

**YUGOSLAVIAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN
LEARNING ENGLISH**

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ABSTRACT

When immigrants move to another country, their success is determined by acceptance within the new society. Acceptance within the new society is dependent upon removal of the language barrier and thus learning the English language.

My questions for this study are as follows: 1) are there cultural or environmental barriers which may inhibit the ability of immigrant women to learn and use English, and 2) are there role expectations which may prevent women from taking full advantage of opportunities to learn the new language? Such barriers may arise from the nature of the interpersonal relationships or roles within the family unit, or values held by women or their spouse/partner, such as attitude toward gender equality, which could influence the ability or opportunity to learn English.

This research explores the experience of immigrant women from the former Yugoslavia in accessing and learning the English language. These women who are between the ages of twenty and forty-five and their families, have immigrated to a small western Canadian city, since the war in that country in 1990. In addition, this study explores the influence of factors such as educational attainment, efficiency in their first language, motivation and desire on learning and retaining English.

My analysis, based on interviews with seven immigrant women, revealed that even though hierarchical structure is evident in their cultural beliefs, women empower themselves through their motivation and desire to learn English, primarily for reasons of economic stability.

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OVERVIEW

Purpose and Organization of Study

The objective of this thesis is to study the relationship among family dynamics, family member roles and cultures within one immigrant community and the success of women from that community in learning the English language.

When an immigrant family moves to an English speaking country, their success in becoming part of the community is dependent upon the removal of the language barrier and thus learning English. If an immigrant is to be successful at obtaining employment and adapting in the new country, learning English is important. My inquiry then, arises from my concern for human problems; in this case, the problems that are encountered by immigrant women learning English. I questioned if there are barriers which are culturally determined that may inhibit their ability to learn and use English, and if these cultural barriers are brought with them to their new country? Such barriers may arise from the nature of the interpersonal relationships or roles within the family unit. For example, role expectations may prevent women from taking full advantage of opportunities to learn the new language. In some cultures, women traditionally stay at home and look after their families.

In addition, this study will explore the question: are there cultural values held by their spouse or partner, such as attitude towards gender equality, which influence

women's ability or opportunity to learn English? The influence of factors such as educational attainment, language efficiency in their first language, urban or rural upbringing¹ and motivation and desire will also be examined.

This study is limited to a convenience sample of seven immigrant women between the ages of twenty and forty-five, and their families from the former Yugoslavia who have immigrated, since the war in that country in 1990, to a small western Canadian city in Alberta.

Chapter One of this study combines the research data on the available Canadian and Alberta immigration statistics. Armed with this information as well as the government policies which direct immigration to Canada, the readers will begin to understand how the numbers of immigrants are placed into categories that prepare them for possible admittance to this country.

Vital information regarding the history and the population that I have chosen to research in this paper are contained in Chapters Two and Three. (To a degree, these chapters are more important than any of the others). These chapters scan the Yugoslavian immigrant community from its education, cultural and social roles, to that of immigrant women's place in the family and workforce. These chapters also provide a background for (initiation of) the research question.

¹ According to Massey, Hahn and Sekulic (1995), women from former Yugoslavia that are from a rural background are more accepting of male dominance and the stereotypical role of a women's place being in the home. Women from an urban centre are more likely to question traditional roles.

Chapter Four describes the sample, the methodology employed in studying that sample, how I obtained the group of women, an example of their dialog and my experiences in all of this.

In Chapter Five, a discussion of the findings is presented with my perceptions or assumptions on this group of women from Yugoslavia in their learning of the English language.

Chapter Six concludes the thesis. It gives a final summary from the provisions of the paper that may be helpful to students, teachers or other researchers.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL CONTEXT OF IMMIGRATION INTO CANADA

The Scope of Immigration: Canada, Alberta

The current wave of immigrants² to Canada is the largest since the early 1900s³. Canada's ethnic⁴ demographics are constantly changing and vary by region, often reflecting where different waves of immigrants have settlement.

Table 1: Total Immigrants to Canada, Alberta and a Small Western Canadian city from 1980-1996⁵

Year	Canada	Alberta	A Small Western Canadian City
1980	143,117	18,839	
1985	84,302	9,001	
1990	213,647	18,908	314
1995	212,491	14,328	206
1996	224,050	14,212	215

² The Canadian Census defines an immigrant as a resident of Canada who is not a Canadian citizen by birth. Thus immigrants are people who came to settle in Canada, as either adults or children (1996, p. 4).

³ According to Knowles, between the years 1906-1913, an average of 243,981 immigrants per year were accepted into Canada (p. 189).

⁴ "Ethnic origin refers to the ethnic or cultural group(s) to which an individual's ancestors belonged; it pertains to the ancestral roots or origins of the population and not to place of birth, citizenship or nationality" (Canadian Social Trends Autumn, 1993, p. 18).

⁵ Alberta Stats File, June 1994 and Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, Edmonton, December 1997.

The most recent influx of immigrants came to Canada from the NW Balkan area, (former country of Yugoslavia) in 1992 as a result of the outbreak of war. In 1990, of the total number of immigrants to Alberta from all countries, 52 percent did not know English or French and 51 percent had secondary or less education. In 1991, there were 4.3 million immigrants living in Canada⁶, representing 16 percent of the total population, .9 percent or 477,778 were living in Alberta.

The total number of new immigrants to a small western Canadian city in 1992 was 271. Of these there was no listing of country of last permanent residence, and no listing for Serbo-Croatian as a spoken native language. The following year, in 1993, the estimated total number of new immigrants to Canada was 256,000. Alberta accepted 18,479 or 7.3 percent. A small western Canadian city within Alberta accepted 283 immigrants, of which four spoke Serbo-Croatian as their native language.

The total number of immigrants destined to Canada in 1994 was 217,763. The preliminary statistics to Alberta in that same year were 17,551. Of these, 266 immigrants moved to a small western Canadian city. Of these, 141 were women, 68 of whom spoke English, one French and one was bilingual. A total of two percent of all immigrants living in Alberta as of 1994, or 351 immigrants, were from Bosnia.

⁶ Cincnet publication, August 1996.

Table 2: Total Immigrants to Canada, Alberta and a Small Western Canadian City from 1995-1996⁷

1995	Canada	Alberta	Small Western Canadian City
Total	212,491	14,328	206
Yugoslavia ⁸	2,976	170	2
Croatia	770	69	2
Bosnia	6,270	620	67
"Other" ⁹			132

1996	Canada	Alberta	Small Western Canadian City
Total	224,050	14,212	215
Yugoslavia	1,813	82	3
Croatia	915	85	
Bosnia	5,098	485	48
"Other"			184

Of the total number of immigrants in 1995 to a small western Canadian city, 104 were women. Of these women, 32 were admitted under the Family Class,¹⁰ and 2 were admitted as Assisted Relatives. The remaining 70 of the women were classified as "other". Of the total number of women, 32 spoke English, 2 were bilingual speaking both of Canada's official languages, English and French, and 70 spoke neither French nor

⁷ Alberta Stats File, June 1994 and Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, Edmonton.

⁸ Please note that the term "Yugoslavia" here means the designated areas of Serbia and Montenegro that together establish a new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Background paper: Library of Parliament, Research Branch, Vincent Rigby). "Serbia" is not listed as a country on the immigration statistics (Alberta Stats File, 1995-1996).

⁹ There is no explanation as to what "other" is defined as. It is my assumption that "other" means immigrants from countries other than Bosnia, Croatia, Herzegovina, or Yugoslavia (which includes Serbia and Montenegro).

¹⁰ The immigration classifications are defined in the Government Policy section of this thesis.

English. Of the total number of women destined to a small western Canadian city, 36 had 0-9 years of education, 27 had 10-12 years of education, 9 had some university, 10 had a trade certificate, 5 were non-university educated, and 17 had a university degree.

In 1996, of the total number of immigrants to a small western Canadian city, 113 were women. Under the family class 32 females were admitted, three were admitted as assisted relatives and 78 were admitted as "other." Of these women, 45 spoke English, none spoke French, and 68 spoke neither of Canada's official languages. Of the total number of women, 54 had 0-9 years of education, 22 had 10-12 years of education, 22 had some university, five had a trade certificate, seven were non-university educated, and three had a university degree.

Government Policies: Regulations, Entry and Support

The current Immigration Act was passed in 1976 and is presently being redrafted. Its purpose is to provide legislation to reunite families, protect refugees and promote Canada's economic development through population growth. According to the Alberta Stats File (October 1994, p. 7), immigration is often described in terms of the following three categories: the social stream (family class), the humanitarian stream (convention refugee and designated class), and economic (independent) stream. Canada continues to modify its programs to meet the needs of refugee and humanitarian groups, and effective May 1997, two new humanitarian designated classes, the "country of asylum" class and

the “source country” class were introduced. These two classes along with the convention refugee class comprise Canada’s humanitarian/refugee resettlement program. The designated class was thus replaced (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Refugees Branch, p. 11).

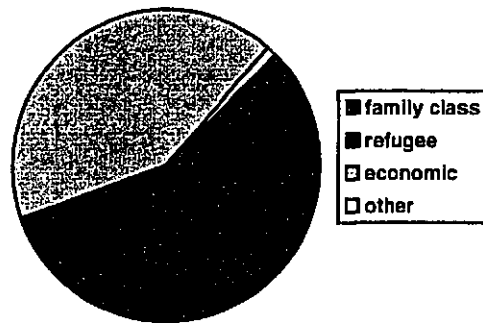
According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Public Affairs Branch, 1996, the family class consists of Canadian citizens and permanent residents, aged 19 or over and living in Canada, who have the right to sponsor the applications of certain close relatives who wish to immigrate to Canada. These sponsored relatives, together with their dependants, must meet the requirements set out in the Immigration Act and Regulations. The refugee¹¹ class consists of groups of at least five Canadian citizens or permanent residents 19 or older, or local organizations which are legally incorporated, who may sponsor convention refugees, members of emergency situations, and persons whom the Government of Canada has recognized as specially designated classes for humanitarian reasons, and their families. The settlement assistance undertaken must be for at least one year, and meet the requirements of the Immigration Act and Regulations.

¹¹ The term “refugee” here refers to the definition given by Citizenship and Immigration Canada defining a “convention refugee.” Any person who by reason of . . . fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion” who cannot return to his country of nationality or former residence (Alberta Stats file June 1994, p. 34). Also the terms, “designated” and “convention refugee” are categorized under the same title of “humanitarian class”. For the purposes of this paper, “refugee” will be used to designate both of those terms. “Other independents” includes retired class and live-in caregivers.

The economic stream comprises all those who are selected on the basis of a point system; i.e. the business class, assisted relatives, and other independents.¹² Not all applicants are judged on all criteria. The point system criteria include education, vocational preparation, experience, occupational demand, arranged employment, demographic factors, age, knowledge of English/French and personal suitability. Applications that are evaluated on a point system reflect perceived needs for labor both in Canada and in the area in which the immigrant wishes to settle. An example of an independent that would be selected according to the point system would be an entrepreneur who has the ability to purchase or invest in a business. That investor is seen as contributing to the economy and must employ and maintain support for at least one Canadian citizen other than him/herself and dependents.

¹² See Appendix B for the selection criteria for the point system (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, p. 13-14).

Graph 1: Immigration of Women¹³ to Alberta by Class 1993 Preliminary¹⁴



Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Encarta computer publication) is quoted as stating, “in 1994, close to half (49%) of new arrivals to Canada were economic class immigrants, while 42% were in the social or family class and 9% were admitted on humanitarian grounds” (p. 1).

In order to help immigrants adjust to Canadian society and to promote an acceptance of immigrants by Canadians, a “settlement”¹⁵ program was created. This government support is made up of grants, contributions, loans, services and delivery.

¹³ The term “women” here designates those of legal voting age, 18 years of age or older.

¹⁴ The Total Economic Stream represents 42% of all immigration to Alberta comprising of business, assisted relative and other independents. Family class is represented by 48% of the immigrants, refugees 9%, and other (in this case live-in caregivers) is 1%. (Alberta Stats File, 1994).

¹⁵ The settlement movement began as early as 1869 with the introduction of the first Canadian Immigration Act. Newly arrived immigrants looked to earlier immigrants to help them understand the country and how best to survive.” With the establishment of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration in 1950, the federal government made provisions. . .for payments to voluntary organizations to provide settlement services to immigrants in Canada” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Refugee Branch, p. 8). The current partnership for the management of settlement services was developed in February 1995 in the federal budget under the Settlement Renewal policy. Settlement programs provide initial bridging mechanisms to assist immigrants in accessing services available to all Canadians and in becoming participating and contributing members of Canadian society. They also promote an acceptance of immigrants by Canadians (p. 10).

The grants component is for transfer payments made to the Province of Quebec only. The federal government has withdrawn its services to Quebec for settlement purposes and the Province transfers the money to appropriate agencies looking after the settlement programs. The contributions component includes transfer payments to assist in the adaptation, settlement and integration of recently arrived permanent residents in order to achieve early integration into Canadian society. The contribution payments are made to individuals, non-profit organizations or educational institutions for program planning and implementation. The loans component includes loans to all immigrants, primarily composed of refugees¹⁶ and their dependents (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, p. 39). The services component includes the provision of decisions for amendments to immigrant's landing records and the destination matching and notification of arrivals for refugees.

Immigration falls within both federal and provincial jurisdictions in Canada. Services for both federal and provincial areas could overlap. Programs or projects for similar services make it difficult to understand how the money is distributed to the organizations that provide assistance to immigrants. The multiple amount of money available to the newcomer (through programs), has the potential for misuse with the possibility of more than one institution applying to different sources for funding to pay for the same or similar needs. As stated by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, March

¹⁶ The term "refugee" here is defined as those immigrants sponsored by the Canadian government and brought into Canada as permanent residents.

1998, “local administration of settlement services was not considered to be an effective appropriate core function for the federal government, particularly as there was overlap with provincial programming sometimes resulting in a lack of service co-ordination” (p. 10). Currently, both Federal and Provincial Governments are coordinating components of settlement services. For example, the Host Program funded by Citizenship Canada provides monies to not-for-profit organizations and educational institutions to help adapt, settle and integrate newcomers into Canadian society, while the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada Program (LINC) provides other Federal funding for educational institutions, community-based organizations, or businesses, for pre-migration language training, so that adult immigrants may be integrated into Canadian society as quickly as possible.¹⁷ Canadian Immigration’s funding is in the form of contributions, i.e. only actual costs are reimbursed¹⁸ by both the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta entitled Integrated Services Program (ISP).¹⁹ Its aim is to provide support to community services that assist in the settlement and integration of new

¹⁷ The LINC program is sponsored by Employment and Immigration Canada. The objective of the program is to provide basic language training to adult newcomers in one of Canada’s official languages. Funding may be given to a number of qualified Canadian “partners.” These “partners” may be businesses, non-profit groups, non-governmental organizations, community groups, educational institutions, individuals or provincial, territorial or municipal governments. The program provides French or English language rating, and three levels of language training. If a client scores above level three, the client may be ready for the labour market. If this is the case, Labour Market Language Training is another language training program linked to an occupation (Employment and Immigration Canada).

