCC offered by speakers of Ukrainian that could help newcomers. For example, in Toronto, there were Ukrainian banks, stores and pharmacies; I wondered whether it was similar in Saskatoon. Ivanna told me that there was a large community of Ukrainians and that it was possible to go to a Ukrainian bank or to a Ukrainian dentist; that even the new housing development complex where she and her family recently bought a new house was being nicknamed "Ukrainian village" because many Ukrainian families were purchasing homes there.

She explained to me that she definitely felt that the English language is extremely necessary and important to learn, but that she wonders how she will learn it better when she has so many responsibilities including going to work, taking care of the house while building the new one, taking care of the family and also spending time with the children, "you want to take them [the children] to the park too, once in a while, but I keep my dictionary close just in case. Hopefully, with time, my English will get better." Ivanna said that while she is working on her language acquisition and learning to blend in with other people in their city, they nevertheless remain close to their Ukrainian roots and

spend time with Ukrainian friends. For example, on their time off work, they often visit a Ukrainian park not far from Saskatoon, spend New Year's Eve with the Ukrainian community and feel like a little "colony." Ivanna said that,

> Nobody is supporting me physically or financially, but maybe there is an invisible support through the fact that there are many Ukrainians around us. If we were alone, of course, it would be very difficult; we would be pulled to go back to Ukraine. Since I have moral support from other Ukrainians here, I don't feel isolated from the world; I have friends who have all settled down here, have bought houses and cars and amongst each other, we feel supported. We know there is someone to talk to who understands our situation and we have people whom we can consult, learn something new, talk about life and not feel completely alone.

After this, I understood that as a newcomer, the Ukrainian community was important to Ivanna, if only to provide a sense of comfort in a new and foreign place. Although she was working at her own pace in learning the language and was able to get by and understand what was being said around her, there was nevertheless a need to find

comfort amidst other people who could understand her on the same level; people who spoke the same language and those who had similar experiences in immigrating from the same place. Perhaps it is not only the English language that is necessary to achieve success when moving to live in a foreign country, there remains a human need for comfort and moral support offered by things that are familiar.

5.5 Nicholas's Experience

I was connected with Nicholas who lives with his wife in a small city in Saskatchewan through a Ukrainian colleague who also resides there. After communicating over e-mail, we agreed to conduct the interview over Skype on a Sunday afternoon. For this interview I sent Nicholas the questionnaire over e-mail, but did not send the interview questions before our conversation and thus he did not prepare his responses prior to meeting with me. From the written questionnaire that I received from Nicholas over e-mail prior to the interview I learned that he came to Canada in the year 2008 at the age of 28 through a work visa, as part of the Provincial Nominee Program. I learned that he had some opportunities to learn the English language in Ukraine, but did not have opportunities to learn it once he arrived to Canada. From the interview, I would ask for a more in-depth account of his language learning experiences and their effects on his life in Canada.

Before asking Nicholas about his move to Canada and the effects of the English language on his day-to-day life, I asked him how he felt his current proficiency in the

English language differed from when he first arrived to Canada. Nicholas told me that he felt there was a great difference between his skills five years ago and his skills at the present time. He said that, "with every passing year, it [his English language skills] gets better and better. Before, even though I had learned the language, I never practiced it, so I did not remember the things I was taught." Nicholas explained that in Canada, he was surrounded by English-speakers, who provided him with a great opportunity to practice, recall and retain the skills he had had once learned. Since he mentioned that he had studied English in Ukraine before coming to Canada, I asked him about those opportunities and the skills that he acquired.

5.5.1 Learning the English language in Ukraine: Nicholas.

Nicholas explained that he grew up in the city of Sumy, in eastern Ukraine. At his school, the course of English as a foreign language was offered and thus he had the opportunity to study it at a young age. "As a child, I never though I would actually need to know this language, so I can't say that I put a lot of effort into learning it." As an adult, after deciding to apply to work in Canada, one year before coming to Canada, he hired a private tutor to teach him English one-on-one. Although the tutor provided him with some of the basics of the English language, Nicholas was nevertheless required to take a subsequent course prior to leaving Ukraine. He explained that he came to Canada through the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program where a Canadian employer hired qualified and trained individuals from other parts of the world to come to Canada to

work at their company. Nicholas said that three months before leaving for Canada, he paid $450 and enrolled in a mandatory English course that lasted one month. For the required course, he remembered receiving a workbook and a textbook which the class followed during that time, "but it was literally for only a month, so if I actually learned something there, it didn't really stay in my head. It's impossible to learn the language in a month and, I had nowhere to practice it!"

In learning about the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program, I found that immigrants wishing to come to Canada through this program were required to pass an English language proficiency test, in order to ensure that they would be able to work once they arrived at their destination in Canada. I asked Nicholas whether he remembered having a test and whether or not he felt prepared. He began by telling me about the process of applying to the program and the necessary requirements.

> I paid a lot of money to get into the program and I paid money to take the mandatory English course. I think that the language test was just another money grab as well. Once I came to Canada I realized that the employer did not require the language test, because he did not see my scores or anything like that. We were paying so much to get into the program; we knew that we would have work once we came to Canada even if we did not pass the exam! And

> some people didn't [pass the exam]. Some people were so clueless, for example, they would be asked a question such as, 'how are you today?' and they would answer, 'no I will not be going there tomorrow.' These people passed too. They just paid the money to get the exam done and receive the check mark saying that they passed the exam.

In learning that most of the application could easily be completed by paying the necessary amount of money, I asked Nicholas whether or not he felt prepared to come to Canada with the English language skills he gained in Ukraine. He told me that he felt he had acquired the basis necessary for the beginning and that he was not worried about learning the language once he arrived in Canada.

5.5.1 Learning the English language in Canada: Nicholas.

I asked Nicholas about the English language learning opportunities available in Yorkton, his city in Saskatchewan. He explained that there were government funded classes that people could attend free of charge. When I asked him whether he took these opportunities, he explained that he attended a few classes, but that his work commitment did not leave him with time to attend classes. "When I arrived, I had a job right away and I didn't have much time to study the language. I just learned it at work, talking with my colleagues. And I needed to work, I couldn't quit, because I needed to repay the

taxes and dues that I owed on account of my coming here [to Canada]." In listening to Nicholas' story, I wondered about his future plans in learning the English language and whether he felt that his workplace required him to improve his current level of proficiency. He told me simply that it was his choice to come to Canada and since "I came to Canada; I respect the fact that I need to learn the English language. I'm not going to start speaking my own language when I am here in someone else's country." Although Nicholas did not fully take part in the government funded language classes, he chose a different method: namely daily communication in English in order to improve his speaking skills, stating that, "it is just necessary, so you do it." Nicholas remarked that, "it is probably a 50:50 ratio of immigrants who do not go to English classes and those who do go to the schools. In the schools, there is a mixed population and there are not many Ukrainians." It is possible that a disconnect exists between the language learning needs of the population and the programs that are offered. Perhaps people would be more willing to participate in formal language learning if the educational practices recognized and responded to students' interests and needs. Moreover, Nicholas, the participant in Saskatchewan, is not the only person who expressed disinterest in the language programs as in Toronto Oleksandr, Elizaveta and Olena all studied in formal language learning classes, namely the LINC program, up to the point when they felt they had outgrown the services being offered before they felt completely comfortable with the skills they had acquired, therefore, being forced to find other methods, whether other agencies or independent means of learning the langauge.

5.5.3 The purpose of language proficiency in Canada: Nicholas.

In hearing the Ukrainian population being mentioned, I asked Nicholas to tell me about the community in Yorkton and whether or not it was supportive to newcomers. I wondered whether skills in the English language took precedence over the importance of community support. Nicholas told me that there were many Ukrainian speakers in the city of Kenora, which was near Yorkton, but that many people did not admit that they speak Ukrainian. "Especially since we are Russian speaking, they [Ukrainian speakers] like to speak in English but listen in on what we are talking about in Russian. It's just that I grew up in the east, I speak Ukrainian, but I am much more comfortable speaking Russian." Nicholas introduced to me the feeling of animosity between immigrants from eastern Ukraine and those from western Ukraine, indicating that even in Canada, which should be neutral territory; old habits are difficult to overcome. As a result of this, Nicholas did not feel any support from the Ukrainian community in Saskatchewan and speaks mostly English in his daily life and daily business. He said that only recently two Russian-speakers began working at the bank as tellers, but before then, he communicated at the bank and in stores only in the English language. Nicholas said that, "I chose to come so I will learn English. I want to move further in my career and improve my current earnings. To do this, I need to take some professional courses. I need to know English well so that I can succeed in those courses, so this is what I am currently working on. I am hoping to have greater achievements once I accomplish these goals."

