INFORMED CONSENT FORMS IN ESL RESEARCH: FORM DIFFICULTY AND COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

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Background: The concept of informed consent has become a cornerstone for modern research and is generally required for any project that uses human-beings as a source of data (Haggerty, 2004). Yet research in various fields has shown that participants do not understand informed consent forms and are generally not well-informed about studies for which they have or will enroll themselves into (Freer, McIntosh, Teunisse, Anand, & Boyle, 2009; Joffe, Cook, Cleary, Clark, & Weeks, 2001a, 2001b; LoVerde, Prochazka, & Byyny, 1987). To date, relatively little empirical research has been conducted on research ethics in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) and no studies have investigated the fields usage of informed consent forms.

Objectives: This dissertation attempts to answer three overarching research goals that deal with (1) the current difficulty level of SLA/ESL consent forms, (2) ESL learners' understanding of consent forms, and (3) ESL learners thoughts about the consent process?

Methods: To examine the current state of SLA/ESL consent forms, 20 consent documents were collected and analyzed for length, reading grade level, and vocabulary coverage. Two forms, an easy and a hard form, were then given to 112 ESL students and 38 native English speakers who read the forms and then took a comprehension task. Finally, five focus group interviews were conducted with ESL learners.

Results: The average ESL consent form was 1.8 pages long, rated at the 10.8 grade level, and had roughly 95% of its vocabulary at or below the 3000 word band according to the New General Service List. According to the comprehension task, the difficulty of the form did not

statistically impact the participants' outcome on the task; however, proficiency was correlated with form comprehension. High level learners and native speakers performed similarly on the task answering between six to seven questions correctly, while low level learners answered roughly three to four questions correctly. The focus group interviews showed that many participants only skimmed the document prior to signing it and that they were largely apathetic to many important factors of consent such as risks and confidentiality.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION OF DISSERTATION

Overview of study

Studies on participant consent forms have shown that the consent process is complex and difficult for many people, and that participants often sign documentation without truly understanding the research study or the conditions to which they have just agreed (Freer, McIntosh, Teunisse, Anand, & Boyle, 2009; Joffe, Cook, Cleary, Clark, & Weeks, 2001a, 2001b; LoVerde, Prochazka, & Byyny, 1987). In the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), the process of consent is made even more difficult because many studies target or include participants who do not natively speak the same language in which the consent form is written (Perry, 2011), or participants come from cultures in which giving consent for a research study is uncommon (Russell, Carapetis, & Liddle, 2005).

In the modern, western tradition of research, informed consent is considered a right of individuals, often guaranteed by governments, funding agencies, and ethical review boards. Various ethical review offices require informed consent forms to be presented to research participants and collected after signing (Steneck, 2004). It is often assumed that a signed consent form indicates not only overt agreement to participate in a research project, but also that a participant is fully aware of all benefits, risks, and rights tied to the research project. To date, only limited research has investigated second language (L2) participants' comprehension and knowledge of the consent process, especially in the field of SLA and English as a second language (ESL) research (see Chapter two). The aim of this research project is to investigate the difficulty of the consent forms and how well ESL learners understand the forms, as well as offer possible recommendations to the field that will better ensure the informed consent of research

participants.

Risks and research ethics in SLA

Informed consent forms have become a staple of modern human-based research (Van den Hoonaard, 2011). In the United States, the recent concern for human research emerged from the atrocities that occurred during WWII and the development of the modern industrial research complex that now exists at almost all federally funded research universities (Steneck, 2004). Events such as the Tuskegee syphilis study and the Stanford prison experiment in the USA, or the horrendous actions of Nazi doctors in Germany have left a blemish on modern science that can still be felt today. Even new controversies such as the anti-vaccination movement was fueled by one ethically challenged, and later retracted paper (Wakefield et al., 1998 [RETRACTED, 2010]). The modern world runs on science and trusts that scientists conduct research properly.