¹⁸ The term “actual costs” means that when an agency spends an amount of money on supplies or services, those costs are reimbursed to the agency through a billing system.

¹⁹ The information was provided by an immigrant settlement association.

immigrants. The method in which the funding is dispensed is currently being revamped, and should be ready for implementation by April 1999.

Program services available to immigrants in the small western Canadian city studied, consist of settlement (including language interpretation, if needed), English as a Second Language assessment, language classes, ESL Workplace Program, home visits, counseling, tuberculosis tests, immunization, pre-natal classes, job search techniques, women's support groups and parenting programs. These services are provided by at least six different agencies²⁰ (some of which are not-for-profit and volunteer-based), with involvement as well from elementary, junior and senior high schools, and other not-for-profit agencies such as the YWCA.

According to Boyd (1989), as far as language training is concerned, the programs are associated with two federal departments: Employment and Immigration Canada and the Secretary of State. The Language Training Program of Employment and Immigration is employment oriented. A number of seats are purchased by the Canadian Employment Immigration Council, according to the budget with the provincial educational institutions. These courses are offered on a full-time basis and average about twenty weeks. In order to qualify, the participants must have been out of school for at least one year and be destined for the labour force. The program is intended for workers who cannot find employment in their usual occupation due to a lack of fluency in either of

²⁰ These agencies include a health authority, a language learning centre, a post secondary institution, an immigrant settlement association, a city hospital, and an ethnic association.

Canada's official languages, or if they are unskilled and their lack of skill prevents them from obtaining employment. If their usual occupation does not require one of the official languages, they will not qualify for language training. The above criteria limit the accessibility of language classes and prevents some immigrant women from entering the program. For example, women who are working as dishwashers, chambermaids, laundry help, seamstresses or domestic workers, can perform their jobs with little fluency in English. As I have stated above, if immigrant women are not destined for the labour market, they will not receive funding for language training.

The Language Training Program participants may be eligible for at least five types of allowances:

1. living allowance, which is a basic training allowance
2. dependent care allowance
3. commuting allowance (i.e. bus tickets)
4. living away from home allowance
5. (long distance) transportation allowance

This support is not provided to those who are family class or assisted relative class immigrants because they are supported financially by their sponsor. Immigrant women are more likely than men to be assisted or family class immigrants, making them ineligible for the living or basic training allowance, but leaving them eligible for the other four allowances. This means that if they have small children, the women might stay home to provide care, or if their sponsor pays for their language program they would

attend classes instead of going out to work. If their family relies on a dual income for support, it is more likely that these sponsored women will choose to work rather than participate in a language program (Boyd, 1989).

The Secretary of State program offers language instruction that promotes language training and knowledge about Canada for citizenship requirements. The Department reimburses the province 50 percent of the costs of instruction (for teachers' salaries and fringe benefits), and separate agreements reimburse the province for textbooks. There is no limit to the funding received. In other words, the government pays out monies depending on the demand for the programs. The programs are usually offered in the evenings through school boards or post-secondary institutions. Immigrant women who are ineligible for the basic training allowance or the employment-related training program could take these classes. However, as Lloyd Axworthy, previous Employment and Immigration Minister noted, the burdens of family, working long hours and taking classes are often too much of a burden, (1981). Even though the opportunities for language training seem good, not all immigrants are able to participate.

Canada continues to adapt and modify their programs to meet the ever changing needs of the refugee and humanitarian groups from around the world.

CHAPTER TWO

IMMIGRANT PROFILE

Educational Levels

The educational plight of immigrants is understandably a national concern. In Canadian culture²¹ education is regarded as essential to success, yet not all people who populate Canada can use the education system and advance in the workplace effectively. For an immigrant there can be no denying the barriers to learning the English language.

With this in mind, it is important to examine some of the theories that will explain the findings that arose from this study. The theory used in this study is an explanation of something that happens and draws upon psychological, sociological, pedagogical and curriculum factors. This thesis deals with immigrant women in relation to their environment and entails a wide variety of circumstances that draw from those theoretical categories.

In order to obtain a sense of community, and to be accepted in the community, the immigrant has to adapt to and learn the norms, values and behaviours of the host country. "Every act of immigration is like suffering a brain stroke. One has to learn to walk again,

²¹ Within this paper, I incorporate two definitions of the term "culture." According to Banks (1987, p. 60) "the behavior patterns, symbols, institutions, values and other human-made components of society. . .the unique achievements of a human group that distinguishes it from other human groups." And as quoted from Schermerhorn (1970), culture is a "pattern of fundamental beliefs and values differentiating right from wrong, defining rules for interactions, setting priorities, expectations, and goals" (p. 42).

to talk again, to move around the world again, and probably the most difficult of all, one has to learn to re-establish a sense of community” (Rakoff, 1981, p. 19).

Moving to a new country places anxiety and stress on the husband, wife and indeed, on all family members. As Chiswick (1992) states, their social and cultural adaptation is contingent upon occupational adaptation and occupational adaptation is contingent for the most part on their level of English language skills. The successful transfer of occupational skills from their country to Canada is rare leaving immigrants vulnerable to unemployment, underemployment or low status/low paying jobs. Extending from this idea, we as a society expect the uneducated or the “undereducated immigrants to take the lowest level jobs without security and benefits” . . . “the decision to migrate, the choice of destination, and the success of adjustment in the destination all depend, in part, on language skills” (p. 227).

John Friesen (1985) writes, “education...[is] considered [to be] the key to minority success, economically and professionally, as a way to access the dominant social identity” (p. 45). Ideally, this situation should be altered through education. Access to the dominant social identity makes it necessary to learn the English language. Immigrants’ educational attainment in their own country is usually not given equal value when they arrive here, making it difficult on a low income, to go out to work, to do any upgrading, or to find the time to attend English language classes. The ability to communicate verbally is taken for granted until one immigrates to another country. One would not

think of basic language skills as an economic resource, yet they very much are. "Moving to a country where a different language is spoken results in a depreciation of the value of . . . [language] . . . for economic and social interaction," (Chiswick, 1992, p. 227). And until one becomes fluent in the dominant language, as Chiswick and Miller cite from an earlier prediction of Chiswick's on the economic theory, "*certeris paribus*, ...those less fluent ...will have lower earnings" (p. 229). Chiswick continues to state that "higher rates of labor force participation for the better-educated compared with the less-educated, characterize persons with fluency in the host language" (p. 229). As well, the less income earned, the more stress that is predictable for the newly arrived family.

Ogbu (cited in Peirce, 1995) states, "this return on investment must be seen as commensurate with the effort expended on learning the second language" (p. 17). The language learner is "constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. Thus an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own social identity" (p. 18).²²

Bourdieu argues that social identity is construed mostly by competence in the language (1977, p. 75). Peirce counterargues by stating that, "competence should include an awareness of the right to speak" (p. 18), what Bourdieu calls "the power to impose reception". Bourdieu states "that the linguist takes for granted the conditions for the establishment of communication: that those who speak regard those who listen as worthy

²² It should be noted that "investment," above, is not to be confused with "motivation." "Motivation" is a property of the language learner- a personality trait. . .investment, on the other hand, attempts to capture the relationship of the language learner to the changing social world" (Peirce, p.17).

to listen and that those who listen regard those who speak as worthy to speak.” He further argues that “it is precisely such assumptions that must be called into question” (p. 75).

Further, in discussing education and language learnability, we look at the grammar of a language. Archibald (1993) states, “there must be an explicit connection between theory of grammar and language acquisition” (p. 55). In order for grammar to be learnable and in order to account for second-language learning, we examine what a speaker knows about his or her own language and “how that knowledge could have been attained” (Archibald, p. 54).

There are two ways to develop competence in second-language learning, according to the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis. One is to use language for verbal communication, or to use language naturally to communicate and thereby to develop language ability in a subconscious (acquisition) process. The second way is via formal language learning. Formal language learning is a conscious learning method. This method alone can impede the learning of a language as it is not stimulating language use, but correcting and “monitoring language used” (Knibbeler, 1989 p. 26).

Krashen (1980) points out that “. . .our fluency in using second languages comes from what we have acquired, not from what we have learned” (p. 186). Knibbeler states that language “learners learn more by unconscious assimilation” (p. 16). He goes on to state that this theoretical model is practiced in adult second-language acquisition and is

simple in that it posits that “language learning and language use are two highly interdependent activities” (p. 16).

And yet to state that second-language acquisition is simple is a complete misunderstanding. According to Gregg (1996), “as is often claimed, language research offers the best access to knowledge of the nature of the human mind” (p. 49). Kean (1988, cited in Gregg above) says “it is only through [second-language acquisition] research that many questions about the structure and function of mature linguistic capacity can be addressed” (p. 70). These statements cannot be overlooked in the determination of second-language theorists to understand the process involved in the acquiring of a second-language. Keeping the second-language acquisition framework in mind, this study looks at the influencing principles outside the language module of second language acquisition that hinder competence in acquiring a second-language. I refer not to the actual language production - syntactics, grammar, or language ability - but the influences within the environment with which a second-language learner deals with, in order to have an opportunity to acquire a second-language.

Demographics

Massey, Hahn, and Sekulic (1995) analyzed the working habits of 7,790 men and women between 1989 and 1990 in the paid labour force in the former socialist Yugoslavia. They found that women were over-represented among office and service workers, many of them in the retail trade. These women, not unlike women from other countries, “were likely to experience the triple burden of shouldering paid employment, housework and political/community responsibilities” (p. 364). Massey et al. define “housework” in this article as cleaning, cooking and washing dishes. Massey explains that “common in socialist societies was a gendered organization of work and community that . . . paid women less for comparable work” (p. 360).

“Women’s subordination is structurally determined and continually reinforced for each new generation, regardless of women’s efforts to affect the system through group or individual action” (Massey et al., 1985, p. 361). The attitude of male dominance within the socialist society carries over into the relationship with each other in their new home when they immigrate to a new country. MacKinnon (1989) is quoted as saying that “Women become as free as men to work outside the home while men remain free from work within it” (p. 10).

The data shows that there were 3.37 million women in the work force, in Yugoslavia representing 38 percent of those who worked for a living. Women

represented more than 50% of all professionals. The term “professionals” included nursery school workers, primary school teachers and nurses.

Place of birth and present place of residence were included in the survey. Early childhood and adult experiences reflected attitudes of cultural beliefs. The survey data also indicated that these women were “outnumbered by men by more than two to one” in the League of Yugoslav Communist party, and that “men are more likely to eat out and much more likely to frequent bars and cafes” (p. 364). Both sexes were equal in the amount of leisure time spent in reading, listening to the radio, watching television, going to movies and the theatre, visiting friends, relatives and church going.

In order to maintain a sufficient standard of living in many households, income is gained from work done apart from one’s normal occupation. Working two jobs is done by both men and women, “although it is more likely to be done by men and during the years when children are school age” (p. 367). Also, having a mother or mother-in-law in the home provides for some relief of child care and household chores. Nevertheless, spouses look at occupational and educational attainment as measures for gender equality and women are looked at as having an economic value for the family. Therefore, if she has a good education, she is a benefit economically. Participation in household chores has no influence on the equality issue, even for women who are employed outside the home. Women still do the housework, whether or not they are educated or have decent occupations, (p. 367).

Traditional patriarchal attitudes still prevail in the former Yugoslavia, and the “efforts of women to change their situation not only rests with their attitude, but the actions and attitudes of the men with whom they live” (p. 376).

Cultural / Social Background

In trying to understand the people of Yugoslavia, how their community was organized and how they lived before they became immigrants to Canada, clarification of their complicated history is better understood by explaining some of the attitudes and changes that have occurred to the groups involved.

In 1990 before the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina for example, had a total population of 4,124,000. Two-thirds of the republic’s population lived in rural areas, mainly relying on agriculture. The primary religions were Islam, Serbian (Greek) Orthodox, and Roman Catholicism. Muslims, primarily of the Sunni sect, constituted the largest ethnic-religious group with about 44 percent of the total population. This group of Muslims (who were descendants of Turks and Slavs) converted to Islam when the region was controlled by the Ottoman Empire during its 400 years of rule. Serbs constituted the second-largest ethnic group before the war, with approximately 31 percent of the population, and Croats (Roman Catholics) made up 17 percent of the population. The difference in their religious backgrounds is partly to blame for the ethnic war (Donia & Fine, 1994 p. 9).

“The three so-called ethnic groups of Bosnia speak the same language . . . Serbo-Croatian” (Donia & Fine, p. 9). Muslims and Croats use the Roman alphabet and Serbs use the Cyrillic alphabet, (which is also used in the Russian language), (Encarta, 1994). Serbian students were encouraged to choose Russian as a second language in school, and the Slovenian (i.e. Bosnian) and Croatian students were able to choose between German or English. In some schools systems, German was chosen as a course of study for the students rather than Russian due in part to the proximity of that area of the country to Western Europe.

Part of the historical events behind the cause of the war is the fact that the Serbs were brutally attacked and defeated in 1389 at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. Many Serbs remain to this day obsessed with that Turkish domination.

Also important historically, according to Malcolm (1994), is that after World War II, Tito gained control by holding the Yugoslavian countries in line and by ruling with a Stalinist constitution. Communist power was imposed rather than settling conflicting territorial claims, because Tito wanted to form ties to Russia for obvious political and economic reasons. When Russia dumped him as an ally, in order for him to retain leadership and to prevent loss of control, Tito “. . . maintained freedom of [religious] belief and the separation of Church and state” (p. 195). He became a friend to the ‘Western’ world of Ethiopia, India and Egypt mostly to create an ideology which would smooth the waters between the various religious groups within his country, and further, to

gain him the respect he needed to continue his “. . .dependence on loans, subsidies and diplomatic support” (p. 196).

Another reason for the recent war was “since World War II, 30 to 40 percent of urban marriages in Bosnia have been mixed” (Donia & Fine, p. 8). Mixed marriage was one of the major reasons that the Bosnians fled their country; they were no longer welcomed because of their beliefs in a “mixed cultural society” (p. 8). It seems that “the fanaticism of nationalists . . . insist that states be based on ethnicity and be nation-states, and that pluralism is artificial and unworkable” (p. 8).