Nicholas' main reiteration was that it was his choice to come to Canada and thus his respect for the country encourages him to improve his language skills.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In order to fill a gap in the literature regarding immigrant language acquisition experiences as well as the economic outcome of Ukrainian immigrants in Canada after the year 2000, I conducted the present study in which individuals from both Ontario and Saskatchewan participated in sharing their life stories. By documenting the stories of six Ukrainian immigrants across five interviews, I gleaned a great deal of information regarding individuals' notions of success, their attitudes toward achievement in Canada, their experiences and opportunities in learning English in Ukraine and in Canada and their views on the role of the English language in affecting their economic outcome. In the previous chapter, the findings were outlined using the narrative approach to allow for a retelling of individuals' stories guided by the four key questions posed during the interviews. The following chapter will provide a discussion of the findings organized according to the main themes collected from the interviews: English language learning in Ukraine, language skills across gender and immigration classification categories, women's experiences with language learning in Canada, influences of the Ukrainian community in Canada and the economic effects of proficiency. The analysis focuses on outlining individuals' reflection on self-assessed English language speaking ability and economic effects thereof using the theoretical frameworks of Roman Jakobson and

Michael Halliday; the differences between the experiences of individuals in Saskatchewan and those in Ontario will also be reviewed.

Opportunities and Advantages: Learning the English Language in Ukraine

Most of the participants had opportunities to study the English language in Ukraine depending on the area in which they lived. Four of the six individuals (Elizaveta, Andrij, Oleksandr, Nicholas) participated in formal and two (Elizaveta and Olena) participated in informal English language education in Ukraine. All of the participants spoke of those prior experiences as helpful to varying degrees upon beginning their lives in Canada. As described in chapter 3, throughout its long history, the structure and focus of Ukrainian schools and curriculum changed many times, observably depending on the country's occupiers. For example, after the brief creation of the West Ukrainian People's Republic (WUPR) in 1918 (in Western Ukraine), the schooling system was reorganized where education became the government's responsibility, teachers became government workers and the official national language (Ukrainian) was to be used in all schools. Therefore, in 1919, the Ukrainian language replaced the mandatory teaching of the Polish and German languages (in the WUPR). After the Bolsheviks occupied parts of Eastern Ukraine during the beginning of the twentieth century, around the years 1917-1919, they managed to hold onto the principle that the people should have the right to choose the language in which their children

would learn. Although this was the stance, the Bolsheviks did achieve susceptibility to the Russian language of instruction.

It is not the intent of this study to detail the history of Ukraine and its political occupiers. However, in order to understand the current foreign language curriculum it is helpful to understand the reasons why certain languages and not others were used during various times in Ukraine's history. In more recent history, schools included elective language courses depending on the wishes of the parents and on the population in the given area. Currently, education in Ukraine is ruled by regional and city bodies which, although authorized with a certain degree of power over the linguistic curriculum of their schools, nevertheless follow mandates and Curriculum as set on the federal level by the Ministry of Education and Sciences (MON), which was reorganized and thus named in February 2013.

In the current study, for those individuals who lived in more rural locations and villages (Olena, Andrij and Ivanna) and studied in the 1980s, the foreign language that was available in the neighbourhood school, was usually German. Those individuals who lived in large urban centres had more opportunity to choose the school that specialized in the foreign language they were most interested in learning. Of the six individuals interviewed, three (Elizaveta, Oleksandr and Nicholas) lived in large cities and attended schools where they learned English as an additional foreign language. Living in Eastern Ukraine where all mainstream subjects were taught in Russian, Elizaveta in Zaporizhya and Nicholas in Sumy studied English and Ukrainian as foreign languages from the

fourth to the eleventh grade. Currently, subjects are taught in Ukrainian in these areas while Russian has become one of the foreign language options. In Western Ukraine, Oleksandr studied Russian and English as foreign languages, as most of the schools in his city used Ukrainian as the language of instruction for the core curriculum subjects.[8] Both Nicholas and Elizaveta described their elementary school education in the English language as quite ineffective explaining that as young students they did not take full advantage of the learning opportunity never expecting that proficiency in the English language would be useful in adult life. Only one individual (Oleksandr) felt that the years of studying English in school provided him with a good understanding, a rich vocabulary and a good basis for learning the language in greater depth as an adult.

Since all of the interviewees arrived in Canada in their late 20s, I had the opportunity to ask them about their English language learning opportunities and experiences in Ukraine, not only as children, but as adults. The prevailing theme was that the male principal applicants (Andrij and Nicholas) had more accessible opportunities to learn the English language in Ukraine than those who were sponsored (Elizaveta) or the family members who were arriving along with the principal applicants (Olena and Ivanna). It would be unjustified to state that the women did not have opportunities to learn the English language as two of the women (Olena and Elizaveta) said that opportunities were available: schools and tutors existed; however, they were not always able to take advantage of the opportunities. Even though there were a very wide

[8] For more information on the foreign languages and core language of instruction in schools in the Ukrainian SSR, please see chapter 3.

variety of language schools in the large city where Elizaveta lived, she said that they were very expensive to attend. In addition, right before she was to leave for Canada, she was working full-time and could only hire a tutor for a short customized program before departing. Olena also mentioned that she had hired a tutor immediately before her departure but, like Elizaveta, she studied one-on-one with the tutor for a short time and did not feel that the language learning experience was adequate to prepare her for life in Canada. Ivanna said that living in the village, she had no opportunities to learn the English language apart from her sister-in-law who visited from America and shared a few common phrases and basic key words. Therefore it seems that although opportunities existed, these were not as accessible as the mandatory language classes that the economic class male principal applicants participated in at the agency through which they applied for work and immigration to Canada.

Language Skill: Comparing Gender and Immigration Classification Categories

After arriving in Canada, the male principal applicants in the economic immigration classification category either felt well-prepared with the language skills they had acquired through the mandatory language training program in Ukraine, which was introduced at the agency in Kyiv (Andrij), or felt that they were ready to quickly begin learning and responding with the necessary language skills on-site at the workplace in which they were already working (Nicholas). This is addressed in Halliday's theory where he considered and compared second language learning with learning a first

language as a child stating that when first learning a language a child simply listens from birth onwards without generating replies. Halliday wrote that listening is an important part of the language learning process, whether first or second language, because unlike a classroom where the individual is nervous about their next statement, an environment that lets the individual truly listen allows the person to hear and to internalize (Halliday, 2007). All of the principal applicants who arrived under an economic immigration classification category (Nicholas and Andrij) received some form of English language training in Ukraine specifically; language training that was focused on the profession, aimed at helping them to feel comfortable in the workplace once they arrived in Canada. In his study of linguistics and communication theory, Jakobson also wrote that the "linguistic observer who possesses or acquires a command of the language he is observing is or gradually becomes a potential or actual partner in the exchange of verbal messages among the members of the speech community, a passive or even active fellow member of that community" (1990, p. 493). Perhaps the short but intensive time in which both Andrij and Nicholas spent listening and learning the English language prior to arrival helped them to mentally prepare to become truly immersed in the English language in Canada and to thus feel ready to produce responses and to participate by speaking once they arrived in Canada.

The women, however, did not have an agency to contact, which would provide language training, nor did they come directly into employment where they could be trained in basic English language communication. The recruitment agencies neither

provided, nor recommended official language training to the family members who arrived together with the principal applicant. They instead attended language classes in the destination city after arrival and only if opportunities existed and were obtainable. As in Chiswick, Lee and Miller's (2005) study on the English language proficiency of immigrant husband-wife pairs in Australia, the principal applicants were often more proficient in the official language than the women who were often the spouses accompanying the principal applicants (2005, p. 642). This was definitely the case in one of the interviews in this study. Information is unavailable regarding the spouse of Nicholas, a participant in Saskatchewan who arrived under the economic immigrant classification category. Andrij's wife Ivanna however, felt linguistically unprepared to come to Canada because she did not have any opportunities to learn the language prior to her departure. Living in a village did not afford many resources in terms of language training and leaving the village was impractical as she had many family responsibilities in the home while Andrij was in Kyiv studying English.