Publications on ethical training often discuss the tarnished history of science to make the dual point that research (a) always carries a risk, but (b) is normally conducted by well-intentioned people who make mistakes. In discussion with SLA researchers over the topic of research ethics, I am often asked why a deep understanding of research ethics is important to the field when the research normally carries minimal, if any real risk of harm to our participants. There is no denying that on a continuum of risks, asking for grammaticality judgments is much less dangerous or harmful than taking part in an experimental clinical trial. However, having small risks or non-life threatening risks is not the same as having no risks at all. SLA researchers ask questions that have the potential to negatively impact participants' lives in a number of ways (for examples see Ngo, Bigelow, & Lee, 2014; Shohamy, 2004). Research can lead to close relationships that blur the lines between friend and participant which might cause some participants to provide information they normally would not divulge (Richards, 2003).

Why use consent forms?

After the events that spiraled out of WWII, many countries adopted the idea that research conducted on humans must be done with their consent, which was encapsulated in the USA as respect for persons in the Belmont Report. The idea behind consent forms is to ensure (a) that people are aware of the fact that they are participating in research, (b) that they understand their rights as well as the risks and potential dangers associated with that particular research, and (c) as proof that the participant has been made aware of the research. These rules of research were originally developed for the medical or other biological studies fields (Steneck & Bulger, 2007) but over the course of several decades these goals of ethical research have been incorporated into almost all fields where humans are used to generate data (Haggerty, 2004).

In the United States, consent for research is typically obtained by having a participant sign an informed consent form once at the onset of data collection. However, there is debate in various fields as to whether this should be a standard practice or if consent should be viewed as an ongoing procedure that constantly takes place throughout the data collection. The argument against one time consent is that researchers need to continuously negotiate the role of the participant and the data during and after the data collection session (Marshall & Batten, 2004). Carusi and Jirotka (2009) discussed the role that technology plays in terms of ownership and use of data in qualitative studies. A larger discussion has taken place concerning the use of biobanks, or digital data centers that hold genetic data, and whether a single instance of consent allows a researcher to use and share this material with other researchers (Stein & Terry, 2013). A direct comparison could be made with linguistic corpora as well. Though the arguments for using continuous consent might be compelling, the current structure of consent in the USA is for a single instance to be obtained at the onset of the data collection session.

The current research investigates a specific situation for consent, one in which a large heterogeneous group of non-native English speakers are asked to sign consent forms all at the same time. For this type of study, it is expected that a single signed consent form will be used to not only gain the permission of individuals to be part of research but also that by signing this form, participants indicate that they adequately comprehend the research. During this type of consent process, forms are handed out to all participants, and while the researcher will likely allow time for general questions, he or she will not be able to meet with individual participants for one-on-one interaction during the consent process. Thus the consent form in this type of research is required to carry the burden of providing adequate information to the participants. The question of whether or not the form is able to handle this burden will guide the narrative of this dissertation.

Why not translate the forms?

When it comes to writing informed consent forms for L2 speaking participants, one recommendation often offered to researchers is to translate the consent form into the first languages of the various participants. The idea is that the complex language and culturally based assumptions about research will be easier to understand in the participant's own language. On the surface this method might seem like a simple way to guarantee that all participants will understand the consent form but there are issues involved that make this solution less than ideal.

One issue with translating the consent forms can be found in the process of translation itself. McCabe, Morgan, Curley, Begay, and Gohdes (2005) attempted to translate a medical consent form for a diabetes study into Navajo. They found that a word-for-word translation of the form did not result in participants understanding the form better. They also found that many of the concepts of consent were not readily available in Navajo, nor were they easy to translate

into the language. Often, terms were used that had subtle contextual differences and lead to confusion on the part of participants. The researchers also found that translators did not always understand the research process nor goals well enough to correctly translate the material. Taken together, these difficulties resulted in a consent form that was written in the first language of the participants, but did not equate to a better understanding of the process for the participants.