Today, the Serbs continue to be determined to maintain their police and military power in order to gain territory (the only territory that the Serbs currently occupy are the areas of Montenegro and Serbia²³) and since neither Serbia nor Croatia had any legal claims to Bosnian ground, Bosnia fell under attack in the outbreak of war in 1991 (Donia & Fine p. 9). Slovenia had only a “. . .tiny Serb minority” and therefore that territory escaped without bloodshed, (Butcher, 1998, p. B8).

The UN Security Council set up peace-keeping sanctions that were inevitably lifted in 1996, owing in part to the fact that the Council had faith that the Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosovic, was interested in “brotherhood and unity.” This ploy, as a result of the lifting of the sanctions, was to get the Western world to look the other way while the

²³ See the Political map of the NW Balkans Appendix D.

Serbs tried to “set the scene for the further breakup of Yugoslavia” in an attempt to force the Albanians to flee their country or accept Serbian rule (Butcher, 1998, p. B8).

It is no wonder then with this continued attitude of planned annihilation, that a war of ‘ethnic cleansing’ would break out, and the people would be faced with a decision to give up their value and belief system while at times turning from their own family members, and flee the country to which they belonged, for fear of their lives. Leaving their family, country, and heritage - not to mention all they had worked for in terms of life savings and monetary goods - is disheartening and distressing for those who decide to immigrate from Yugoslavia in search of a better quality of life.

CHAPTER THREE

NATURE OF THE FAMILY

In this chapter, what follows is a discussion of the literature on the family. This has several objectives: to define *family* - to situate the present research within the context of the literature on immigrant women in the family and workplace, and to examine the significance of family member roles in relation to immigrant women learning English.

Family Context

Statistics Canada, sociologists, and politicians all have different definitions of family²⁴ depending on the ethnic and social relationships, as well as history involved in the complexities of the lives being dealt with.

According to Hayford (1988, p. 3), “we use ‘family’ to mean our ancestors, our brothers and sisters and parents, all of our relations who are alive, and a vague general sense of identity and relationship, as well as our spouses and children” (p. 1). The word *family* comes from the Latin *familia*, which means, not *family* in the modern sense, but something more like *household* (p. 3).

Those involved in the household are those people who are tied together in “specific, socially recognized ways [and]. . . are genetic[ally] and blood” related (p. 4). In

²⁴ Please refer to discussion of *family* below.

other words, these are people born into these relationships and people who enter families through marriage, (or some such contract), or through adoption.

According to Mulkey (1995), family is defined as the sub-system of society which involves the “reproduction of [its] members...and nurturing the young” (p. 50). And Haley (1971), states that “. . .each member of any family is unavoidably committed to the system of his family, if only because that is where he had his beginnings” (p. 128). These latter two seem like traditional views of the family. In reality, not all members want to reproduce, nurture their young, nor stay restricted by their beginnings. As an entity of society, the definition of family should be flexible as families are constantly changing, and structures of support fall outside of the family; and at the same time the meaning of family expands to connote a community of people sharing a neutrally inclusive interest. People never stay the same; their values and belief systems are always in flux. Changes occur within the roles of individual family members from birth to maturity to death; between husband and wife both before and after children arrive; and when children are grown and leave the family unit; to advancing ages of husband/wife and/or parents, and illness or injury.

Roles of Immigrant Women in the Family

Family members are constantly adapting to and coping with changes that are brought on by social and environmental factors, such as a move, a new job or a new social order.

Immigrant families are most susceptible to the hazards of adaptation. The biggest challenge is to find functional ways of adapting as individuals to the new situation. The present situation must not be dealt with as life was dealt with before. New rules and role expectations have to be formed when family members are in the middle of a social change. For example, children will often take on adult responsibilities (translating, filling out forms, banking and so on) when their command of the English language is better than their parents'. The adaptation will be dysfunctional if the present is seen as the past (Haley, 1981, p. 29).

When women stay at home to provide care for their families in a new country, their chances of communicating with people who speak the English language are restricted. I assume (from this premise) that if women are unable to find work due to a lack of knowledge of English, they stay at home and look after their families. As one researcher states, "to a degree, a sense of self is depicted in this traditional role of caregiver" (McMahon, 1987, p. 22). In other words, a value is placed on taking care of the family.

As well, she states that some women experience male violence²⁵ in connection with their wanting to learn English. Some women find it necessary to go out to work when they arrive in the new country, and by learning English, they feel more empowered to access the job market and have greater freedom to participate in the community. Gaining knowledge of the dominant language potentially enhances both a woman's and a man's self-esteem and well-being. But when immigrant women access English, their men (husbands, fathers, male partners), feel threatened if there is no opportunity for them to learn the language because of lack of time or money. McMahon goes on to say that this is contradictory in that women struggle between being the main caretaker of their families including being responsible for building the ego of their children and men, and at the same time provoking their men to violence through the power that women gain if they educate themselves (McMahon, 1987, p. 22).

“The way we see [how] the world is organized, is by the way we have lived in it. To see a world different than the way we have lived it as regulated, then we must understand how particular forms of regulation effect one's sense of self and self worth” (McMahon, 1987, p. 22). When one immigrates to another country one's sense of regulation is disrupted, and one's sense of self and self-worth become battered. One suddenly becomes “different” in a foreign country. This “difference . . . sets them

²⁵ Violence is defined by McMahon as oppressive restrictions that are placed on women for their personal advancement or educational efforts.

[immigrants] up as other to one another, in structures of dominance. This structure of dominance, while pervasive in its ability to limit opportunities . . . is not impenetrable” (p. 23).

In other words this theory states that setting one up as different marks a value on each person in terms of levels of knowledge, power and dominance. For an immigrant to learn English is one way to break through the structure of dominance or oppression, and gain power.

If an immigrant woman is not “allowed” to go outside the home to learn English, she will be less able to become an active member of the community, and she will be of less monetary value to the family. McMahon explains that if one does not speak the language, in essence, one is violated [against]. “When violence is more narrowly defined to include male sabotage of educational efforts, whether through physical force or more subtle means” such as restrictions on time spent outside of the home with people other than the husband “a vast number of women are affected” (1987, p. 24).

Rockhill (1990) adds to the discussion of this dilemma in her study of Hispanic immigrant women with limited English. Because education is looked at by women as “a way out of the working class life . . .” it also “poses a threat to them in their everyday lives” because “their men feel threatened by images of power (independence and success) [that is] attached to education” (1990, p. 89). Her theory states then, that the more education a woman has the more power and prestige she will have in the

household. The more power and prestige she has, the less control the man will have on her life, thus her voice will become more powerful and her status will become more equal to the male.

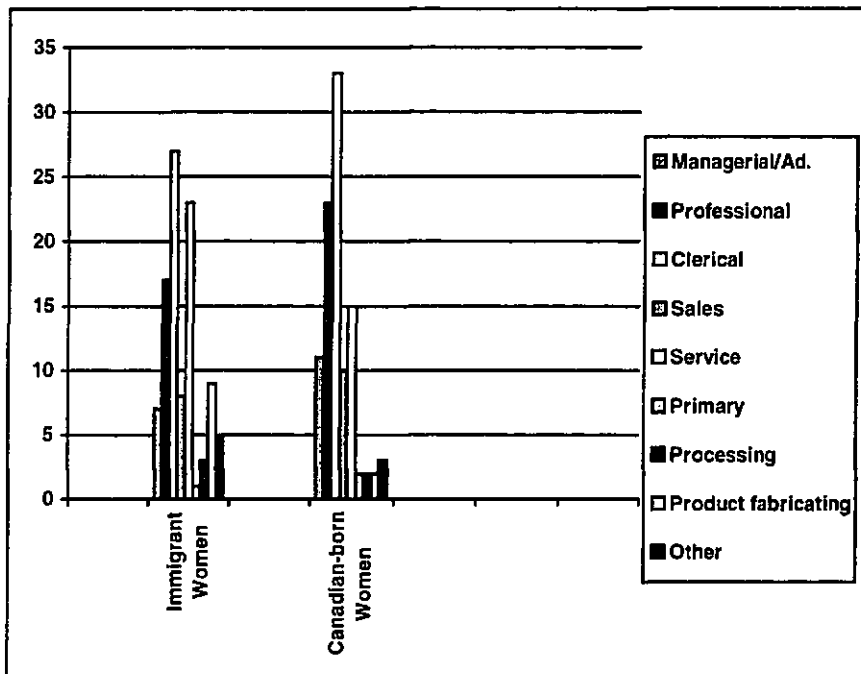
Roles of Immigrant Women in the Workplace

According to Burke, writing for Canadian Social Trends, with Canada's aging population, immigration is able to balance the numbers of people in the workforce. A larger population encourages a healthier economy in terms of production of goods and services and raising per capita income (1992, p. 15). However, as mentioned in Chapter One, the selection criteria imposed on single immigrant women entering the country and thus the workforce, and the positions they assume when they arrive in Canada, depend partly on the amount of English language they have learned previous to their admittance, their age, and their previous occupation.

Further, immigrant women may not only be deficient in language skills, but any job skills that they do have may not be transferable due to inappropriate training, lack of appropriate experience, lack of familiarity with job search strategies, or the lack of value placed on their capacities and capabilities.

As the data on the next page demonstrates there is a high number of immigrant women that go out to work when they arrive in Canada (probably for economic reasons).

Graph 2: 1991 Comparisons of the employment occupations of immigrant women to Canadian-born women (in Percentages)²⁶



The graph above illustrates that the number of immigrant women occupying jobs low in status and low in income increases as the job status and job pay decreases, compared to the number of Canadian women.

As stated before, it may be a necessity for both husband and wife to work because of an economic need felt by immigrants arriving in a new country (for example, to pay

²⁶ The job distribution of immigrant women compared to Canadian-born women. Clerical jobs ranked first for both groups, 27% of immigrant women compared to 33% Canadian-born. In the services 23% immigrant women versus 15% Canadian-born; in the food and beverage area 33% of immigrants, and 50% Canadian-born. Personal services represented 31% of the immigrant group and 27% of those born in Canada. In the product fabricating, recent immigrant workers accounted for 9% compared with 2% Canadian born. This data derived from Chui and Devereaux (1995).

back government loans that enabled them to come to Canada) or it may be a necessity for women to be employed because their husbands are unemployed, or underemployed (one income earner in the family working for the minimum wage does not provide enough money to survive). As well, in 1981 Jim Fleming, the then Minister of State for Multiculturalism, stated that “Immigrant women are most often the last to have an opportunity to fit in and to learn about Canadian society simply because they have such heavy initial responsibilities for maintaining the family unit and often assisting in providing adequate family income” (Fleming, 1981, p. 18).

According to Hartman (1983), who did a study on the effect of immigration on women’s roles in various countries stated, “whether immigrant women who worked in their country of origin work in the receiving country” (p. 93) and perform the same occupational role in one country as the other is hard to document. Occupations having similar names may radically differ in terms of training and actual job responsibilities. Statistics are gathered from the visa application forms and may be “intentionally distorted” or because “of special benefits potential immigrants think they may get if they say they are of a certain occupation; thus, it may not be a valid representation of the immigrant’s actual occupation” (1983, p. 96). As well, “occupations may be misstated in order to elevate one’s socio-economic status or to make an impression on potential employers in the receiving country” (p. 93). In making a comparison with the United States, the occupational “dissimilarity between [the] last job in [the] old country and

[the] job seven years after immigration ” between 1972 to 1977, there was a 31.4 percent difference. The changes in job occupations were from “clerical, professional and household service work and into other professions” (p. 97). The differences between intended occupations upon arriving in Canada and subsequent jobs found in Canada shows a “move out of white-collar positions . . . to . . . non-skilled occupations after immigration” (p. 99). Hartman states that immigrant women in Canada “have a lower occupational status which does not improve over time and can be only partially explained by age, education, socioeconomic status, and country of origin” (p. 99).

A Canadian government document in 1984 states, “The immigrant woman is often a shadow[y] figure in the Canadian mosaic, frequently sacrificing her own development so that her husband and children may be more fully integrated into Canadian society” (Minister of Supplies and Services Canada, 1984, p. 32). Adjustment of immigrant women into the new country is looked at in terms of variations in cultural differences from the country of origin and the host country, number of years in the country of origin, age, language proficiency and educational levels.

Hartman continues to say that in Canada, “years of residence accounted only slightly for differences in occupational status. If the women are less pressured to work immediately upon immigration, their labour force participation reflects an adaptation which does not need to change with time in the country ” (p. 99). This could indicate that whether or not immigrant women work upon immediate arrival in the country is

dependent less on the husband's maladjustment, and more on socio-economic aspirations of immigrant families in general, or a need to stay home and look after the family. Still another speculation is that money for language courses is "geared toward the breadwinner of the family, in most cases the man" (p. 100).

In the Report of the Proceedings (1981) previously mentioned in this chapter, Jim Fleming states that:

Immigrant women in our society are one of the most exploited groups and are definitely in a disadvantaged class. Ways must be found not only to help immigrant women cope with their new Canadian environment but also to change public attitudes towards them. (p. 16)

In the same document, Maria Larrain (1981) explains that "...[immigrant] women who take jobs that Canadian women won't take are seen as victimized in three areas: immigration, employment and education" (p. 7). In explaining how immigrant women become exploited, it has been documented by Ng (1981) that service agencies, having "relations" to the government for providing some of their funding and while interviewing immigrant women for the labour market, "work up the client's work experience and skills into 'credentials' which could then be matched with the requirements of certain job openings" (p. 14). When admitting immigrants into Canada, part of the admissions procedure was to make sure that the occupational gaps in certain areas of the country were filled. Statistics were kept, so that occupations match with the destination. Keeping the occupational statistics in mind, when there was a gap in the labour market that

needed to be filled, immigrant women were organized into those occupational roles, thus skewing the statistics for occupations that they were qualified for, and also skewing the statistics for those occupations that would not necessarily be filled. By providing the employer with a client that matched the skills required for the job, “the counselor in effect ‘produced’ a client as a special ‘commodity’ having these special characteristics. When the client joined the labour force, she in fact *became* an “immigrant woman” (p. 14). (This is not the same as touching up a resume in order to make occupational skills and background better match those required for a particular job). And, as Ng (1981) also states, “in Canada, this process is intimately linked to the history of colonization of North America where immigrant labour was and is used to build up Canada as a nation” (p. 13). The service agency would be happy to have filled the quota that allowed for the funding that they required to keep their operation running smoothly but at the same time it would help to “reproduce existing divisions in the class structure” (p. 14) of immigrant women in the labour market.