Women and Language Learning in Canada

The second theme discovered after collecting all of the data was common among two of the women who were interviewed (Olena and Elizaveta), namely their role as mothers and the necessity of having skills in the English language in order to communicate for the benefit of their children. In their experience, Elizaveta and Olena

felt that the English language played a critical role in affecting their personal economic outcomes, as well as an important role in their effectiveness as parents, as the women felt that language skills allowed them to provide their children with a stable foundation in all aspects of their lives, with the aim to help their children be successful in the future. As Halliday wrote in the context of learning theory, the language learning process is related to the use and understanding of language in that as in the first language, the aim of the second language learner is to achieve success. Success "will always be a relative matter; in a second language we may be aiming for success in quite specific areas, not necessarily restricting our ultimate aims but at least ordering our priorities. This is [...] the notion of 'languages for special purposes'" (Halliday, 2007, p. 190). Olena and Elizaveta both spoke about their focus on learning the English language upon arrival in order to be able to take care of their children and provide for them in this country. In studying immigrant women's access to language classes in British Columbia, Sandra Kourtizin (2000) focused on the complex role of learner identity, thus, looking beyond factors such as time and geography as constraints to English as a Second Language classes. In delving deeper into the lives of immigrant mothers, Kouritzin extracted their distinct but contradictory roles; first, finding that they had the responsibility to act as guardians of their cultural identity, "maintainers of the mother culture, keepers of the mother tongue, and guardians of familial heritage" (2000, p. 15). However, in order to be a strong support for children outside of the home, and apart from encouraging children to learn their heritage and history, Kouritzin discovered that an immigrant mother must

"function in the majority language, interacting with teachers, doctors, social systems officials [...she] must integrate as quickly as possible into the new life, acquiring English language and customs so as to benefit her children" (2000, p. 15). This was precisely the situation as described by the women interviewed in Ontario. Although Elizaveta in a sense delayed her own English language learning in Toronto because of familial obligations when her daughter was born, both she and Olena nevertheless felt it necessary to learn the language to not only benefit themselves, but to be able to learn and gain insight on behalf of their children's futures. In Gardner's (2001) analysis of motivation to learning a language, motivation is classified as integrative when individuals have the desire to learn from members of the language community they choose to join which is evident in the experiences of both Olena and Elizaveta as mothers. Halliday wrote that success in learning the language follows the idea of "language as a resource" (Halliday, 2007, p. 191), For example, Elizaveta stated,

> The level of education my child receives depends on my own level of education, speaking and understanding in English. Communication is information. I didn't know about French immersion schools; after I learned about them, it was too late. With no information, you know nothing.

Therefore, Elizaveta felt that in gaining a good understanding of the English language, she would be better able to help herself become competent in her surroundings, as a result, better able to provide her child with the best possible opportunities. In our follow-up correspondence, Olena stated,

> I needed to learn English not only for my benefits, but also to help my son in his school. For me, my son's future is much more important than mine. I did not want him to struggle, or to be depressed about studying here [in Canada]. When we came, none of us could speak English, at that time I tried to help him with his learning the best I could.

Thus, language was an important resource for Olena as well, as it was a way in which she could support her child, his needs and his future successes.

All three of the women interviewed were mothers who expressed feeling a sense of responsibility toward their families, especially to supporting their children. The follow-up conversation with Elizaveta emphasized her feeling of urgency; understanding that her husband would support their family financially while she settled in, she nevertheless took the responsibility to learn English upon herself – seeking to achieve the degree of fluency that would allow her to create a sense of stability for her child as soon

as possible. As Kouritzin explained, "Men financially provide for the family by interacting publicly at work, while women provide sustenance and nurturing for the family [...] being primarily responsible for the educational development of their children" (2000, p. 15). Elizaveta spoke about not only learning English in order to earn a degree and start a career in Canada, but also spoke about the importance to integrate with the native Canadian-born community, to be able to learn and ask for guidance and assistance in matters pertaining to her child, such as schooling options, which were of the utmost importance to learn about quickly in order to avoid missing important deadlines or details that could be irreversible in the future. For example, although she felt it was important to maintain the mother tongue in the home, the French program was of great interest to Elizaveta, as she wished her daughter to be multilingual and to learn a language in addition to English and her mother tongue, but she was unsure about the process, applications and commencement details of the French programs in Toronto. She was very adamant in highlighting the importance of socializing with Canadians who were not necessarily members of the Ukrainian Canadian community, in order to broaden her perceptions and understanding of the available opportunities. She emphasized that the more people she spoke to, the more opinions or scenarios she would learn and the better prepared she and her husband would be to form their own opinions and form decisions that would benefit their child. Similarly, Olena began learning English with dedication in order to not only work on gaining entrance to a degree program so that she could support her family financially, but to also ensure that she was able to help her son

with all matters pertaining to achieving success and a feeling of security in his studies in elementary school and later in high school.

Both Ivanna, in Saskatchewan and Olena, in Ontario enrolled their children in Ukrainian day schools. During our conversations, both women spoke about having no issues in registering their children in elementary school, as the staff spoke Ukrainian and proficiency in English was not necessary in order to communicate initially. Although Ivanna's son was beginning high school when their family moved to Canada, she felt supported by the UCC representative in their Saskatoon neighbourhood, as he helped them to become acquainted and comfortable with the education system in Canada and helped them register their son in high school. At the point of our interview, after having spent some years in Canada, Olena's son was at the end of elementary school and she spoke of a different story than Ivanna. Olena was most concerned with things such as speaking with the classroom teacher in English during parent-teacher interview nights, helping her son with schoolwork and preparing applications for high school; thus she was more focused on forming a link between her family and people outside of the Ukrainian-speaking community, with the aim of helping her child. Thus, as much as Olena may have wanted to learn the English language at her own pace, the goal of helping both herself and her son become comfortable and proud of their personal successes was reliant on her ability to communicate with many different people and in many different ways. This is consistent with Garder's (2001) writing on instrumental and integrative motivation to language learning which states that individuals who wish to connect

emotionally with members of a language community show integrative motivation while the desire to help one's self illustrates instrumental motivation. The women wanted to learn English in order to communicate with other English-speakers and to learn from them, thus they were displaying integrative motivation. However, their desire to learn the language for the purpose of helping their children satisfied the criteria for instrumental integration. Gardner acknowledges that it is possible for an individual to be motivated both integratively and instrumentally, and that the criteria for each category are flexible. Most important to note is that "the motivated individual expends effort, has desires [...] an individual might feel that neither set of reasons apply, or that there is some other reason" (2001, p. 10). Both Halliday and Jakobson wrote about this in their theories through the purpose of language. Halliday identified language as a resource (Halliday, 2007, p. 191) while Jakobson held the idea that "any verbal behavior is goal-directed" (1981, p. 19) and thus each person had a specific purpose for their language learning.

Influence of the Ukrainian Community in Canada

After organizing all of the data provided by the respondents, the third theme involved the positive and negative effects of socializing and living within the Ukrainian community in both Saskatchewan and in Ontario on English language learning. Interestingly, while both geographic areas contained large Ukrainian communities, individuals' interaction with the communities was quite different. For example, in the

small urban centre where Nicholas lived, the Ukrainian community appeared neither accommodating nor hospitable to him, which Nicholas explained was due to his being a Russian-speaking Ukrainian. Although Nicholas did not receive the same welcome or guidance from the Ukrainian community as some of the other respondents in the other cities, the positive aspect of his experience was that it allowed him to learn the English language perhaps more quickly than those individuals who were welcomed into the Ukrainian community and actively participated in it, as a familiar refuge away from the confusing and frightening English-speaking surroundings.

Like some of the participants in Chiswick, Lee and Miller's study (2005), for Olena, learning to communicate in English to the extent she needed was difficult in that Ukrainian-speakers constantly surrounded her, at home and in the workplace. The authors wrote about examining not only the characteristics of the individual but also the characteristics of spouses and members of the household, as these individuals could largely affect language acquisition (Chiswick, Lee & Miller, 2005). Scholars in the past have suggested that immigrant groups who settle into large ethnic enclaves have less economic incentive to learn the dominant language because of large markets existing within (Evans, 1986), or that groups of immigrants who speak a minority language are influenced to refrain from integrating into the dominant society (Veltman, 1983). In writing about some of the negative effects of ethnic networks on learning the dominant language, Chiswick and Miller (1994) also discussed some of the ways in which new immigrants may be sheltered from learning the language. Although instances to support

Chiswick and Miller's (1994) study do exist in the present research, there are also cases where the ethnic network hindered language learning for a short time, but individuals' perseverance and personal goals prevailed, causing them to eventually learn the language, and in most cases, step out of the security found in the community. Olena spoke about being surrounded by Ukrainian television channels and Ukrainian-speaking family members at home and by Ukrainian-speaking co-workers at work. She was nevertheless determined to attend LINC classes and to study the language actively, displaying Halliday's "language as a resource" (Halliday, 2007, p. 191). The goal was to not only attend a college program that would lead to a stable career for herself, but to also become confident enough in the language as to speak freely with teachers or other people such as tutors who could be instrumental in allowing Olena to help her son complete his elementary school studies successfully and move on to high school. Olena felt that it was important to not only understand the people around her, but also felt it necessary to be understood in order to receive the responses to her specific queries. In his work, Jakobson found that each sound functions in order to allow the speaker to be heard and to be understood by others. As Jakobson spoke about the actions of humans' phonatory organs during a lecture in New York city, he stated, "these actions aim at producing, *for we speak in order to be heard;* and in order to be able to interpret, classify and define the diverse sounds of our language we must take into account the meaning which they carry, *for it is in order to be understood that we seek to be heard"* (Jakobson, 1978, p. 25).