SLA, in particular ESL, research has its own specific issues with translating consent forms. One issue is the constituency of the potential research population. ESL learners are a diverse group, coming from a multitude of different linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds. A very diverse classroom could have speakers from ten or more languages, each requiring a different translation of the consent form. Additionally, students in an intensive English program (IEP) classrooms are typically grouped together by their proficiency level, which is not always an exact science. Students might have strengths in oral, grammar or written skills, and weakness in others. Finding someone who simultaneously has the linguistic ability to translate a document, understand advanced research terminology, and be able to produce level appropriate language is a daunting task in one language, let alone several. Researchers would be required to translate consent forms into a variety of languages and proficiency levels, causing a strain on the limited time and resources of researchers. While burdens should be expected to be found in research, the study by McCabe et al. (2005) cast doubt over whether the process is worth the effort or not.

Another issue when translating a document into the L1, is that not all participants will be educated or literate in their L1. This might be especially true for migrant or refugee groups (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004; Ngo, Bigelow, & Lee, 2014; Perry, 2011) or second-generation speakers who might never received an education in their native or heritage language. Groups

who lack the literacy to read the forms are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to consent documents, regardless of the language they are written in.

The final reason that translation might not be the best method of ensuring comprehension of consent is the fact that even native speakers of English tend to not understand the consent forms they read (Freer, McIntosh, Teunisse, Anand, & Boyle, 2009; Joffe, Cook, Cleary, Clark, & Weeks, 2001a, 2001b; LoVerde, Prochazka, & Byyny, 1987). Consent forms are difficult documents to read; the act of translating them alone is not enough to ensure that participants are truly informed about the research in which they are about to partake.

Summary

Research ethics are vital to all branches of science, and informed consent forms are legally and ethically necessary for research that involves human-beings (Steneck, 2004). Little empirical research has taken place on the topic of informed consent in SLA. L2 speakers are generally excluded from meta-reflective work on consent forms conducted in other fields as their lack of language ability is often considered a conflating variable. The result is that the knowledge of what constitutes a good consent form appears to be tied to best practices and general knowledge of how to craft the document in English for English speakers. The idea that the best method of ensuring consent is to translate the document is problematic from two standpoints; (1) ethically it is not clear that translation alone results in better informed participants, and (2) the practicality of translation is costly in terms of both time and money.

The overarching theme of this dissertation is to investigate the current practices of SLA researchers in order to (1) gain a better understanding of how consent forms are currently written, (2) investigate the level of comprehension that results from reading a current ESL consent form, and (3) to allow ESL participants to voice their opinions and beliefs about the ESL

consent process and research in general.

Breakdown of chapters

The main focus of this dissertation is research ethics, specifically the usage of informed consent forms with ESL learners. In Chapter two, a review of the relevant literature in SLA and neighboring fields will be discussed. The discussion will be couched within a responsible conduct of research framework. In Chapter three, the methods of this study will be put forth. Chapter four will attempt to answer research question one by examining the complexity of consent forms, including a discussion of the difficultly level of the forms in terms of their length, vocabulary level, words used, and reading grade level. Chapter five will focus on research question two, pertaining to the results from a reading comprehension task that participants took after reading one of two sample consent forms. Chapter six will discuss research question three by addressing the results of five focus group interviews conducted with ESL learners. These focus groups discussed the various elements commonly found in consent forms and ways of making the forms easier to read for the target population. In Chapter seven, all of the results will be brought together into a detailed discussion of consent form understanding by ESL learners. The overarching aim of this research project is to provide the field with empirical evidence of ESL learners' ability to read and understand material on informed consent forms, as well as increase the field's awareness of the difficulty level of current ESL/SLA consent documents. My hope is that this dissertation will be a useful first step towards creating and using consent forms that truly inform ESL participants about research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Various views of research ethics

Writings on ethical practices and thought stretch back into ancient history and have generated entire fields of inquiry dedicated to discussing ethical and moral issues. In order to truncate this long literature into a manageable size, this dissertation will be limited in scope to focus solely on research ethics, or the ethical issues and problems that arise from any step of a research project, and a time limit of post-World War II activities will be implemented. Prior to WWII, much research was carried out by individuals or teams working in labs, with money procured from independent wealth, donors, or scholastic societies. During and after the war, many labs organized at universities with federal and state sponsorship, leading to the current configuration in which a large amount of research is conducted by university faculty following regulations set forth by various governmental agencies.