Significance of Learning English

In the Report of the Proceedings (1981) mentioned in the previous section, Larrain comments, “language acquisition must be [recognized as] a fundamental right” (p. 7) if immigrant women are to participate fully in Canadian society (1981).

Research conducted by Peirce was derived from research based on Spolsky’s (1989) premise that practice in the target language is a necessary condition of Second

Language (L2) learning. Her research examined under what conditions immigrant women learning a second-language in Ontario spoke English and how such opportunities to speak were socially structured across time and space. She states that when a second-language acquisition (SLA) learner is learning, she is investing in the learning of the second language so as to use the dominant language with the same power as dominant users. Thus she will be better equipped to become part of the higher paid workforce. In becoming a higher wage earner, she is therefore contributing to the cultural, social, political and economic character of Canada.

According to Boyd, (cited in Chiswick, 1992) if immigrant women do not learn the language, she will perpetuate the association between those who are not fluent in the language with a low income. Boyd alludes to those women who have difficulty in fluency in the host language, are associated with being less educated in their own country (1992, p. 351).

And further, Boyd argues

the percentage of immigrant women who lack official language fluency is approximately twice that of men. This finding characterizes both the foreign-born population as a whole and those immigrants born in Southern Europe, East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia [and] . . . the data for women from Southern Europe indicate that the inability to converse in the official language persists for some groups long after entering Canada. (Chiswick, 1992 p. 327-328)

The low level of education could reflect the “practices that favor educating males rather than females” in the country of origin (Chiswick, 1992, p. 351). Also, companies

hiring are more apt to provide job training to those who know English because they are more willing to invest in an individual who has basic language skills. When a woman does not know the language, she is more likely to be placed (by government programs) into the labour pool of low wages for the only type of work that is available to her; industrial or domestic work where the job can be done with very little, or no English language skills. Therefore, the labour pool of low wage earners who are non-English speaking is sustained. The imbalance between supply and demand suggests wages should be low for non-English speaking employees.

When Chiswick indicates that in Canada the government struggles between capital and labour issues, it is clearer to state that the more money Canada puts toward educating immigrants, the smaller labour force for low paying positions and the greater the demand for better educated employees.

Even though immigrant women can work in Canada with very little English speaking skills, they still face occupational discrimination and exploitation. When they arrive in Canada immigrant women are not considered for most occupations for which they are trained and in which they have work experience in their country. It is difficult to translate their education and training into the Canadian education or job classification system. Through the LINC language training program, if a refugee scores below level three on their English language skills examination when they arrive, they are entitled to one year of English language training (government sponsored) before being pushed into

the work world.²⁷ However, economic pressures when they arrive may push women into the job market even though they may be unprepared for the multitude of problems ensuing from their lack of English language skills. It is with these issues in mind that I conducted my study of immigrant women and the effect of family dynamics on learning English.

²⁷ Please refer to the Appendices p. 104 & p. 105.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESIGNING THE STUDY

This chapter focuses on the research question and the design of and methods used to study immigrant women and their success in learning the English language. The approach used in obtaining that sample of women and the procedure used to investigate their learning of English are then discussed.

Developing the Question

Months before I began my thesis work, I was volunteering at a post secondary institution in the English as a Second Language Department. All the students were immigrants. I observed that a couple of women were not attending every week, and did not attend without their husbands. They appeared to separate themselves from the remainder of the group when they did attend. I began to think about the difficulties that must be faced by immigrant women upon arriving in a foreign country and their acquisition of the indigenous language. I speculated that perhaps family dynamics was the reason they kept to themselves. I realized the couples did not know anyone else, they did not own a vehicle, or a driver's license (and came by way of public transportation to class). Therefore they would want to travel together.

My queries arose again when I began to think about a thesis topic.

I read a study researched in Los Angeles (Rockwell, 1990). The research was achieved with a group of Hispanic immigrant women with limited English, and how they viewed learning the dominant language. Rockwell's field work was conducted by means of life history interviews. This group of women included "recent immigrants. . .who spoke little English, . . .other residents who spoke more English, as well as agency and community workers who were politically committed to working with that community" (p. 92). For the thirty-five women interviewed, learning English was viewed as both threat and desire. "Desire" meaning that in order to gain employment better than minimum wage, there was a desire to obtain the language and, theoretically, move ahead in job status. Because education in the dominant language holds this promise for women, it was also viewed as a "threat" when the men in the heterosexual relationships felt threatened by the images of power (independence and success) attached to the education that their women may be able to obtain.

This article interested and motivated me. I reviewed the literature on immigrants, Yugoslavian immigrants, education and family roles (and so on). (After several attempts to develop a question that was not biased), the question became, "Is there a relationship between family dynamics, family member roles and cultures within the Yugoslavian community and the success of women from that community in learning the English language?" Further, I wanted to know the conditions under which these women were learning English, and if there were any changes they had to make to their environment in

order to make it possible to learn the language. I needed answers to questions such as, “Are these women learning the language? Do they feel they have a choice in whether or not they want to learn English? Do they practice the language outside the school environment? Do they speak English freely, or do they feel inhibited in speaking the language? And, do they think they are getting what they had expected?”

Data Collection

The Sample

I wanted to choose my sample from a specific population group. In talking with a Yugoslavian friend, I decided I would draw on the Yugoslavian community (i.e. the people from all the current republics) for my subjects. As far as I knew, this particular community had never been studied in this small city, whereas the native Indian and Vietnamese communities for example, had been studied and documented to a great extent. Before I began my work I only had a vague idea of the tension that existed among the people from the different republics within the country of former Yugoslavia. I had little knowledge that this unease would have an impact on the work that I did.

I chose this group for convenience of location (the city in which I reside), easily approachable English language providers, (I chose a post-secondary institution because several different ethnic women studied their English language classes there), and because these women were a group of recently arrived immigrants. I wanted to conduct the

research either at a post secondary institution the women were familiar with, or at another location that was convenient and comfortable for them.

Gathering together a sample of women from the population of approximately 65 families (in this city) who have recently immigrated from Yugoslavia and who are learning the English language was more of a challenge than I first thought. I tried to access the Yugoslavian community via two institutions, a post-secondary institution and an immigrant woman's group; neither of these approaches was successful (see Appendix A.).

With the help of my Yugoslavian friend who telephoned another Yugoslavian woman, who in turn contacted another, and so on, I was able to build a small snowball sample by imparting an initial introduction via the telephone.

The sample then, became seven immigrant women, who ranged in age from twenty to forty five years from the Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian community, living in a small western Canadian city, who were or had recently²⁸ been studying the English language.

Four of the women were married, two women were single and had never married nor had ever had any children, and one woman was a widow. All of the women interviewed had lived in Canada for less than three years.

²⁸ "Recently" meaning within the last three years.

Interviews

When researchers speak of documenting the learning of a second language through interviewing, Seidman 1991 and Heron 1981 suggest that what it means to be human is the ability of people to symbolize their experience through language. To understand human behavior means to understand the use of language and since language “enables human construing and intending to occur, it is difficult to see how there can be any more fundamental mode of inquiry for human beings into the human condition” (p. 26).²⁹

When reflecting upon my research, my decision to engage in qualitative research was because I identified with the “natural” voice, meaning that I was interested in hearing what immigrant women had to say about issues regarding family dynamics in relation to learning English. This relationship may have been different for each family depending on what the “family” constituted for each of them. However, I was determined to find out if that was the case. I also decided the mode that I would use to obtain data would be to ask questions in an interview setting, using a tape recorder.

Prior to the interviews, I gathered information about the issues that surround these women’s decision to immigrate, to become refugees and why they chose Canada as their

²⁹ My understanding from reading this quotation is that interviewing is a means of communication. However this quotation could be interpreted as meaning that the speaker has the ability to interpret the language of the interviewee, and to change the meaning to that which it was not intended. When we interpret an interview, we quote directly. The reader is able to interpret the meaning for his/herself and not have to rely on the interpretation of the interviewer. At the same time, even by virtue of the quotes that the interviewer puts into the paper, the interviewer is making an interpretation through choice .

new home. I read the newspapers and understood the economic, social, religious and political issues that surround the war, that forced them from their homes and to make decisions that would tear them away from their family and friends. All of this was academic knowledge which was impractical and unuseful when applying it to human subjects.

Once the group had been organized to interview, the second problem became communication, or the language barrier. I am not a speaker of Serbo-Croatian, German, Russian, or any language other than English, and in referring to some of the interviews (see pp. 32, 33 and so on), I had to rely on the interviewees' limited knowledge of English. This affected my method of interviewing and the questions that I asked.

In the past, I took pride in my analysis of non-verbal communication, in the clarity of my speaking skills, and in my empathetic listening ability. I felt prepared to do my interviewing. However, as I quickly learned, at times my preoccupation with "getting the question right" and the analysis of my questions (previous to asking the question), was restricting. Initially, I took a list of questions with me on my interviews, to provide a structure to follow in making comparisons with the answers. I thought these pre-formed questions would help me organize and analyze the data when the interviewing was completed. However, I decided I did not want to use the structured format, because when I originally formulated the questions, an assumption was made that the respondent was married, has a husband and children. As well, I found that in order for the interviews to

flow naturally, and to prevent the conversation from becoming a regimented pattern of 'question', 'answer', 'question', 'answer', I decided to guide the conversation as I would a conversation with a friend. There would be no referring to a printed set of questions, but I would try to create a natural conversation that showed my genuine interest in immigrant women and their story. I did not want to present myself as the "other", or as someone who was separate from, or who was in control of the conversation.

As Charon quotes from Goffman regarding social interaction in everyday life,

We play for audiences in settings. . .and we try to fashion our action according to a face - or image - that we wish to present. Our appearance and manner are our personal front, and other people become not only our audience, but stage directors, authors, commentators, and critics. In our performance our goal remains to present ourselves in a way that we choose, to act in ways so as to influence the judgments and actions of others, to 'manage the impressions' of others (p. 155).

If I was going to "manage the impressions of others", then I wanted that impression to have some semblance of equality, meaning that I wanted to be myself, even though I was doing the interviewing. I wanted to be on as much of an equal footing as I possibly could be so they would trust me and be forthright in answering the questions.

Occasionally, jostling back and forth to rephrase and reword the questions got in the way of communicating. The banter of a conversation with people that we know well, is uninhibited. The message, or the question being asked is understood, and the idea enhances a response that is receptive to the person who has spoken. In the case of someone who has a limited knowledge of the dominant language, the question, or

message is lost if the wording is not just right (Abrams, p. 3). Most of the questions I asked were candid and not all of the questions followed the list that I had made up. When the conversation got “stuck”, or when the natural flow of the conversation stopped, I rephrased the question because I assumed that my question needed to be reworked. This seemed to be the right solution as I seldom had to change the question again because of a lack of understanding. When there were silences in the conversation, I observed the interviewee and either waited for a response, or I asked if the question or comment was understood and then rearranged the question to ask it again.

These experiences made me aware of and appreciate the differences between my life and theirs, and how difficult it was for both of us to try to communicate.

After informal introductions were made on the telephone (in which I explained my identity and the purpose of my study), I made arrangements to meet them. One of my concerns was that of selecting a site in which to collect the data. In the original plan, the site was to be the post secondary institution in which the students were learning English.

Since my research deviated from the original plan and I now had another group of Yugoslavian women in which to interview, I decided to interview them wherever they felt most comfortable. I asked them if they wanted to come to my home, I was willing to pick them up and take them back to their home after the interview, or I could meet them at a post secondary institution, at one of the libraries, or I could go to their home.

At the beginning of each interview, I explained the purpose of the research, the signing of a “consent form”³⁰ giving permission to interview and consent to use an audio tape recorder. Recording in this form, provided me with an accurate account of answers to questions that I asked them. I explained that if they didn’t want me to use the tape recorder, I wouldn’t, although I would be taking notes, and it would be hard for me to keep up with the conversation and the exact wording. I assured each one that I would be the only person who had access to the tape recorded interview. I further explained, that I could provide a copy of that transcript. I assured them they could stop the interview at any time, or that they did not have to answer questions if she did not want to. The women I interviewed were comfortable with the use of a tape-recorder. Throughout all seven interviews, there was never a time when answers to questions were refused, nor were there any objections to the use of a tape-recorder.

One woman was uncomfortable with being interviewed. She did not understand what was involved in the interview process, and because she had only completed the first two levels of English language classes, she was afraid that I would not understand her. As well, she did not think that she would be able to understand my questions. Because the women of the community knew her, one woman made arrangements to have me meet her at the home of a woman that I had previously interviewed. In this regard, she felt comfortable that someone she knew was there with her, and that any interpreting would

³⁰ Refer to Appendix E for a sample of the Consent Form. The Consent Form is a single page document drafted up and approved by the University Education Faculty Ethics Committee prior to any interviews taking place. As the title implies, when it is signed, consent to interview has been given.

be done if there was a need. With this interview, as well as one other interview, I made use of an interpreter. Both interpreters that I used, had also been a part of my research study and had been interviewed prior to being called upon to help interpret. As I stated above, the woman being interviewed felt more comfortable talking to me when she knew that someone with whom she had a former relationship, was in the room with her. As far as I could tell from the way the interviewing and the answering of questions was concerned, there was never any coaching of the answers. The interpretation came as a result of the interviewee not understanding the question.

The final interview took place at a post secondary institution. This interview was interrupted by a group of students preparing for a class. All of the major questions were answered by the time we were interrupted, but a natural ending did not occur to this interview.

To collect the data, I used an inquiry with open-ended questions as well as a semi-structured interview format. Even though I had a semi-structured list of questions³¹, the questions were regulated by the direction which the conversation took. For example, I began the interview by asking questions about family history and education. As the women answered the question, I followed their train of thought with a related question. The reason for this seemed obvious. To give out strictly formatted questions would not gain a trust and ease for them in talking to me. In this regard, when an answer was given I

³¹ Refer to the Appendix F for a sample of the questions.

tried to either make a comment on what had been said, or ask a question that clarified what had been said, and then move to a related question. To demonstrate, I present a sample of one of the interviews. I asked the following questions to understand the background of my interviewee, and to determine how much English language exposure she had before coming to Canada.