In their study based on immigrants in Australia, Chiswick and Miller (1994) found that minority language enclaves greatly affect the language learning of their members. Chiswick and Miller found various factors that negatively affect language learning, including: spouses who speak the same language; at least one other family member besides the child or the spouse who speaks the same language; and the existence of a great number of foreign language newspapers (1994, p. 27).

Although all of the individuals in the study feel very self-sufficient and some feel quite confident in their communication abilities in English, in analyzing the data, I found that people preferred to focus on positive achievements completed independently rather than admit that help was received along the journey to the present. Nevertheless, most of the participants utilized the resources offered by the Ukrainian community at the very beginning and at sometimes currently in their lives in Canada. For example, Elizaveta, Olena, Oleksandr, and Ivanna experienced the factors limiting language learning as organized by Chiswick and Miller (1994). Elizaveta's language learning was delayed on account of her having a child and being required to remain in the home during her first three years in Canada. She explained that at home, with her mother and her husband, she was only communicating with people in her first language, with very limited exposure to English at that time. Only after her daughter began attending school could Elizaveta begin formal language training and move away from trying to teach herself English while at home with a small child and surrounded by family members with whom she only spoke Ukrainian. In her case, Elizaveta did not feel greatly influenced by the Ukrainian

community linguistically because she minimally participated in it when she first came to Canada, relying mostly on her husband for guidance and after she became more comfortable with the English language, she much preferred to professionally socialize in the English-speaking community. She explained that when people remain hidden in their own communities and refuse to learn English,

> You don't even understand any basic information. As a result, you have nothing. You don't know where to find work and don't communicate with people, which is most important because you are cut-off from opportunities that you might have [...] You don't build relationships or make connections, which is very important to getting somewhere here.

To expand on the idea of learning to communicate within a particular language community, Jakobson explained that after the initial period of observation, linguistic investigation must move "toward an internal approach to the language studied, when the observer becomes adjusted to the native speakers and decodes messages in their mother tongue through the medium of its code" (1990, p. 494-5). Elizaveta explained that it was much more efficient to learn English, because, "When your language skills are better, [...] You become better prepared to make an adjustment." Following her own

philosophy, Elizaveta focused on gaining resources and learning from the English-speaking community and as Jakobson explained in his theory, Elizaveta also felt that her exposure to the English speaking environment allowed her to become more comfortable in socializing within Canadian society.

Perhaps most of all the participants, Oleksandr spoke about and emphasized the role of the Ukrainian community. He said that when he came to Canada, he was encouraged by family members to learn the English language, to start feeling more comfortable in the Canadian society. After inquiring at the Ukrainian Social Services in Toronto about English language classes, he began attending the LINC classes in his neighbourhood. Although he felt that the classes were very beneficial in helping him recover some of the English vocabulary and structure that he had extensively learned as a child, he slowly lost interest in the classes after a while, explaining that it came to the point that, "I didn't learn anything, or at least, I wasn't consciously learning anything. The class was full of pensioners, coming to kill time, as well as other Ukrainians and Russians, so I was meeting people, but I was not learning." Oleksandr felt that in order to maintain his self-respect and feel he was fulfilling his full worth or potential, it was extremely important to learn the English language. Although he thought it was important to maintain his ethnic roots and participate[9] in the Ukrainian community in Toronto, he also emphasized the importance of learning English in order to truly become an

[9] In their study on recent Ukrainian immigrants to Toronto, authors, Satzewich, Isajiw and Duvalko (2006) argued that although the current Ukrainian immigration to Canada may not be significant in size it has a role in acting as a renewal to existing Ukrainian organizations.

independent and contributing member of the new society he chose to join. In explaining that the Ukrainian community could offer much moral comfort and assistance to newcomers, especially in the form of employment for new Ukrainian immigrants, it was nevertheless essential for Oleksandr to refrain from following those who "don't feel the necessity of learning English. They appear to be adults [...] but they are not because they are unable to learn the language, which is what makes them adults in this society."

Thus, for Oleksandr, it was important to learn the English language in order to truly become a part of the Canadian society. He said that, "you live among people, in a society and so you need a common language. We live in Toronto, so we need to speak English, it's one of the languages of our country." Oleksandr, although supported by Ukrainian-speaking family members, community members and co-workers, strongly felt that in knowing the English language, he is able to be more self-sufficient in the greater sphere of life; that is to say, he felt he is able to successfully function outside of the Ukrainian-speaking community. In fact, this is exactly what Nicholas said as well, "I came to this country, so I respect the fact that I need to learn the English language. I'm not going to start speaking my own language when I am here in someone else's country [...] Everything that happens in daily life, happens in English. I chose to come here, so of course I will learn English." In reverting back to Halliday's theory, language has evolved to serve social functions (Halliday, 1976), which is precisely the idea held by Nicholas and Oleksandr. Though Nicholas and Oleksandr both had different relationships with and feelings toward the Ukrainian community, they both felt that

learning English in Canada was very necessary from a social perspective, as it serves the purpose of communication (Jakobson, 1990). Thus regardless of their initial relationship with the community, in the end, they were affected the same way: with the concluding idea that they must know how to live and must become comfortable living apart from the Ukrainian community, or living outside the community and integrate with English-speaking Canada as well.

Economic Effects of Language Proficiency: Gendered Perceptions

Although Oleksandr and Nicholas were both very supportive of integrating into Canadian, English-speaking society, Olena was different in that she supported the idea of learning the English language and integrating in English-speaking society for different reasons. Olena spoke about receiving a great deal of support from the Ukrainian community in that she had family members, friends and co-workers who were able to provide her with advice regarding English language schools and other matters pertaining to daily life. Thus, there was a reliability and safety found in the Ukrainian community that was quite incomparable to anything else. Heller (2003) presents the concept of the "older ideology of community and of the ways in which the community organized itself to reproduce it" (p. 487). She asserts the "reproduction of the ideology of the authentic community are shifting" (p. 487) and somewhat ambiguous. In Olena's case, English language learning and the promise of integrating into Canadian society is supported by the same community that signals Ukrainian authenticity.

Olena mentioned that having a Ukrainian-speaking place of employment, Ukrainian-language television at home and a fully Ukrainian-speaking household hindered her language learning greatly at the beginning, precisely as described by Chiswick and Miller (1994). This perception is in direct opposition to the findings of numerous studies that reject the notion of first language suppression in favour of second language acquisition, in particular, Cummins' (1981) Interdependence Hypothesis which maintains that experience with either the L1, or the L2 builds capacities in both. Olena felt that by remaining close to the Ukrainian community she would be unable to achieve the things that she wanted by coming to Canada. She was determined to learn the English language in order to help better her son's future and she was focused on earning a degree in order to secure financial stability for her family, as she stated this was impossible for a woman to do if she remained within the Ukrainian community. Olena did not feel any negativity toward the community – on the contrary, she was grateful to be a part of such an ethnically rich and familiar community in Toronto, however, she said that as a fact, men have better chances to remain in the Ukrainian community, to work, to support their families and confidently never learn English. For a woman, high-paying jobs requiring low language skills do not exist in the community, thus, learning English was the best option for her. In order to become gainfully employed and become helpful to her son, she needed to join the English-speaking society. She needed to become an active participant because the only way in which she would be able to communicate, ask questions and find answers, would be to join the majority culture. This is consistent with

Garder's (2009) talk on motivation in which he cited his previous studies based on the hypothesis that people require reasons in order to learn languages which found that integrative orientation was a motivation factor. This factor was a "motivation of a particular type, *characterized by a willingness to be like valued members of the language community*" (p. 2, italics in the original). Investigations on changing attitudes and motivation toward language learning showed that individual students who had high levels of motivation at the beginning of their language learning "tended to maintain high levels of attitudes and motivation" (2009, p. 9), and were as a result successful in acquiring the language.