- Question:** "Where did you grow up?"
Answer: "I grew up from Croatia. In Yugoslavia."
Question: "Do you have family still living there now?"
Answer: "Yes."
Question: "I am interested in your family's education as well as yours. Did your family members go to school in Yugoslavia?"
Answer: "My Mom is a, in economic. In a office and my Dad is a teacher. High School."
Question: "Did they both go to University?"
Answer: "My Dad went to University and my Mother, she finish high school. My Father he finish University but he don't work in his job, he is manager."
Question: "Is that sort of like an administrator of a school?"
Answer: "Yes."
Question: "And did either of your parents learn English?"
Answer: "No. Russian in school. They didn't have choice."
Question: "Did you go to school in Yugoslavia?"
Answer: "Yes, in elementary school, I have eight grades, in high school, I have 4 grades. And in University I had, I don't know, 4 years. For teacher, I had two years."
Question: "Can you tell me that again? I don't quite understand. Did you go to University for two years, or four years?"
Answer: "I had a, I had a just two years of University I finish two years."
Question: "Oh. Did you receive a diploma then, to teach school?"
Answer: "Yes, I had diploma. Only two years for teacher in elementary."
Question: "Oh. So you went to University for two years to teach elementary school, after you completed your high school. Did you learn any English in school or in University?"
Answer: "No. No, I only learn Germany. German? Ah, German. And I speak German very well. Yes, very well. Reading, write and think."

Question: “O.k., so your first encounter with the English language was when you came to Canada?”

In interviewing the seven women, they talked to me about anything; they volunteered freely, candidly and openly. When I asked them questions they answered without any hesitation and they did not appear to be suspicious of my intentions. Sometimes the words they chose to express themselves were very strong. Because of the war and having suddenly to face political unrest, racist behaviour, terrorism, poverty, torture and death of family members and loved ones, and to become a refugee for months while waiting for immigration approval, were reasons why strong words were used to express their feelings regarding their history. Here are two examples of quotations from my interviews that will demonstrate how much they revealed to me. The first question was asked to prompt a second question that was to be in regards to how she felt about learning English but that second question was never asked as I was caught up in her dramatic expression of feeling and realized that I felt like an intruder needlessly sifting and sorting through her life.

Question: “How do you feel about leaving your country and living here in Canada?”

Answer: “If people are forced to leave - if raised differently, could see that you did not want to see them killed or whatever - when you choose not to be one nationalistic group - and you go to another part of the country and then you see that everybody is the same as the place where you just left from - “refugees should be naked” and they spitting on you in the street - we have accent differently than the others - nobody is accepting you in the place where you are. If it would be different if those people would come to Croatia. When we were living with my Aunt and Uncle at one point trying

to get work, and my Auntie said, 'This is really embarrassing - we cannot have a Croate in our house'. We had to leave. It is really hard and you are not normal person. The 24 years have been completely erased - it feels like I am a different person - I try to think about it and I feel like I have no past. All the pictures are gone I have no pictures for the first 25 years of my life. It's so shocking and no one can live like that. I don't need this treatment! I am going to Canada! To Hell with you! You have a chance to change your life here - the other thing is the students that just got educated, just leave, but nobody every question them. What about all the money the government spent on their education? Nobody cares about that! 'Bosnians' term used but not a nation, mixed up country, now term means Muslim people. Stupid idea!"

A question that I asked one other woman was:

Question: "How do you see yourself adapting to culture in Canada?"

Answer: "Yes, for me it was easy. I not homesick, I never cried. For me, same in my country. Just same, city, people, shopping. For me. I don't know for other people. For me, same."

Communication was imperative to a good interview. The response elicited was my way of knowing that the question I asked was understood. Because there was a language barrier, I sometimes had difficulty getting the question worded right so that it would be understood (especially with the interviews that I gave at the beginning of my research). Some of the women had confidence in their ability with English, usually the ones that had been in Canada longer, while others were more timid in their responses.

The Use of a Journal

After I conducted the interviews, I wrote notes in a journal. The journal entries were made up of observations I made during the interview. I also wrote down my thoughts, perceptions, speculations and presumptions in the form of notes which I included as part of my data. I did not use any material in my data that would be injurious to, or that would identify my subjects.

When I had completed the interviews, I transcribed the tapes by listening to them and recording the material into the computer. If there were journal notes that I wrote regarding an interview, I added this to the typed copy. The transcribed material was then used to categorize or classify the data.³² I highlighted answers to questions on the transcripts to identify themes, words or phrases that occurred more than once, and related to my original research question. This procedure helped me to write the findings of this study.

I then used index cards and wrote themes as headings for categories. The themes were then used as headings under which I placed specific quotes that related to that theme. These were then used to draw the conclusions to this study.

³² I am a fairly organized person, and having worked in libraries, my tendency is to categorize material. According to Bogdan & Biklen, coding is one method of sorting the material to prepare for data analysis (p. 166).

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

The following chapter reports the findings of the research work with respect to the original question, “What is the relationship between family dynamics, family member roles and cultures within one immigrant community and the success of women from that community in learning the English language?”

With such a small sample I do not present definitive findings but an exploratory study of seven immigrant women from (former) Yugoslavia learning English. I rely on tape recorded interviews for my data. I relate my findings and perceptions with specific quotations from the women that I interviewed. Some of the sub-headings of this chapter are theme-related descriptive words actually used by the women in answer to questions I asked. In some cases, the sub-headings are direct quotations from the women I interviewed. Therefore the headings may not always be grammatically correct.

In choosing to use parts of their speech for sub-headings, I did so to demonstrate how the women used the English language to express their answers to my questions. Each sub-heading is a finding that directly related to an original question.

Who Is Hand In House?

In the following examples I present an entire segment of an answer to a question that I asked. I chose not to split the commentary into a smaller segment but instead I submit each document in its entirety so that a better understanding of how specific interviewees answered the question. The questions I asked pertained to family³³ dynamics so I got an overall picture of the interrelationship roles within the family members, between males (husband, brothers, uncles, grandfathers, sons) and females (wife, sisters, aunts, grandmothers, daughters) from former Yugoslavia.

The following excerpt was from one woman who was single and never married nor has ever had children. In asking the question, “What do you think of gender roles?”, I was interested in her attitude toward family member roles and the nature of interpersonal relationships within the family. As I asked this question, she did not understand the word “gender”. It is my assumption that this was not because she did not understand English, but in fact because she had never had any exposure to the word in her own language. At first she did not comprehend the word. Therefore there was no answer to the question. I waited for a reasonable length of time assuming that she did not know what I had asked her and I rephrased the question. I asked her, “ Do you know what gender roles are? Male, female, for instance within the household. . .” She did not wait for me to explain further as she answered:

³³ Please refer to Chapter Three and the discussion of the term family as used throughout this document.

“Probably sex. Who is hand in house? Man or woman?”

Oh, like that. This is very interesting question. How many women, how many tongues, how many men, how many tongues? I don't know. You know, this is a . . . I think that lots of women in Yugoslavia they came, before they reaching to Canada they just heard that women in Canada has more rights. But I was arguing at school many many times, because every women likes that is the boss, or something like that but I told you, only one book for me in life and that is the Bible. The Bible said that God first makes man and after the woman but in this here I strongly disagree. I really like men something ah, because one old message, ah proverb in my country and that is that 'women keep three,' how you say, 'keep three stuffs, but men just holding one' and I think ah every character from the women coming is from Mother. Character for everything, for cooking, ah but ah, for example for now I am single but I expecting tomorrow I having boyfriend, ah, or husband, that he's really strong, powerful man. That he's making or something that I feel comfortable beside him. That's essentially about helping, about that. For example if I am sick or something about man's job. Or it doesn't matter if I sick or something like that, he can help me, I agree, no problem.” (She laughs).

In answering the question, the words, “who is hand in house” refer to the household member who has the control of the house. It was my impression that this woman's attitude regarding man's role (husband, father, uncle, grandfather, brother) as a protector in relation to woman's role (wife, mother, aunt, grandmother, sister) as family care provider was typical of the other women in the group that I interviewed. Her cultural values were very strong, which can be attributed to some extent to her religious beliefs, but it was my assumption that her statement was due to her patriarchal upbringing. It would be difficult to speculate whether her attitude will change once she is married.

Gender dynamics was not an expressed concern with these women, although typically in one-time socialist countries it was. They claimed they had little concern with

being treated as inferior to the men in their family structure (fathers, husbands, brothers, uncles, grandfathers, sons), nor did they concern themselves with liberating social changes. These women claim they don't struggle against male authoritarianism in the family structure. In fact, the women I interviewed have empowered themselves through learning the English language. Learning English was their means of gaining economic success, and in doing so seemed to gain an equal status with their spouse/partner/ or other male family members because they became an asset to the family.

I asked one married woman the question, "What do you think the husband's role is in the family?" Again, in answer to this question, I was interested in finding out if there were cultural beliefs regarding male and female dynamics within the family. Her answer was:

"I am really capable person, and if you have control like everything, how can I say, if you have family, he has to do everything for family, or who's gonna?"

From the above comment, it is my interpretations that this woman says she is capable of looking after the family, but implies that she relies on her husband because that is what is expected of him. If he does not look after the family by being the provider and the protector, who will?

In asking the question, “How do you see yourself as a success?”, I was trying to determine one woman’s vision of herself in relation to her new social world, i.e. her new environment. The woman, who was single, replied:

“Ah. This is honestly. I would like to find one really good man beside me and in future have nice children. I would like, I don’t know, I like a really successful man. I would like that he standing beside me.”

This statement displayed her “honesty”, but the answer to this question surprised me at first because it seemed that she did not see herself as an individual with rights and beliefs separate from anyone else. In fact, she rated her future success in the social world and her sense of self or her self worth by marrying a man that was successful. This statement demonstrated that she believed the male to be superior. Perhaps this was due in part to the socialist or cultural attitude expected of the sexes from (former) Yugoslavia. Depending on what the cultural expectation was for women in that country, and based on what this woman said, I am led to believe that she would find a partner in which she would take an equal role (demonstrated by her words “standing beside me”). Taking an equal role means that she would value herself in relation to what she expected of herself. She would see herself as compatible with her spouse. By listening to her words, I understand that she thinks having a successful man beside her would make her a better person, or a successful woman. She has defined herself by her family and as she had brought no family member with her to Canada, this was important to her. To me, the role she took might be a contributing factor in her attitude toward learning English.

Attitudinal factors influence the pace and rate of learning English. If learning another language was praised, language learning would be done at a faster pace just as, if language learning was mixed with criticism and self-doubt, language learning would be slowed. From this then, if she had a positive attitude about how successful she would be, she would no doubt learn the language quickly and be a success in her new environment.

The purpose of the next question was to find out what the cultural expectations were of women and men from former Yugoslavia. I asked one woman, "In Canada, do you go out with your female friends without your husband?" The reply was:

"Oh. Little bit jealousy. Probably not."

I then asked her, "Why jealousy?"

"Probably because you have bad reputation."

The question I then asked was: "What about men, if they go out with their male friends without their wife, would they have a bad reputation?"

"Oh, no. This surprise is bigger. For example, if you slept with ten or fifteen men you are a 'bitch'. But if you are a man and you slept with ten or fifteen women, oh! You are macho!"

Again in the above example, culture played an important part for her in answer to the questions. Through the sex roles the cultural expectation was that there were different attitudes and behavior for men and women.

The following question was asked to determine if there were certain role expectations for males and females. I asked the following question to one of the single women, "Who does the housework, childcare, grocery buying and so on?" She answered:

"Usually women. The wife's. Maybe an exception that some men do but essentially women do. Men would do really men's kind of job like yard work or something like that. We are Croatian and really modern women, total opposite to Muslim women. You know now a days for example most women are kindful to men and I don't know Muslim women they really like are a little bit different from other women and I think that lots of men in my country accept work. Muslim women are not too much talkative; if men are say talking, women are leaving but if you see Serbian or Croatian or something, they like to hear and be in conversation."

I assume these cultural statements might be a stereotype held by other Croations that reflect a social attitude that Muslims are traditionalists. To me, she is stating that Croatian women are "modern" in comparison with Muslim women who are "traditionalists" in that part of the world. According to research previously documented in this study, if women are traditionalists they become subservient to the power dynamic within the household. Power dynamic determines what role men and women play in their relationship with each other. In moving to a new country there is little choice in the matter of learning the dominant language. Previous research also stated that men feel threatened in connection with women learning English if there is little time or money for themselves to learn. My research found that the women I interviewed are learning the language because they want to learn for economic survival. In doing so, they are empowered to become as an equal with their spouse.

There are incentives to gain a better education: to get out of working in the lower paying labour jobs, and to have better access to participate in the community. As well, in the case of the single women that I interviewed, learning English gave them more independence in their new environment which has and will lead to their further successes.

Importance of Family

According to the women I interviewed, family life is very important to the people from former Yugoslavia (not to say that it is of less importance to other groups around the world). Unfortunately because of the war, most have come to Canada without their families. The attitude toward married women working outside of the home is perceived as a disruption in family life. As a result, it seems that the money women earn when they worked outside of their homes was viewed as “extra” income, not necessarily to help “provide for” the family. Men are the providers and women help out.

In the paragraph below, I present a statement from one unmarried Bosnian woman about how she felt about the importance of family life and women working outside the home. According to her, in all republics of Yugoslavia, the Grandparents often live with the nuclear family in order to provide childcare while the parents work.

“Oh, upset family when the woman working. Husband buy things for family but not wife. But they they marriage people has very wonderful wonderful life. Because Grandma always or Grandfather they are caring children. Usually for example there are big houses one, two, three flight or

something. For example, Grandma can live there and get up, but you know your time is for going to job you know exactly that your Grandma is going to care. And you cannot pay. But here I see that there is a big difference if husband and wife working, if you pay daycare or somebody who is working, but this is really hard question, for example tomorrow, I am single now, but I, I don't trust anybody for example that I have children, that I don't know that somebody can keep out or something when the brain small. I don't trust anybody then."

Four of the seven women I interviewed did not worry about childcare or sharing of household chores because they were single. Starting a new life was difficult and to find suitable daycare and to pay for education and transportation to and from classes on a very limited income could be an inhibiting factor in attending English classes.

I asked one woman, "What is family life like in Yugoslavia?"

"Most of people are family people. They like children, wife and they like to have everybody and essentially their family life is nice, they have like to work in the world. Most have a good relationship, but they have divorce like many people."

And one other woman spoke of the family relationship in former Yugoslavia in terms of the extended family. If there was no extended family in Canada to provide extra support in babysitting the children while both husband and wife work or attend English classes, the implications were that the wife would look after the children, or she would take on the added burden of making sure the children were taken to and picked up from daycare. Also, the childcare expenses and time restraint involved in taxiing children

might be too overwhelming and the wife may choose to stay home and look after the family.

“Women are usually happy in Yugoslavia, because they have booked off for maybe one year with child. Anyway they are happy because when they are working they don’t have to worry about children because Grandmother they always care them. But, here in Canada I think women are suffer because you have to pay daycare, many many stuffs. When I have children I do same. I take children and I pay. Same.”

I then asked this woman, “If both parents are working, who would stay home and look after the children?” She answered:

“Everything is depend on people, if somebody have good job. Who is the weaker person they are going to quit, or whoever makes the most money [stays working]. Women usually do much more jobs than men. Okay, men usually like that they give good money, good food and everything, you know. In fact women care more children than the husband even.”

The answers to the questions I posed above and on the previous pages, indicated that attitude and behaviors are laid out culturally and socially before we are born. Traditionally, in former Yugoslavia, Yugoslavian women look after their families. Here again, the expectations for males and females in their “husband/wife” roles, were reflected. We are shown that although the women that are now living in Canada say that the workload in former Yugoslavia was evenly balanced, in order to work outside the home, the woman took on the responsibility of the housework and child care in addition

to being employed. The traditional role of the man working to “provide” for his family, is demonstrated in the words above. The “weaker” member of the family would be the person making less money, which would likely be the wife. If the wife was expected to stay home and look after the children (in either country), this would inhibit her chances (and thus the family’s) of higher economic mobility. In Canada, this could impact on her chances of furthering her language skills both socially through the work world, and because of a lack of money that would provide her with the opportunity to study.

Language Barrier (Importance of Learning English)

Learning the dominant language of a country uncovers an awareness of the opportunities that are available to immigrants. Socialization is important for any person that wants to gain acceptance in a new country. Communication is a means of acquiring social acceptance. Through learning English and in gaining social acceptance, immigrant women gain a sense of power over their future. Immigrant women also gain a better understanding of their surroundings and a feeling of trust and security in their new environment when they learn English.

Even though interview data is attitudinal and does not necessarily translate into what people will do, or what will happen, here is an example from one interview that demonstrates the attitude that learning English will give immigrant women power over

her own destiny by means of communication. I wanted to find out how she felt about learning English. I asked the question, "Did you want to learn English when you came to Canada?"

"...we wanted to learn the language as soon as possible when we got here because not knowing the language in the country, is really a big problem, disadvantage. . . and especially we came from a country where when we spoke we were equal with the rest of the people because they were all the same language and we didn't have that language barrier and you don't want that language barrier even if you know, subconsciously know, that this is not your country and this is not your mother tongue and you didn't learn it when you were a little kid you still don't want that barrier, you want to get rid of it as quickly as possible. That is what I found."

Gaining knowledge of the English language as quickly as possible also dissolved any hierarchy that might be present in the relationship between the immigrant who does not speak the language and the host who does, thus a trust is formed between the two. In order to socialize one must communicate and in order to gain an acceptance within the community, one must learn the language of the host country.

I asked the question, "Now that you know some English, are you glad you learned the language?" I was interested in knowing what this immigrant woman thought of

learning the language. She replied:

“This is my, how you say, this is my ‘division’, no, ‘vision’. If you don’t know English, you are weak in everywhere, jobs, school, street, music, everywhere, everywhere. English everyday you are getting better and (kisses her fingers and throws the kiss in the air). Your future if you don’t know English, that’s because English is an international language and everybody likes English.”

According to research previously mentioned in this study, learning a language relates mutually to using the language. If the language is used everyday, it stands to reason that a higher level of learning would be gained. In gaining a proficiency in the language, the future of an immigrant should be successful, as English competence facilitates further opportunity.

In the next excerpt, the woman interviewed was married and had one child. Her husband was in the room while she was interviewed. Even though her husband helped out with the cooking and cleaning, she was responsible for some of the housework, and the childcare as well as being employed full time outside the home. Her husband worked full time as well. I noted in my journal, that this couple seemed tense at the beginning of the interview. Perhaps it was because they did not know me, had never been interviewed before and did not know what to expect. We had been discussing her desire to go back to school to study more English, so she could go on to University to get a better job.

Question: “Could you go back and start classes again?”

Answer: “No cause I work.”

Response: “Yes, right, but they do offer classes at night too don’t they?”

Answer: “I took some classes at night, but it’s too hard to go there after work.”

Response: "Yes, it's very hard on you."
Answer: "I can't do anything with baby."
Question: "Yes, I know it's very hard. You already had your baby when you came here?"
Answer: "Yes. At first he was in daycare. Now he is in dayhome."
Question: "That sounds much better for you. Did your husband go to English language classes with you?"
Answer: "Yes. We were in workplace program."
Question: "What kind of responsibility do you have at home, do you cook and clean?"
Answer: "Yes, and I am working, but (husband) does cooking and cleaning too. And he works."

Even though the woman quoted above did not think it was possible to go back to school, by the time of writing, she and her husband found a way to balance their need to take classes, employment, household chores and their child.

Probably due to traditional thinking, the husband's participation in household duties or childcare after working at a full time job was not always expected by the wife, who may make excuses for his lack of involvement. This is demonstrated by the following example. This Bosnian woman's husband was not present during this interview.

The question I asked was, "Does your husband help with [their child]?"

"Oh yeah. Anyways, if you know how to organize your time, that's a, actually I don't need his help. His work time, his work shifts are such that I can't count on him. He works until six and he comes home at quarter after six and he has his shower and it's seven and [their child] goes to bed. My husband, he works long hours and when he gets home he is tired. I put [their child] to bed just after he comes home, and weekends [their child] is mostly with me. But never mind, I manage. I went to school eight to two then I stayed two to four to write a part of my homework and then I took [their child] home from daycare and prepare supper and then I did the rest

of my homework nine to eleven, or to ten. It wasn't easy, I can't say it is funny, I can't have any time to watch any movie or so (she laughs)."

The traditional role lends itself to women who feel that it was their "duty" to provide care for the family. Not unlike some young Canadian women, this woman juggled school work with child care and household chores without the help of her husband, which was done in the name of getting ahead. The difference was that the immigrants had very little knowledge of the English language, so they had to go through the hardships that are involved in order to get to the next stage of their social mobility, that of continuing on to college or to university, so that they could be economically better off.

Even though both of the women mentioned above were married, their motivation to achieve their goal was very strong. With or without the help of their husbands, they seem determined to strive toward a better life. In wanting a better life, they were willing to put up with some difficulty.

The women I interviewed wanted to learn English. To them learning English was (potentially) the answer to being accepted in Canada, i.e. the new society, which in turn would be a way to access the community to meet others, and/or to be able to join the paid workforce, thus get ahead financially. Learning English was also a means of communication between them and (if they have any), their school aged children.

Learning English provided an inclusion and acceptance of the family into the society and children into the school system.

Based on the answers given in the interviews, prior to immigrating and learning English, there seemed to be a correlation between how easily my interviewees learned English and the number of years of previous education (especially if a language other than their mother tongue was learned as well). Learning another language did not seem difficult to them. In fact, English seemed easier to them compared to the German or Russian languages that they learned in Yugoslavia. The experiences that these women had in learning languages other than their native language seemed to enable them to acquire the English language fairly easily.

I asked the question, "Did you learn any English before you immigrated to Canada?"

"There were no English language classes at all in my country, lots of schools have the English, but because I am from the small city, from about grade six and up we learned Germany, but unfortunately, my school had Russian. So, I have studied Russian for seven years. Because the alphabet is similar with Russian, it wasn't any problem for me but grammar is a little bit harder for me than English. I prefer English grammar."

One woman talked about the other languages she learned in Yugoslavia:

"My Mother learned German and that is what she decided to work and my Father learned Russian because ah, ah where he was ah born and raised, it was one of Republics in Yugoslavia that had a lot of nationalities lived together. A lot of nationalities makes um Romanian, Czechoslovakian, you know, Russian and the Russian language was just more common in that part of the country. If you are looking at Yugoslavia then you have to remember Croatia which are a Republic. They're are more, ah, turned to West side. You know, everything is living on in the West. So, ah, basically

students in school learned English, or German, or French. Except students who lived on the coast, they would learn Italian, you know.”

Two women were taught English in elementary school and in university in Yugoslavia. They were able to understand English before they arrived, and could speak enough to get by. All seven of the women knew a few basic words such as “Hi” and “How are you?” when they first arrived in Canada.

A question I asked one of the women, was: “Did you learn English in school, [in Yugoslavia?])” Her reply:

“I learned English in my school and in the high school I got German too. I learned a bit of German. I was always buying National Geographics. He (her brother) was reading that and through the musics, through the films. And then we spent a month of our summer holidays every year, at the seaside. We had a lot of friends from midland, and the only way how could we communicate with them, was English. And we used it a lot. I had two years of University, and what they were trying to do, all the professions, had English at University too, and they tried to learn specialized English. For example, (husband) had to learn all the words that he needed for mechanical terms and what I learn in Psychology and Sociology and Literature, and kind of to learn all the international words and use them, not like I did. And. . .we would sometimes talk in English only to make our parents you know, if you were mad at them we would talk in English so they could not understand”.

All seven of the women interviewed, spoke, read and wrote at least one language other than Serbo-Croatian and English. Three of these women spoke Russian and German as well as Serbo-Croatian and English. At least one of the parents of four of the women, speak Russian or German as well as their native language, Serbo-Croatian. Six

of the women interviewed, completed high school in Yugoslavia. One woman had grade eight education. Four of the women each had at least two years of College or University education, completed in Yugoslavia. Five of the women employed in Canada were underemployed, none of the seven women interviewed were working in the area for which they were trained or educated in Yugoslavia. They all experienced downward economic mobility once they fled their home in former Yugoslavia. An example of this is the answer to the question, "Did you attend University or College after high school?"

One woman replied:

"I had two years of University, when we moved to Serbia to finish our studies, I wasn't able to find job. The only job I got was - it was a term position and it was a cleaning toilet job in a city hall. I worked there and the economic situation in our country was really bad and they just fired me because they couldn't afford to pay anybody anymore except the people who were there for ten or twenty years they kinda have their foot in the door. We didn't see anything better in the future and we decided to try a new life here in Canada. And when I come here I first worked in hotel cleaning".

Even though all of them fled their country because of the war, they were optimistic about the future and were here to start a new life. Three women were interested in studying in the computer field, mainly because they saw lots of advertised jobs available, and depending on how much education they receive, the rate of pay is good. One woman was interested in returning to the same type of career that she was employed in in Yugoslavia, that of a teacher. One woman was learning a trade and was

considering continuing with her education while she worked in that field on a part-time basis and one woman would like to study in the management area.

Only one woman from this group was working full time, in paid employment. She worked in a domestic position in a hotel. She worked in the retail industry before she came to Canada. This woman had the least amount of English language training of all of these women, since arriving in Canada, the equivalent of about two months. She expressed an interest in upgrading her education so that she could work in an area other than domestic labour.

Four of these women were employed on a part-time basis. Two of the women employed part-time were studying full time at a post secondary institution. The other two work part-time while studying English at various levels. Two women do not work at all but attend classes full time in a post secondary institution and each of these two women had one child.

Three of the parents of the seven women remained working in a professional capacity in the former Yugoslavia. One mother was a teacher of German, one mother was an economist and one father was an administrator of a school. All but two of the families had to flee to another location because of the war, in order to look for work and to find a place to live, leaving behind their belongings and even their pets. Some of the parents of these immigrant women have not been able to find any type of employment and rely on their children, on other family members, friends, or their life savings in order to survive.

Some of their children have immigrated to Canada or another country, are working and send money home. The women I interviewed were not from wealthy homes in Yugoslavia, but had a good economic standard of living. Two of the families enjoyed a lifestyle that was able to accommodate vacations to the seaside. At least three families owned two homes before the war, one in the city and one in the country.

When first arriving in Canada, immigrants worried not only about their own survival and what their new lives would offer them, but also about the family members they left behind. Depending on what their expectations were for themselves, and from what they thought the host country would offer them when they arrived, they were able to take advantage of opportunities to learn English and to make a living.

I asked the question, "When you first came to Canada, were you helped in getting enrolled in classes to learn English?"

"Yes. The only thing is, is to have everybody take English no matter what level. And have someone there who knows English and understands grammar. Somebody who is there speaking English. That needs to be classified. I know that it's hard to classify, but you know people who know the basics, put them in one little group I think that the classes are not serving the needs of the people who are going there. So that was my only concern. I really wanted to learn a lot of grammar and vocabulary. And I did learn vocabulary, but grammar is more difficult to do on your own. My independent work when my teacher was working with people who did not have enough English. I didn't think at that time that I can understand English grammar because there are a lot of exceptions for rules."

Another similar question to another woman was, "Is there anything you would do to make it easier for others when they arrive here to learn English?" Her reply:

"Well, when we learned English in school, it was going step by step and it was cover all the basic things and just like that you were build or something, you know we were building a house or anything, that's how we build our language in Yugoslavia. And that's what I was hoping I would get here - a little bit of this, a little bit of that and you know everything is still in the air and I wanted to just put it down and learn it from there."

Not being able to speak the language fluently is a disadvantage when immigrants arrive in Canada. They are tested in their English language skills, and some decisions are made for them. They are placed either into a workplace program or English language classes. In trying to determine how she viewed the English program when she first arrived in the city, I asked a question to one other woman: "What was your English language program like when you first came here?" Her reply was:

"I had one class that was four months, and that was the workplace program. Basically, the class I went through was not oriented to learn English, it was more, ah it was more to get some work experience for the workplace. It was a different program that had six weeks of English and we were prepared learn how to find ads in the Canada employment centre or newspapers or learn how to write a resume. I worked six weeks and then we went back to four weeks at the school and talking about our experiences in the workplace and then there was another six weeks work experienced and one final week and that was all. A lot of people from our class there were thirteen people and eleven got job. It's oriented to help you find a job not oriented to help you to learn grammar, or pronunciation. That is what I want to do to learn English."

The same question was asked to another student, and her reply was:

"I had program at first I was in English. It was for one month and

a half. It was grammar, I had book and someone come in and correct lesson, like in school. It was good, but short. Then it was technical English. Writing reports. It was different, we didn't do any grammar."

This woman worked for a number of months, learned grammar on her own, wrote and passed an entrance exam, and is now attending University classes.

Within certain limits, that of following government criteria in testing the immigrant's knowledge of English (see Appendix C - LINC language benchmarks criteria for reading, writing and speaking), English language providers have the power and knowledge to determine the direction in which the immigrant proceeds upon entrance to the country. It is important to understand that if funding is being paid on a need basis, it would be beneficial to have larger classes. However, when the immigrant is tested, if they have a good prior knowledge of English (and are benchmarked at a level 3 in all levels of the placement testing), they are placed in the workplace program and expected to learn the language while working. This is seen as beneficial in that it gives the immigrant time to settle in and to pay off any government loans that were given prior to entrance.