As a woman in Saskatchewan, Ivanna felt similarly to Olena. Although Ivanna had been in Canada for the least amount of time (3.5 years) and had not yet learned the language to the degree of speaking with confidence, she held this as her goal. Also living in a large Ukrainian community in Saskatoon, recently buying a home in locally nicknamed "Ukrainian village," Ivanna talked about a great sense of relief in being surrounded by other members of her culture and language group. As an adult who had moved to a completely new place of residence where the language is unfamiliar, she in the least felt comfort in knowing that there were others with whom she could share her experiences, doubts, problems or questions and knew that she was not alone in her struggles.

> Nobody is supporting me physically or financially, but
> maybe there is an invisible support through the fact that

> there are many Ukrainians around us. [...] Since I have moral support from other Ukrainians here, I don't feel isolated from the world [...] We know there is someone to talk to who understands our situation and we have people we can consult, learn something new, talk about life and not feel completely alone.

Ivanna talked about being able to communicate and complete errands by using the Ukrainian language in Saskatoon, as the community is quite large and has established all sorts of services, with Ukrainian-speaking employees. Even though it is possible to communicate almost completely in Ukrainian, Ivanna also said "you can't isolate yourself. Sometimes the Ukrainian bank might give you a high percentage on a mortgage, so to open an account with a Canadian bank, you need to speak English [...] Now, we have really learned the language of gestures, but this will not work every time." Ivanna felt that since she was very busy with her home, her work and her family, she could not attend English language classes, which was slowing down her English learning, but not necessarily her financial success in Canada, in that the Ukrainian social agencies also helped her become established at work. Chiswick and Miller (1994) investigated life in an area where individuals spoke a language other than the country's official language and as Olena agreed, found that same language community members

hinder language acquisition. Although her surroundings played a role in slowing down the rate at which she learned English, Ivanna spoke of the incomparable positive support provided by her ethnic community in providing comfort in a new country where things may seem unfamiliar at first, and she did carry a dictionary, in the hopes of independently learning the language and improving her English communication skills. I did not gain the sense that it was as urgent for her to learn the language as it was for Elizaveta and Olena, the two women in Toronto.

Language Learning and the Role of Children

Together with the theme of ethnic community effects on immigrants' rate of language learning and the effect on economic outcome is the theme of family effects, specifically children. In their study, Chiswick Lee & Miller (2005) found that children can have a more negative effect on the language proficiency of women than the proficiency of men. As women often stay out of the work force in order to take care of their children, and since children can act as interpreters for their mothers, it is often the women whose language proficiency suffers (2005, p. 639). This is the situation as described in Ivanna's household. Although Ivanna began to work almost immediately after arriving in Canada, she said that she did not attend English language classes because it was important for her to support her children financially and emotionally. Although her son was in his mid teens and fairly independent, her daughter was quite young, at the age of ten and Ivanna felt that it was important to spend time with her

children, to ensure that she was fulfilling her responsibility as a mother and was available to guide and support them. She also talked about how helpful her daughter was whenever she needed to ask a question at the store or to talk to a sales person at the front door. Language is thus used for the exchange of information (Halliday, 1976, p. 17) although not by the person who wishes to know the information, as this situation is consistent with Chiswick et al (2005), who wrote that the children act as interpreters for parents who have not yet acquired the language to the degree of communicating with comfort. Ivanna did not feel that she was at leisure to attend classes due to work commitments and household obligations and although she was doing her best to learn the language on her own by carrying a dictionary and by listening to her colleagues intently, she was nevertheless happy for the assistance that her children could provide.

Comparing the Experiences of Individuals in Ontario and in Saskatchewan

When comparing the findings that have come out of both provinces, individuals from urban areas in both Saskatchewan and Ontario spoke about the existence of Ukrainian community services, large Ukrainian immigrant communities and the existence of government-funded English language classes (LINC). Although participants' opinions on the role of English language fluency as the greatest factor affecting financial success in Canada varied, all of the individuals felt that proficiency in the English language was nevertheless of great importance to becoming Canadian and living as active citizens. As Heller (2003) wrote, language could be regarded as a

symbol of identity and belonging and perhaps even more significant in relation to this study, a commodity. For the purposes of this investigation, economic success is defined as the extent to which respondents were able to participate in economic life in Canada, by holding positions of paid employment and in participating as consumers. No specific income was assigned to represent financial success as this was regarded as self-assessed and relative to individuals' expectations, lifestyles and personal goals. Additionally, all of the participants projected a feeling of optimism regarding their economic outcome in the future especially if they did not feel completely proficient or successful with their English communication skills in the current stage of their lives in Canada.

One notable difference in the findings is the way in which the individuals came to Canada. Specifically, the immigration category through which the respondents arrived appears to be the main difference affecting their economic success, especially the rate at which individuals gained the feeling of economic stability or success. Both of the families in Saskatchewan arrived in Canada through the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP), whereby the individuals contacted an agency in Ukraine which connected them with a Canadian employer who was seeking a skilled worker willing to relocate to Canada. Although one individual from Saskatchewan, (Nicholas), did not feel that the language training in Ukraine was sufficient to prepare him for his life in Canada, the SINP applicant (Andrij) felt that the language course he completed in Ukraine increased his comfort with the English language and helped him navigate his surroundings during his beginning stages in Canada. Although both of the men in

Saskatchewan felt differently regarding their initial language preparedness, both however mentioned its importance in affecting their future economic success in Canada.

Andrij and his wife Ivanna felt that their satisfaction with their current economic achievements in Canada was the product of a cycle or a series of events whereby Andrij's preparedness with the English language helped him obtain and retain the job that essentially brought his family to Canada; in Canada, the family members as a unit wholly supported one another which provided strength and encouragement to move forward and to consistently improve not only their material situation, but their individual skills as well. Similarly, Heller (2005) reviewed the idea of a "new work order" whereby an employee's value as a worker increases when he or she acquires work-related skills that can be transferred between workplaces, thereby leading to a person's transferability or mobility as a worker. Heller explained that communicative competence can also be measured, objectified and standardized as a skill – especially in language-related work. Although neither Andrij nor Ivanna specifically worked in a language-related industry (i.e. customer service), their motivation to learn the English language was directly influenced by their desire to be employed in an English Canadian setting.

Upon initial arrival, lacking confidence in their language skills, Andrij and his family owed a great deal of appreciation to Ukrainian community resources in Saskatoon, specifically the UCC which helped them with various settlement, education and employment-related tasks. Paying attention to the adults in the family, as opposed to the family as a whole, Ivanna also felt a sense of personal achievement in the minimal

language skills she was able to acquire in her short time while attending English classes in Saskatoon, as well as at her different jobs. She said that in her current job, working as part of the kitchen staff at a nursing home, her minimal language skills nevertheless allowed her to feel satisfied with the knowledge that she was able to provide for her children; and was confident in knowing that with time, her language skills would only improve, further increasing her feelings of personal success, as well as her employability and potential for greater accomplishments. Moving into the future, Andrij and Ivanna both mentioned three factors that led to positively improving their circumstances. They stated that improving their language skills, mutual support within the family and that emotional support from Ukrainian friends going through the same experiences in Canada was important to providing comfort and to helping them maintain a sense of economic stability and to continue the feeling of pride, accomplishment and success.

In the other interview conducted in Saskatchewan, Nicholas felt that although he immigrated with minimal English language skills, he owed his current economic achievements to the stable employment he experienced from the onset of his life in Canada. Although he did not feel support from the Ukrainian community, mostly due to his being a Russian-speaker, he nevertheless felt optimistic about his personal potential for the future. He was confident that with time, his language skills would improve, allowing him to complete additional training courses in order to self-improve and upgrade his current professional skills, consequently leading to greater economic achievement. Chiswick and Miller (1995) noted that investing time and energy into

learning the destination country's official language was important in affecting positive prospects. Thus, by viewing language as a personal investment, Nicholas expected that he would gain the asset that would provide him with the opportunity to increase his income in the future. It appears that the initial employment stability played a very important factor in both Saskatchewan families' sense of economic success. Language remained however the main quality or capital (Chiswick & Miller, 1995), which the individuals strive to gain, as it has the potential to lead to positive changes. Improvement in language speaking ability is undeniably considered a way to further increase economic outcome in the future.

In Ontario, the individuals arrived as an economic class immigrant (Oleksandr), while the two women arrived as spouses of the principal economic class applicant (Olena), or were sponsored (Elizaveta). Neither respondent had the comfort of arriving directly into guaranteed employment, and as adults, the greatest factor affecting their adjustment was gaining personal and financial independence. As highly educated individuals and proud in possessing an education or a title of worth and prestige in Ukraine, they soon felt diminished upon arriving in a place where living with family or relatives, a fact that although provided safety and security, forced them to feel like children, to feel as though they were starting at the beginning. Although the process may not have happened as quickly as the respondents' imagined, they were nonetheless able to gradually work themselves up to a sense of independence and pride in their accomplishments.

For some immigrants, learning the English language in Canada is an extremely difficult task. There are many reasons why people may find it quite challenging to learn the language; some of these reasons vary culturally while others vary according to people's family situations. For some cultures entering Canada, accessibility challenges are correlated with belonging to a paternalistic culture, which did not allow them the freedom to attend classes because families opposed women learning the language (Kilbride & Ali, 2010, p. 186). For the immigrant women in this study, the accessibility issues were quite different, and involved familial and financial reasons as opposed to cultural ones. In Saskatchewan, in addition to feeling the burden of a mortgage and other credits, Ivanna felt obligated to take care of her family, which forced her to take up employment, leaving neither time nor energy for formal language training. In Ontario, while their children were young, both Elizaveta and Olena concentrated on their children, while being financially supported by their families. Both women however were adamant on earning a degree and becoming gainfully employed in Toronto. Regardless of the way in which the women approached language learning, one similarity exists in all of the accounts which considers the theory of Michael Halliday who emphasized the importance of realizing the relationship between the language system and the social system: stating that learning is a social process, "knowledge is transmitted in social contexts, through relationships" (Halliday, 1985/1989, p. 5). In this study, all of the individuals felt that they needed to refrain from avoiding English-speaking society on account of the comfort and safety experienced within an ethnic enclave and they needed

to create an identity outside of the Ukrainian community. By participating in the world outside of the Ukrainian-speaking community, language skills would improve and, as Elizaveta stated, opportunities would arise as there would be more chances to learn about new things. This is consistent with Gardner's (2009) idea that the characteristic of "integrative motivation [is] associated with success in learning the language" (2009, p. 6). Individuals in this study who believed in the "relevance and importance of language study, [recognized] purposes for second language learning" (2009, p. 6) and were thus successful in attaining the degree of language necessary for them to find satisfaction in their achievements. Language in this way is a form of human capital. One may argue that Olena's economic integration in Canadian society may have initially been hindered not by the persistence of L1 but by a reliance on ethnic ties. According to a report by Roth, Seidel, Ma & Lo (2011) "social ties, and the social capital they activate are central to the incorporation of immigrants" (2011, p. 8). "Network homophily"—an adherence to the community as a kind of safe haven can potentially prevent immigrants "from building an ethnically diverse social network" (2011, p. 8). Nee and Sanders describe this as a "segmented trajectory of adaptation" (cited in Roth et al., 2011). Whereby those relying on ethnic-based social capital for mobility are more at risk of being isolated from the economic mainstream, those relying on human capital investment (i.e. ELL) for mobility are likely to integrate more readily.

All three of the respondents in Toronto came to Canada with self-described minimal language speaking skills. While two of the interviewees felt that English was

absolutely necessary to becoming independent and successful (Elizaveta and Olena); the main difference in the accounts and expectations of success of the three individuals was their sex; where Oleksandr confidently stated that English was not particularly necessary to achieving economic stability, while Olena and Elizaveta strongly felt that they would neither achieve their personal goals nor fulfill their reasons for moving to Canada without English language proficiency. All three individuals felt that the adjustment to life in Canada entailed obtaining gainful employment which would allow them to truly be adults, to become independent and to support their own families. For the two women (Elizaveta and Olena), meaningful employment could only be achieved after they learned the English language and earned a degree. For Oleksandr, formal education was beneficial but not necessary to earning a living, gaining economic stability and supporting his family, as meaningful employment was available within the Ukrainian-speaking community. Oleksandr said English is not necessary to be financially successful because the Ukrainian community is large enough to support itself. Although he worked in an English-speaking environment at first, he admitted it was very beneficial to helping him improve his speaking skills, especially at the beginning when he was desperate to learn the language, but more recently working for an English-speaking construction company completely surrounded by Ukrainian-speakers convinced him that the English language is not the sole channel through which economic stability can be achieved, challenging Chiswick and Miller's study (1995) insisting language is an important investment to make in order to develop one's economic opportunities. In

analyzing the role language plays in the globalized new economy, Heller (2005) discusses the extent to which language is an integral part of work-related competence. Elizaveta and Olena, the two female participants in Toronto eager to earn money on par with their male counterparts, voiced a recognition that language proficiency went with an advanced education necessary for women to acquire higher paying jobs. This is consistent with Heller's (2005) contention that language, in particular, proficiency in written communication is associated with management, not of labour. While female participants, Olena and Elizaveta, in Toronto felt that language was an important work-related skill because it would increase their economic outcomes, Oleksandr, the Toronto male in the study employed in the labour sector did not fully recognize "the centrality of language as both mode of production and product" (Heller, 2005, p. 1). Interestingly, his recognition of language as added value decreased in response to employment change from front-line service industry to construction worker. The gender difference in how participants value English language learning reflects the documented "feminization" of the work force (Gee, Hall, Lankshear, 1996; Krasny, 2013) whereby advances in technology and economic change have resulted in a work place culture in favour of more feminine or relational hence communicative modes of interaction over traditional male modes of individual competition.

Jakobson's and Halliday's theoretical frameworks guiding this study hold that language is a system with specific purposes and it is not an object to be acquired. In questioning the extent to which learning the dominant language helps immigrants

achieve economic success in their destination country, the theoretical frame has also led to the discovery that finances are not the sole driving force for learning the English language for Ukrainian immigrants in Canada. Other factors such as family and community both act as factors affecting language learning as well as hindering language learning. The individuals did not only feel motivated to learn the language for the purpose of gaining economic stability, but also for providing their children with opportunities. Although the reasons for learning the language are specific to each individual, on a more general scale, they fit the theoretical model of language serving the purpose of communication, socialization and for the exchange of information, as the individuals in the study found learning English to be a means for them to actively integrate into Canadian society.

Although none of the individuals I spoke to in Saskatchewan or Ontario talked about their immigration experience as "easy," none of them described it as unbearable. Perhaps the courage that each individual possessed in order to make such a drastic move and change in their lives, overrode any feelings of inadequacy or shortcoming, feeling that the achievement of being accepted to immigrate and arriving to Canada was enormous and that anything that occured in the future could only be better. Even though none of the individuals generally arrived in Canada completely alone; they had family members, spouses, friends and in the least employers who could guide and provide them with advice, all of the individuals were very focused on gaining a sense of independence and self-sufficiency. All of the respondents were hard-working and determined to

become financially independent and to become active contributors to Canada's economy, and therefore be successful.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

The large Ukrainian population in Canada and its long history in this country inspired this study. Curiosity toward its more recent members led to meeting with recent immigrants from Ukraine and learning about their personal journeys to Canada specifically in relation to their language learning experiences and the effect these experiences had on their economic outcomes. At the beginning of the study, I expected to find that the individuals who immigrated to Canada as young adults in the early 21st century would have had extensive experiences with the English language in Ukraine. I assumed that if they arrived around the age of thirty, then individuals would have lived at least half of their lives in the independent Ukraine (independent in 1991), where I assumed individuals would have had more exposure to the English language as opposed to living and being schooled in the closed and communist Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. I expected that there would have been little opportunity to learn about foreign affairs, much less to learn foreign languages during Soviet times. In the current globalized economy I assumed that the people would have been more comfortable with the English language due to its presence in international communication, especially over the Internet.

The findings of this research turned out to be more complicated than expected and quite varied. Six individuals participated in the five interviews. Even though all of the individuals completed their schooling up to grade eight before the fall of Communism, all of the participants studied a foreign language: either German or English, beginning in the fourth grade of middle school. When asked to self-reflect upon the language skills with which they arrived in Canada, all but one of the participants felt that their language skills were not satisfactory. Communication in an official language may serve as an important skill when analysed through human capital theory, but not all respondents were in agreement that language proficiency was sufficient for guaranteeing financial stability or success in Canada.