Immigrants are offered information about English language training after they are given a placement test. The language provider sets the immigrant up in a program that will get them into language classes or out into the work world even if they would rather be furthering their studies. The programs are not set up for the immigrant to choose

which program they would be in, rather government officials determine whether an immigrant should be going to school or working.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

A comprehensive thesis derived from any group of people must include all aspects of their lived experiences, the perspectives, insights and issues which have relevance to, pertain to, or have an effect on, the original idea that started the study evolving. This research stressed the importance of the relationship among family dynamics, family member roles and cultures within one immigrant community and the success of women from that community in learning English.

The research process began by reviewing the literature on the population statistics, examined government policies in regard to the regulations, entry and support of immigrants, the history of Yugoslavia and its education, and their cultural and social roles. It then described Yugoslavian immigrants according to their history and family contexts. These chapters provided background information that was essential to understanding how cultural/family values influenced women's decision making and learning the English language. The analysis of the taped interviews disclosed several details that the importance of learning English conveyed. The interviews revealed that the cultural expectations and family roles of immigrant women from former Yugoslavia do play an important part in learning English.

This research suggests that immigrant women become as equals with their spouse/partner through an economic drive despite the fact that men from former Yugoslavia took the dominant role in the family structure.

Because these women were new to the country the driving force for them was their determination to survive. In surviving in the new country they had to start over, make a new life (for themselves and their family) and to get ahead as quickly as possible. Learning the English language provided them with the means of getting ahead.

Traditionally these women stayed at home and looked after their families because of the cultural belief that men were the head of the household and they were the family care givers. Even though the cultural belief was strong, once they immigrated to Canada, the women learned that by gaining English they empowered themselves as an equal in the family structure through their desire for economic betterment. In doing so they defined their position within the family unit and the cultural structure of the family, i.e. within hierarchical power their voice became stronger. Through motivation and determination and at whatever cost to them whether it be by choice or necessity, they took on the responsibilities of care for the family, household duties and attended school, where they learned English and then entered into the work world. By working hard and being productive, they became an economic asset thus were able to maintain their power position within the family. The women I interviewed took as many English language

classes as they could and looked forward to continued advancement through education in order to get ahead, to raise their standard of living and to become a part of the society.

By learning English and in gaining power, an understanding of their surroundings and a feeling of security in their new environment was realized. Learning English also dissolved hierarchy that may be present in the relationship between the immigrant who does not speak the language and the host who does, thereby resulting in trust through social acceptance. The degree to which immigrant women trusted others who were trying to understand, who were helping them settle, or with their language learning, determined the amount of friendship, number of social contacts and perhaps job opportunities that were available to them. These women were not barred from the working world if they had limited English language knowledge, but they were limited in the type of work that they could perform unless they were at a certain language level. Adding to this last statement, learning English provided access to higher education which should result in a better paying job and greater security for the future.

I did not notice that language learning posed a threat to the husbands of the women I interviewed. In fact, I assumed that men realized in order to survive in Canada language learning was an economic need. In interviewing these women I found that they wanted to learn the language to gain employment. In gaining employment, they became an asset to the family in terms of monetary worth. Earlier research by Rockhill (1990) stated that education in the dominant language was seen by immigrant women as a

“desire”. Their motivation and desire to get ahead quickly, was for economic reasons.

This research assisted in the understanding of immigrants living in a new country. For the newcomer, adapting in Canada has few political pressures, the strain becoming economic survival. If the language is not learned, a standard of living that is above the subsistence level would not be attained, and therefore adaptation would take longer.

Some immigrant women stay home and look after their families. My research revealed that these women were able to attend classes to further their education because it would be an economic advantage to do so. Even though my research indicated that these women believed in their cultural norms, i.e. that women take the major responsibility in child care and household tasks, their drive or motivation to gain economic stability (through their English language learning) overrode cultural (hierarchical) structure. Women gained power within the household by becoming an economic asset to the family unit and therefore seemed to be on an equal footing with their male counterparts.

From this experience, I have gained a better knowledge of the nature of research and the role of the researcher in obtaining material for a study. I hope that some of the problems I encountered (listed in Appendix A) will help other graduate students understand the issues before doing field work.

Recommendations to Others

A researcher has to have research integrity. Be determined, conscientious, polite, do all the reading that you can to prepare yourself for the worst scenario. Above all, talk to others who have done interviews and try to gain a sense of the possibilities of what you may encounter. A researcher must have respect for both the group you want to interview and the person or group of people who are in control of those you wish to contact for your research. These “gatekeepers” are people who are the information and referral agents in control of the community in which you (the researcher) wishes to have contact. Gatekeepers have to trust the researcher before any amount of cooperation can be expected. Working or living within the community for an extended period of time will help to gain the trust and respect of those that are to be interviewed. Even then, until the interviews actually begin, it should not be assumed that because the gatekeepers are well known to you, that this will increase the chances of cooperation. An understanding and realization should be made that the gatekeepers may not want to cooperate. There may be only one source in which to gain contact with the students. More than one back up plan should be in place and ready in case getting what you want when you want it, is impossible.

No matter who you are, or what your status may seem to you (i.e. a student), the interviewees can knowingly or unknowingly withhold the information that is needed, for any reason they want. They become, in essence, the ones that are in control. Making a

conscious decision or not, they have the power to oblige, or to withhold, that is their right.

Learning language is easier if all the responsibilities are taken care of and there is no worry while attending classes. So if easy access to daycare is provided for immigrant families, there is a greater incentive to learn English. This can also be a determining point in how quickly English is learned. If childcare is expensive, language learning might be rapid because immigrant women may want to go to work to make money.

Learning English is a social activity. In English language learning, immigrant women meet other students who are new to the country as well, and may have someone to attend classes with - new experiences can be made more pleasurable when attending with someone. For a new immigrant making new friends, sharing experiences and perhaps because the only shared language is English, speaking together in an informal manner can enhance English language learning. As well, English learning doesn't seem to be as threatening as attending classes.

Personal accounts of learning English could be documented which would give a clearer picture of the student in relation to the learning environment. Learning informally as in on the job, or life situations, can be done but the process takes longer, and the economic reward would be delayed.

The English learning classroom brings together people with common, often painful experiences of immigration. Stories might be shared with self expression rather

than focusing on English language expression. People are much more conducive to learning when competence is gained. Competence can be gained by becoming more relaxed about learning English rather than always focussing on grammar.

I realized that the women I interviewed needed to know me before they would volunteer. They needed to trust my relationship with them. In building a rapport, I needed to make myself known.

The reason immigrants come to this country is to start a new life. They want the opportunity to begin again. Providing them with the opportunity to learn English along with their motivation and desire, they have the tools that will help them to be a success in this country and to be contributing members of society like those Canadians who are already working and studying to get ahead.

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APPENDIX A

The Researcher and the Experience

In order for my thesis to be feasible, I had to have access to the Yugoslavian community. I made an appointment with the head of the English language department at the post secondary institution. I gave her a copy of the consent form the students would have to sign in order for my interviewing to take place, a copy of my proposal, and the purpose of my study. She took me to meet with two teachers that had Yugoslavian students in their class. They suggested that they would combine the classes to make one classroom of Yugoslavian students for my convenience, and telephone me as soon as they had arrangements made. The teachers then went off to teach their class. I did not have an opportunity at this time to talk with the teachers about my work, and they didn't have an occasion to ask any questions of me.

When one of the teachers telephoned me to set up a date in which to talk to the students, I asked if she had the opportunity to read over the documents I had left. She had not seen them, so I explained to her the purpose of my research.

I gave a brief presentation of my thesis and that I needed volunteers. As I was explaining my research to them, I realized that the students did not understand. I explained again, and when the teacher tried to come to my rescue by asking if they were

understanding, they shook their heads indicating, “No”. She tried to explain the concept, but didn’t fully understand what my research was about neither. I told them that it was important for my research to have volunteers and I repeated myself in stressing that everything they said would be kept confidential. I would only make use of a tape recorder if they were comfortable with that idea, otherwise, I would take notes during the interview. At this point, the students were not paying attention, and had no idea what I was talking about. The teacher asked me my name and phone number and wrote it on the blackboard in case the students wanted to contact me later to volunteer to be interviewed. I thanked the teacher and students for their time, and left the room, knowing that this was not the way I had expected the introduction to my prospective interview candidates to turn out.

After three days and having received no volunteers by telephone, I telephoned the post secondary institution and talked to the teacher asking her if I could come back to the classroom and explain my work to the students again.

The reply was that they didn’t want a second classroom announcement because it would be as if they (the institution) were endorsing the project and it would seem like the teachers were coercing them. When asked if endorsing the project would be a bad idea, the reply was that the teachers did not want to tell the students that they had to be interviewed, and the teachers wanted to make it a volunteer effort.

I understood that she did not want to 'endorse the project' on the chance that if anything went wrong, she would be at fault.

This brought about an impasse with the post secondary institution. I thought if I went back and explained the mistakes I had made, it would not do any good in terms of another opportunity to approach the women anyway. I decided because I needed to pursue women learning the English language, I would contact the centre for immigrant women. This centre would have knowledge of women learning English, and perhaps I could get in touch with recent Yugoslavian arrivals through them.

I telephoned the centre. I explained my research work and that I would like to meet to discuss the possibilities of them introducing me to the Yugoslavian community for interview purposes. I made an appointment and upon arrival, gave the same documents regarding my work, that I had given the previous institution. She was willing to help me out, and suggested that I use an office in the centre for interviews. In that way, the women would be in familiar surroundings and not have to worry about not knowing me as she would make arrangements to be there as well. She gave me the name of a Yugoslavian woman and it was suggested that I contact her.

I telephoned the woman, explained how I had received her name, that I was a student conducting research work, and that I wanted to contact women from the Yugoslavian community to interview. She said she could get me as many names as I needed, but some of them did not speak English very well. She continued to explain that

she was unemployed and that she was trying to obtain a job as an interpreter. I was empathetic with her when she explained further reasons for needing employment. At the end of the conversation, she told me she would contact some Yugoslavian women and call me back to set up a time in which to interview.

Two days later she telephoned me and said she could not give me any names of women from the community unless I paid her the going rate of an interpreter, which was anywhere from fifteen to forty-five dollars per hour. I explained again that I was a student and I did not have access to money. She assumed I was doing research for the University and getting paid. I explained again that I was a student, I pay University fees and I did not get paid to research nor to write my thesis. She said because I was a student she could give me the use of her services for fifteen dollars per hour, but interpreters get paid for three hours of work even if they only work for fifteen minutes. I was left with that ultimatum.

I again telephoned the woman from the centre who had given me the Yugoslavian woman's name. I explained the money issue, and I was told that the immigrant community get tired of people coming to interview them and that the University had lots of research money available. She stated that if the immigrants were to give up their time, then they should be paid. She also told me that I would be coming away from this research with my degree and gain a better job with better pay as a result of the interviews. She stated it would be fair to the immigrants who have to work for minimum

wages and have no means of getting ahead (because of their lack of English language skills), that they get paid for their involvement in my work. I thanked her for her time.

I then had a telephone call from the Yugoslavian woman who wanted an interpreter's job, stating that she would be away for a week and if I wanted her services that I should let her know how many women I needed so she could make arrangements. I politely thanked her and told her I had no funds of my own and if that was the criteria for her to help me, then I had to decline.

I was frustrated at having had two possibilities in which to approach a group of Yugoslavian women to interview, and neither of them turned out the way I had expected. I must stress here, that I am not blaming anyone, I am reporting the details as they happened. Even if I were given another opportunity to re-enter the post secondary institution to try to convince the Yugoslavian women to be interviewed, the chances were that they would not have come forward (I explain this aspect later).

I went to the University and explained the situation to my supervisor, to one of my committee members, and at least one other accommodating faculty member. I was told to look at the options that I had, and to make a list of them. I weighed the time factor involved in reworking the literature review, rethinking, rewriting the material and the continuation of fees, and I could not justify this to myself. In order to get on with my life, my decision was that I had to finish what I started even if it meant that I had to think about my actions, and my values. My supervisor asked me if I wanted him to contact the

post secondary institution and see what his chances were in getting me another opportunity to approach the Yugoslavian students. I declined the invitation for several reasons. First, I knew I had not exhausted all the avenues for obtaining names of Yugoslavian women to interview, and second, I had started this project without any assistance, and I was determined to save face and see what I could do to rectify the situation on my own (and I have two Yugoslavian friends I wished to contact to inform them of the situation and to discuss their insights). The final point is, I felt responsible for not doing my job properly when I approached the post secondary institution, and I did not want to be bailed out.

I invited my Yugoslavian friend and her husband over to my house for a visit on a weekend. She had told me once they did not want to get involved in the Yugoslavian community for their own reasons. I did not want to ask them for their help because I did not want to jeopardize our friendship. Nevertheless, as I stated above, I wanted to discuss this issue in the hope they could offer me a solution. I told them I now understood why they wanted little to do with the Yugoslavian community. I explained my encounters in trying to obtain a sampling of women in which to interview. She was appalled at the circumstances, and offered to try to help me. The next day, she telephoned a Yugoslavian friend, who in turn telephoned another Yugoslavian friend, and I suddenly had Yugoslavian women to interview. When I telephoned my friend to thank her and tell her how grateful I was, she told me that most of the Yugoslavian people were thankful to be

here in Canada and would do anything to help others out. She did not want me or anyone to think that all of the Yugoslavian community was uncooperative and expected to be paid for every volunteer thing they did.

Originally I had intended for each of the women I interviewed, to be attending English language classes at a post secondary institution. My expectations would not only introduce me to the Yugoslavian community through the assistance of the staff at this institution, but I would develop a rapport that would enable me to reapproach these women for the possibility of an interview. I had set a deadline for myself to be completely finished the interviewing by the time the institution had their Christmas break. In this regard, this would enable me, over the Christmas holidays to transcribe the interview tapes and to write in the new year. However, my thesis work took a turn when I did not obtain a rapport, and therefore did not acquire a sample of women to interview through the chosen institution. All of the assumptions I made about being able to interview and to complete my thesis with my deadlines, were thrown out.

In analyzing the situation, I did not walk into the classroom anticipating any problems, and I was unprepared for the lack of a response. It quickly became evident that I had to change the presentation if I was to try a second time to get a response from the students. That opportunity never arose.