Factors that I expected to be critical in shaping economic success such as proficiency in the English language because I thought it would be incredibly difficult to function in an English speaking society without this skill were not necessarily instrumental in every individual's life; variations were found not only across the provinces, but across gender as well. For example, educational attainment in either Canada or in Ukraine did not guarantee economic success to the degree expected. The women interviewed in Toronto displayed instrumental motivation (Gardner, 2001) as they were confident that learning the English language would allow them to achieve financial security and success once they earned a degree in Canada and built a career. The responses from the one man interviewed in Toronto indicated that a formal degree was not the most important factor to achieving economic success, as his experience

confirmed that there were greater earning opportunities in positions of lower language proficiency for males than for the females interviewed. For instance, the women in Toronto felt that they needed to earn Canadian credentials because high-paying employment did not exist for them in the Ukrainian community, while it did exist for men. The women were generally seeking long-term stability through social benefits and employment stability while the men sought to provide immediate financial support for themselves and for their families. Therefore, although community support was important for the immigrants in Toronto, its role was different; providing more support in the form of contacts and advice for women, while providing men with more practical employment opportunities. The women realized that they needed to establish their identity outside of the ethnic community believing that the offer of high-paying jobs for female immigrants was tied to earning Canadian credentials.

In Saskatchewan, the uniting factor for both of the families interviewed was the fact that the male principal applicants came to Canada through a provincial immigration program, arriving into guaranteed employment, which played a positive role in immediately affecting their financial stability. Both male participants received English language training in Ukraine prior to their departure for Canada. Only one of the males expressed that the English language training in Ukraine was beneficial in preparing him for his work in Canada while both men agreed that the English language was necessary in their work as their communication skills in the language are what helped them to remain at their places of employment as well as being a factor in helping them improve

their qualifications, participate in professional development opportunities and experience career growth and economic improvement in the future. For the one woman interviewed in Saskatchewan, communication skills in the English language were of definite importance in affecting her economic outcome in the future as she felt that these skills would allow her to obtain a job, feel comfortable in the workplace, as well as influence her ability to communicate with the English-speaking society more confidently. Since she had been in Canada for less than five years at the time of the interview, she did not feel that her English communication skills were perfect, although she did feel that she was constantly improving as she felt that she could understand topics of conversation better than when she first arrived.

In the end, no single factor guarantees for these Ukrainian immigrants' economic success in Canada whether proficiency in English, community or family support but rather, these factors appeared in relation to the quest for autonomy. The results were similar for Saskatchewan and Ontario in that all of the participants were very focused on achieving independence associated with financial success but moreover with an identity: participating and socializing in Canadian society, which required them to learn English. Common among some individuals' responses was the metaphor of the child; where it was considered child-like to avoid integrating into Canadian society by avoiding learning the official language. In order to be considered an adult in the new country of residence, individuals felt it was critical to learn English. Language was a symbol representing adulthood, self-sufficiency, the ability to set and accomplish goals and the necessity to

integrate into Canadian society outside of their own ethnic circles. Most telling about the findings was that the immigrants were not looking to build a "new little Ukraine" in Canada. All of the individuals had specific reasons for moving their lives to Canada, which involved building better lives for themselves and for their children. As a consequence, all of the respondents were willing to integrate (Gardner, 2001) by becoming active members of Canadian society and culture and by interacting with and learning from the other groups residing in Canada. Although many of the individuals expressed a fondness for living within or near the existing Ukrainian community, feeling gratitude at some of the advice or help that they received from this community, they were nevertheless confident that they would not require the community as a crutch and that it was unnecessary to remain inside the ethnic circle which could at times be a sphere of stagnant ideas or opportunities. Instead, all of the respondents in this study expressed the eagerness to learn, improve and to grow in Canada.

Although the research question of this study sought to provide insight on the extent to which proficiency in English affected Ukrainian immigrants' economic achievements in Canada, the participants from both smaller cities in Saskatchewan and the large city of Toronto in Ontario all agreed that various forms of self-sufficiency and independence in Canada was of great value to them and was the greatest positive outcome of official language proficiency.

Implications

In November of 2012, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, the Honourable Jason Kenney, stated that Canada will continue with its commitment to economic growth in the coming years and will thus maintain, in the year 2013, the immigration acceptance levels of the past seven years at approximately 240,000 to 265,000 people (CIC, *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration, 2012).* In order to stimulate growth of the Canadian economy, emphasis will continue to be placed upon the immigration classification categories that accept economic immigrants, including skilled workers and tradespersons. The admittance of federal skilled workers for the year 2013 is set at approximately 53,500 to 55,300 (Speech by Kenney, Nov 2, 2012). A more recent statement made by the Honourable Jason Kenney, unveiled the plans for a new immigration model to come into effect by the year 2014, where a new skilled trades immigration classification category will be created and will utilize a system that expedites the process at which immigrants to Canada are settling, thereby bringing "immigrants to higher levels of employment and income" (Speech by Kenney, 2 Nov 2012). This new strategy will follow the "Expression of Interest" model adopted by both Australia and New Zealand where applications are "pre-qualified," and employers are allowed access to the applications. If an employer is interested in hiring an individual, then the new immigration process will allow them access to skilled and trained individuals from around the world, which, as Kenney says, is a strategy "That's good for the employers. That's good for the immigrants. That's good for Canada" (Speech by

Kenney, 2 Nov 2012). This ensures that the individuals most needed by Canadian industries are accepted and are immediately employed.

The new skilled trades classification category is set to however, "have a lower benchmark for language proficiency. So that reflects the more flexible system that we are creating, and they [newcomers] will get more points for having a pre-arranged job in Canada" (Speech by Kenney, Nov 2, 2012). Policy and immigration criteria are constantly changing; very recently, the expectations for language skills were rising and the evidence of language proficiency was being more strictly analyzed in the immigrant selection process (CIC, *New Minimum Language Requirements,* 2012). According to Kenney's speech however, the language requirements within the new immigration classification category will be less demanding. His statement illustrates that language is not the absolute primary concern for officials charged with admitting individuals into Canada and is thus not the first aspect scrutinized on an individuals' application for immigration, especially when the individual has other valuable strengths and skills to add to the Canadian success criteria.

To account for the large number of immigrants that arrive into Canada annually, the provinces receive some federal funding to organize various programs and services that help newcomers learn some of the skills necessary in order to become contributing citizens in this country. Of specific concern is the fact that the Federal Budget is making cuts to settlement services, which include a language component (Government of Canada, *Economic Action Plan 2012*) that newcomers can access. Given the study's

findings attesting to the importance of English language proficiency on achieving a sense of independence and cultural participation, the more relaxed language requirements associated with the new skilled trades classification leads to questions regarding the effects of limited language proficiency on the lives of immigrants and their dependents in Canada as well as how the government will compensate through the provision and quality of services and resources for people with lower English language skills including, too, those who continue to arrive in Canada through family sponsorship. Although the organization of government funded language resources is not the focus of this study, a restructuring or a rethinking of these learning institutions could be in order as several individuals in this study found that they outgrew the services provided, and consequently sought other means to learn the English language. Perhaps services such as LINC must accommodate the changing demands of newcomers, and be more flexible in providing services that understand and acknowledge the practical learning needs of new immigrants.

I documented the experiences and stories of six individuals across several different immigration classification categories and across two Canadian provinces. Their narratives provide some insight into the language learning needs of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada in the twenty-first century. This research has illustrated some potential factors affecting the success of not only the Ukrainian immigrants but of all prospective Canadian immigrants. For example, from learning about the experiences of a few individuals, the importance of developing communication skills in the English

language have been highlighted, not necessarily as affecting economic outcome, but in helping immigrants to achieve independence and increased comfort in interacting among Canadians in this society. To the respondents, the words "independence" and "providing for family" seemed much more important than, or at the least, synonymous with the words "economic" or "financial success." Even though it is possible for immigrants to be welcomed into families or into large ethnic enclaves which have the resources to support them, not all individuals are content to remain within these circles.

The findings of this study demonstrate that not all immigrants, regardless of the immigration classification category under which they arrive, are proficient in an official language. Although community and family play an important role in helping immigrants settle in Canada, the role of English communication skills is large in affecting immigrants' success because it is critical to achieving the definition of success as independence: being able to form an identity in Canada, being able to interact freely with other English-speaking Canadians of all cultures, being able to build their lives and to provide financially for their families and most importantly for their children. Thus, further research into language learning service providers across the provinces such as LINC would be beneficial in order to find out about the goals of the people who attend. In this study, I found that many of the participants began in the LINC program in both Saskatchewan and in Ontario, but none of the respondents completed the program because it did not completely satisfy their personal requirements. Further study on the language learning needs of immigrants in Canada may identify the types of resources or

pedagogical practices most suited to their needs.