Within each of the groups of people from Yugoslavia, because of the war, and because there are religious and cultural differences, there was some tension amongst the

students that were in that room. Being home in Yugoslavia, they would not associate with each other. In fact, as individuals, it seemed as though they did not want to seem anxious in front of their peers to volunteer information about their country or about themselves. By not volunteering, I assumed that they did not want to be interviewed; they did not want to be singled out to answer questions or to place themselves in a position that might make them the spokesperson for their group. They were not necessarily comfortable in giving me the information that I wanted. If their words were not interpreted as they had intended, the community would hear that they had given out the wrong information. Learning the language and social and cultural patterns of the new country causes stress and may be an inhibiting factor for the student learning the language, let alone trying to get along with people from their own country in a new country.

Even though I knew there were social differences within their country, I never expected to encounter any of these differences in the classroom. I assumed that the differences between people from the same country, that spoke the same language, and were here as a result of the same war would have put their differences aside once they immigrated. Although I have taught adults from different ethnic backgrounds and ages and stages of education and English language development, in my naiveté, I did not consider that they would resist being interviewed because of their ethnic differences.

I had to struggle to gain admittance to the community, and when I gained permission, I had a personal dispute in justifying the interview process. I was unsettled as

far as the subject/object or the researcher/researched is concerned. The question I asked myself: Who do I think I am in going to them, intruding in their lives and asking if I can take their time and exploit them for my gain? The answer was obvious. I am not the only one who dealt with these dilemmas. Researchers in the social sciences, psychology, anthropology and so on, have to think about ethics and do what it is they have to do. Some, granted, probably don't think about it, but I felt because they are immigrants learning the language, I was asking "of them". I felt I was asking them to lay their constitution on the line for my thesis.

Another of their concerns was the language barrier. They were shy and frightened about speaking English in front of me; someone that they did not know. They were unsure if they would be able to communicate with me. They may not have had confidence in their ability to speak English and they may have been reluctant to reveal any of their past. I didn't think they felt exploited, but I felt that I was taking something from them; I felt that I was exploiting them.

Now that the research is over, I am forever grateful to my volunteers. They have provided me with yet another connection to wonderful relationships, and if it weren't for them how would I ever have completed my study?

Appendix B

Selection Criteria For Business Immigrants, Assisted Relatives And Other Independent Immigrants

Factor	Units of assessment	Notes
Education	16 maximum	
Specific vocational Preparation	18 maximum	
Experience	8 maximum	0 units is an automatic refusal, Except for persons with arranged employment or designated occupation
Occupation	10 maximum	0 is an automatic refusal, unless Arranged employment, designated Occupation or self-employed. (N/A for entrepreneurs and investors)
Arranged employment Or designated Occupation	10 maximum	(N/A for business immigrants)
Demographic factor	8 maximum	established by the Minister
Age	10 maximum	10 units if 21 to 44; 2 units Deducted for each year under 21 or over 44
Knowledge of English or French	15 maximum	
Personal suitability	10 maximum	
Bonus for assisted relatives	5 maximum	
Bonus for self-employed Immigrants	30 maximum	

1 "Designated occupation" means those occupations which are in short supply in specific provinces. Additional points, as well as priority processing, are awarded to the applicant whose occupation is designated (p.12-14)

Appendix C

Listening/Speaking Benchmarks

Benchmark 1

Initial competence in basic oral communication. Can follow and respond to simple greetings and instructions. Needs much support from assessor. Struggles to understand instructions. Understands meaning of individual, high-frequency words. No evidence of connected discourse. Has almost no control of basic grammar structures or tenses. Pronunciation difficulties may significantly impede communication. Has very limited vocabulary.

Benchmark 2

Beginning competence in basic oral communication. Can follow and respond to questions about personal information. Often needs support from assessor. Often struggles to understand instructions. Understands several words or a short sentence. Little evidence of connected discourse. Has little control of basic grammar structures and tenses. Pronunciation difficulties may significantly impede communication. Has limited vocabulary.

Benchmark 3

Developing competence in basic oral communication. Can take part in short informal conversation about personal experience. Sometimes needs support from assessor. Understands most instructions. Understands most short sentences. Some evidence of connected discourse. Conveys messages using single words and short sentences. Has some control of basic grammar structures and tenses. Pronunciation difficulties may often impede communication. Vocabulary generally adequate for basic oral communication.

Benchmark 4

Adequate competence in basic oral communication. Can describe the process of obtaining essential goods and services. Needs little support from assessor. Understands instructions. Understands short sentences. Clear evidence of connected discourse. Conveys messages using a variety of short sentences. Has control of basic grammar structures and tenses. Pronunciation difficulties may impede communication. Vocabulary adequate for basic oral communication.

Benchmark 5

Can comprehend and relate video-mediated information. Understands and uses a variety of sentence structures. Discourse is reasonable fluent. Grammar and pronunciation errors sometimes impede communication. Comprehends and uses a range of common vocabulary.

Benchmark 6

Can comprehend and relate audio-mediated information. Understands and uses a wide variety of sentence structures. Discourse is reasonably fluent. Grammar and pronunciation errors may sometimes impede communication. Comprehends and uses a range of common and idiomatic language.

Benchmark 7

Can discuss concrete information on a familiar topic. Comfortably engages in a conversation at a descriptive level. Discourse is fluent. Grammar and pronunciation errors rarely impede communication. Uses an expanded inventory of concrete and idiomatic language.

Benchmark 8

Can comprehend and synthesize abstract ideas on a familiar topic. Comfortably engages in a conversation at an abstract level. Discourse is fluent. Grammar and pronunciation errors do not impede communication. Uses an expanded inventory of concrete, idiomatic and conceptual language.

Reading Benchmarks

- Benchmark 1**
Initial competence at performing simple reading tasks
- Benchmark 2**
Beginning competence at performing simple reading tasks
- Benchmark 3**
Developing competence at performing simple reading tasks
- Benchmark 4**
Adequate competence at performing simple reading tasks
- Benchmark 5**
Limited competence at performing reading tasks of increasing complexity
- Benchmark 6**
Marginal competence at performing reading tasks of increasing complexity
- Benchmark 7**
Satisfactory competence at performing reading tasks of increasing complexity
- Benchmark 8**
Advanced competence at performing reading tasks of increasing complexity

Writing Benchmarks

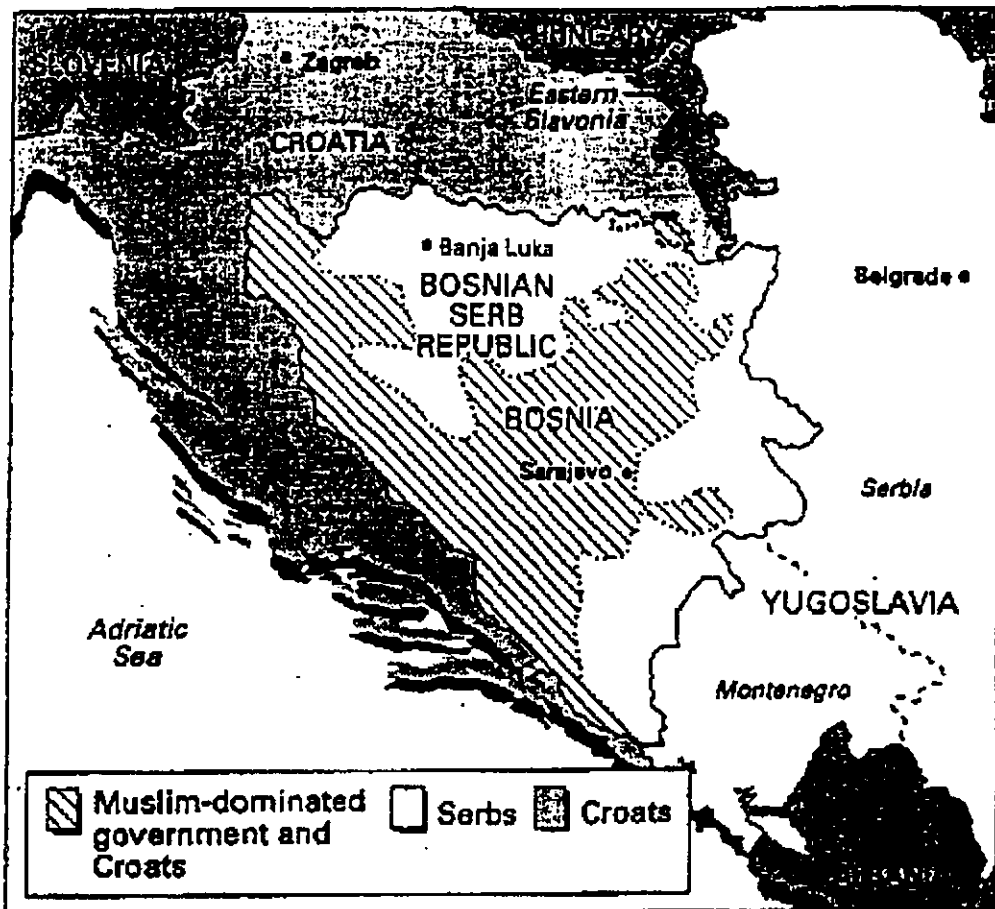
- Benchmark 1**
Initial competence at performing simple writing tasks
- Benchmark 2**
Beginning competence at performing simple writing tasks
- Benchmark 3**
Developing competence at performing simple writing tasks
- Benchmark 4**
Adequate competence at performing simple writing tasks
- Benchmark 5**
Limited competence at performing writing tasks of increasing complexity
- Benchmark 6**
Marginal competence at performing reading tasks of increasing complexity
- Benchmark 7**
Satisfactory competence at performing writing tasks of increasing complexity
- Benchmark 8**
Advanced competence at performing writing tasks of increasing complexity

CANADIAN
CLBA
 LANGUAGE
 BENCHMARKS
 ASSESSMENT

LINC Eligibility Vis à Vis Canadian Language Benchmarks

	Eligible	Not Eligible
Listening/Speaking	Pre-Benchmark, Benchmark 1,2,3,4	Benchmark 5,6,7,8
Reading	Pre-Benchmark, Benchmark 1,2,3	Benchmark 4,5,6,7,8
Writing	Pre-Benchmark, Benchmark 1,2,3	Benchmark 4,5,6,7,8

Appendix D



Saturday October 18, 1997

BERNARD BENNELL/*The Globe and Mail*

Appendix E

Consent Form

Dear

I am conducting a study of the success of immigrant women from former Yugoslavia in learning the English language in relation to family dynamics, family member roles and cultures.

I anticipate that you and others interviewed will benefit from participation in this study by becoming more aware of how you learn the English language. I would like your permission for you to participate in this study.

As part of the research, I will interview you regarding your experiences in learning the English language. If you are comfortable with being recorded on tape, I will use a tape recorder to record the interview. If you are uncomfortable with recording in this form, I will take notes during the interview. The questions will relate to you and your family's educational history.

If you choose to participate, please indicate your willingness to do so, by signing this letter in the space provided below.

There are no risks or inconveniences involved. Please note that all the information will be handled in a confidential and professional manner. When I am writing the report, or in any conversations relating to the study, I will use anonymity for names and other identifying information unless you indicate otherwise to me. When responses are released, they will be reported in summary form, only; all names, locations and any other identifying information will **not** be included in any discussion of the results, unless you indicate to me that it will be left to my discretion to place your name beside your quote. Information developed in the course of the study will not be used or discussed in other contexts. You have the right to withdraw from the study or refrain from answering questions, without prejudice, at any time.

I appreciate your assistance in this study. If you have any questions please telephone me at home (phone number below).

Also feel free to contact my supervisor for this study:

Dr. L. Walker, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge, or the chairperson of the committee, Dr. Loewen, or any member of the Faculty of Education Human Subject Research Committee if you wish additional information.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Freeman, Graduate Student
University of Lethbridge

I _____ agree to participate in this study.

Name

Signature

Date

Appendix F

List of Proposed Questions

- Where were you born?
- Did you go to school there? (Grade graduated)
- Did you go to College or University?
- Did you learn English in school (or University?)
- Did you work in Yugoslavia before moving here? (at what type of job)?
- Did your parents learn English? Or a second language?
- What do you think of education? (For women? And for men?)
- How long have you been in Canada?
- Did you come to this city when you first arrived?
- Do you have any family here in Canada?
- Did you have friends in Canada when you first got here?
- Are you married? Do you have children? Were they born in Yugoslavia?
- Where did you take English language classes? For how long?
- How do you think English will help you in Canada?
- Are both you and your husband taking English language classes?
- What does your husband feel about learning English?
- Are you working now?
- What do you want to do when you are finished taking English classes?
 - Do you want to work (full time) when you complete your English classes?
 - If further education – How will you pay for further education?

- In Yugoslavia, are women able to go to University or college? (if she has been away from school for a while?) after she is married?
- In Yugoslavia, is it easier for a man to go back to school after he has been out of school for two or three years, than a woman?
- Does that change when you come to Canada? How?
- If the wife went to school, or to work, (as well as the husband) who does the housework, (laundry, child care, grocery buying, yard work and so on)?
- In Yugoslavia, would you have to take care of your parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, if you were the only one in the family working?
- Do you have to take your baby out to a sitter, or does a sitter come in to your home when you work/ or go to school?
- Do you take the baby to the babysitter, or does your husband?
- Who makes the decisions in the family? (In regards to the children; money)
- How hard was it to find a babysitter?
- Did you find it hard to leave your child with a stranger?
- Does your child speak English when you left him/her with a sitter? Was your child afraid to be left?
- How has your child adjusted?
- Does this make it easier for you to go out to school/work (knowing your child is fine?)
- Does your child speak Serbo-Croatian?
- In Yugoslavia, would you have to find a sitter for your child if you went out to school or work?
- Do you think you will have children/more children? Has moving to Canada affected your decision to have children/more children?

- Do you ever go out with girlfriends without your husband?
- Does your husband ever go out with his friends without you?
- Do you have any Canadian friends that you speak English with? How often do you see them?
- In order to learn English, did either you or your husband have to work part time?
- Do you speak English outside the school?
- Do you speak English freely, or do you feel that you don't want to speak English?
- Did you learn enough English in your program for you to work at a good paying job, or do you want to continue on to College or University to further your education in English?
- Is there anything that keeps you from studying English?
- Are you speaking English at home (at work?)
- Do your friends (or husband) encourage you to learn more English? (by attending College or University)?
- Do you ever have conflicts with husband or friends about learning English?
- Were you ever treated badly since you came to Canada? (By whom? What was the circumstance)?
- Did you have trouble adjusting to life in Canada?
- How do you see yourself adapting/What makes it easier to adapt?
- Who does the household work?
- Have you noticed any changes in your relationship with your husband since coming to Canada?
- What did your family at home think of you moving to Canada?
- Are you glad you came to Canada?