Although this study has provided insight into the lives of a few individuals: their personal experiences with the English language, a historical look at the foreign language curriculum in Ukraine, and some of the reasons why immigrants may or may not arrive with English language skills, this study has also led to more questions regarding current foreign language curriculum in Ukraine, and the preparation that students are receiving. Deeper inquiry into foreign language learning in Ukraine may lead to a greater understanding of the organization of the curriculum as well as teaching practices and the effectiveness of learning programs.

This ethnographic study had a limited number of participants and it took place over a short period of time; further study with a greater allocation of time and financial resources could allow for a longitudinal study tracing individuals' immigration stories over time – beginning with their language learning experiences in Ukraine, and following them to Canada. Such resources could provide opportunity for measures of motivation to be traced before and after immigration, allowing for a clearer illustration of individuals' lived experiences.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL

Certificate #: STU 2013 - 010

Approval Period: 01/28/13-01/28/14

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS (ORE)

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Memo

To: Maria Bojagora, Department of Education, maria_bojagora@edu.yorku.ca

From: Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor, Research Ethics
(on behalf of Duff Waring, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

Date: **Monday 28th January, 2013**

Re: Ethics Approval

An Ethnographic Study of Adult Ukranian Immigrants' English Language Learning Experiences: Examining the relation between English Language proficiency and economic success in Canada

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I am writing to inform you that the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee has reviewed and approved the above project.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: 416-736-5914 or via email at: acollins@yorku.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LLM
Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor,
Office of Research Ethics

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INFORMATION

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Maria Bojagora, I am currently a full-time student in the Faculty of Education at York University where I am pursuing my Master of Education degree. I am writing to invite you to participate in a study which will be examining the relations between proficiency in the English language and the economic outcomes of Ukrainian immigrants arriving to Canada after the year 2000. In recovering the stories of your personal journeys as Ukrainian immigrants in Canada, I hope to gain a sense of the depth of your immigrant experience thus far. I wish to learn more about: a) your motivations and opportunities to learn the English language in Ukraine and in Canada; b) your views on the importance of English language proficiency; c) your experiences in learning the English language in your Canadian community.

If you are an immigrant from Ukraine who arrived to Canada after the year 2000 as an adult, you are invited to participate in this study. There will be a requirement to complete a short questionnaire with up to ten questions, as well as a requirement of approximately 2 interview meetings, lasting 1 hour each, over a period of six months. Interviews will occur at times and locations that are convenient for you.

I do not foresee any known risks, discomforts or inconveniences to your participation in this study. Your participation will be entirely voluntary, as such no remuneration or compensation will be provided. You can discontinue participating in this project at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating or to refuse to answer particular questions will not affect your relationship with me, York University, or any other group associated with the Faculty. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected from you will be destroyed.

There is a possibility for this research to result in publications of various types. As such, appropriate measures will be undertaken to ensure your anonymity and confidentiality. Your name and other identifiable information will not appear in any reports, presentations or publications, and a pseudonym will be used throughout. Your data will be safely stored in a secure facility to which only my supervisor and I will have direct access. The data will be stored for a period of 2 years as per university policy and will be destroyed/deleted after this period. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

I will collect information from your interview in writing. Following the interview, you will be offered the opportunity to be involved in the process of data review. You will be provided with the opportunity to review transcripts from your interview in order to

ensure that data was collected accurately and is a full and fair representation of your thoughts and experiences. Your participation in the process of data review is entirely voluntary, and you are not required to partake if you do not so wish.

If you have questions about this research project or about your role in this assignment, please feel free to contact myself, Maria Bojagora, either by phone at (647) 834-9663, or by e-mail at (maria_bojagora@edu.yorku.ca) or my Supervisor, Dr. Karen Krasny at (416) 736-2100 x30733. The research for this assignment has been reviewed by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee; York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact Ms. Alison Collins-Mrakas, Manager, Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail acollins@yorku.ca).

Thank you in advance. I look forward to your cooperation and participation.

Sincerely,

Maria Bojagora

I _____ consent to participate in an interview conducted by Maria Bojagora. I have understood the nature of this request and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Participant:
Signature Date:

_____

Interviewer:
Signature Date:

_____

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANTS

	Olena	Oleksandr	Elizaveta	Ivanna	Andrij	Nicholas
Age at arrival to Canada	28	28	28	34	35	28
Immigration classification category	Dependent of Principal Applicant in Economic classification (skilled worker)	Family sponsorship	Family sponsor-ship	Family sponsor-ship	Provincial Nominee Program	Provincial Nominee Program
Years in Canada at time of interview	6	9	10	3.5	5	5
Highest level of education (received in Ukraine)	Master degree	Master degree	Bachelor degree	Secondary school	Secondary school	N/A
Highest level of education (received in Canada)	College diploma (in progress)	N/A	Bachelor degree	N/A	N/A	N/A
Former profession (in Ukraine)	Doctor	Television broadcasting engineer	College teacher	N/A	Truck driver	N/A
Current profession (industry)	Pharmacy technician	Construction	Teacher	Kitchen staff	Truck driver	Auto-motive industry
Oblast of Origin (in Ukraine)	Lviv	Ternopil	Zaporizhya	Ternopil	Ternopil	Sumy
Destination City in Canada	Toronto	Toronto	Toronto	Saskatoon	Saskatoon	Yorkton

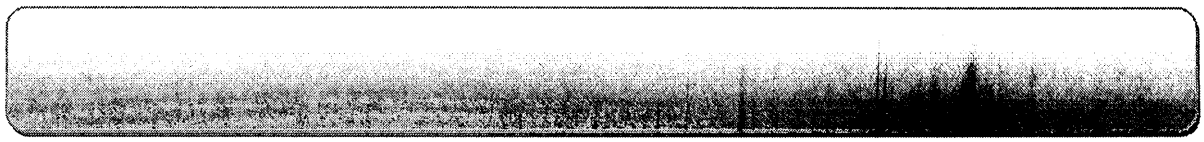
APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE

Participant: _____ Date: _____

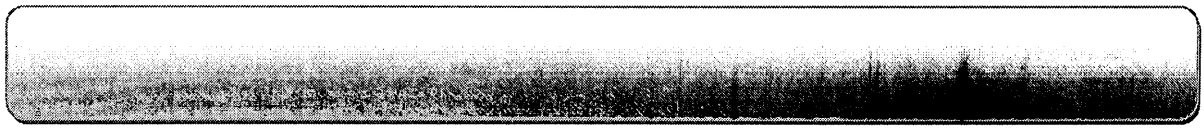
An ethnographic study of adult Ukrainian immigrants' English language learning experiences: Examining the relation between English language proficiency and economic success in Canada

1) In what year did you arrive to Canada?

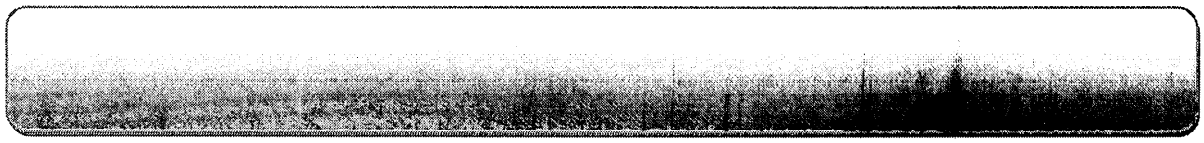
2) What was your age when you arrived to Canada?



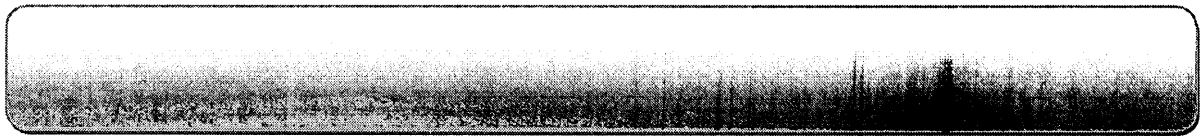
3) Under which immigration classification category did you arrive to Canada?



4) Did you have the opportunity to formally study the English language in Ukraine?



5) Did you attend formal English language classes in Canada?



Signature: _____

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) How would you classify your current English language proficiency as compared to when you first arrived in Canada?

2) What opportunities to learn the English language did you participate in upon arrival to Canada?

3) Did you actively seek opportunities to learn the English language when residing in Ukraine?

4) What do you feel is the importance of the English language in your life in Canada?