Another way that research ethics has been viewed in the past is by authors creating various organizations or breakdowns of research ethics into its assorted components. Emanuel, Wendler, and Grady (2013) suggested that ethical research contains the following seven elements: (1) value to science or society, (2) scientific validity, (3) fair participant selection, (4) balanced risk to benefit ratio, (5) reliable independent review, (6) truly informed consent, and (7) respect for persons. Pimple (2002) reduced the number of items to only three; (1) truth in reporting and representing data, (2) fairness in citing and using the work of others, and (3) wisdom to only conduct meaningful and useful research. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) break research ethics into two macro-categories. The first is *procedural ethics* or the ethics and material involved in obtaining tacit approval from an IRB, including the usage of consent forms

as documents, confidentiality of data, and other areas of research ethics that can be organized prior to a project beginning. The second type of research ethics, *ethics in practice,* are the day to day ethical problems that arise in all research. Ethics in practice might include figuring out how to handle data from a participant who admitted to doing illegal activities or how to record data in a public space without violating the privacy of the people.

The current study is couched under a specific type of research ethics, the responsible conduct of research. The responsible conduct of research is a type of research ethics code that is deontological in nature, or the ethical perspective that morality or correctness derives from following the rules (Hughes, Hunter, & Sheehan, 2010). Responsible conduct of research has traditionally been applied to the harder sciences, though it is equally applicable to the social sciences. The code is comprised of nine domains and was originally developed as a joint effort lead by the National Institute of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Office of Research Integrity, which is situated inside the Department of Health and Human Services, as a means of teaching research ethics and ensuring that future research would be conducted under the most ethical light available (Steneck & Bulger, 2007). Responsible conduct of research is a useful framework for discussing research ethics as it condenses the complex system of ethics into manageable chunks and uses language that is understandable to non-ethicists. Responsible conduct of research contains nine domains; (1) research misconduct, (2) human subject protection, (3) conflicts of interest, (4) data management, (5) mentorship, (6) collaborative science, (7) authorship, (8) peer review, and (9) treatment of animals in research (Steneck, 2004). While the domains are designed to each handle a specific portion of potential issues that might arise during a research project, there is overlap between items. For example, a discussion of mentor/student roles might touch on topics covered in authorship, or of elements of collaborative

research.

Responsible conduct of research has not received much direct attention in the second language acquisition (SLA) literature to date. Sterling, Gass, and Winke (in press) used a responsible conduct of research approach and surveyed the types of research ethics training that SLA researchers receive. They found that materials related to IRB applications, such as data protection, conflicts of interest, and human subject protection were covered in much more detail during graduate school or other types of training when compared to other domains such as mentoring, collaboration, and peer review. The researchers also found that this trend was stable over time, indicating that the field of SLA has not had an update to its research ethics training over the past 30 years. Responsible conduct of research is a valuable tool that can be used by researchers and mentors and was built around existing frameworks of research ethics taken from documents such as the Belmont Report and the Declaration of Helsinki.. It is flexible enough to be used in hard and soft sciences and removes much of the technical jargon that can be found in other research ethics materials (Steneck, 2004; Steneck & Bulger, 2007).

History of informed consent

The expected use of informed consent forms in research is a relatively new concept that was established out of reforms that occurred during the latter half of the 20th century (Faden, Beauchamp, & King, 1986). In the USA, research ethics are largely guided by three overarching points contained within the Belmont Report: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html). For consent forms, these principles mean that persons should have the ability to decide for themselves whether participation in a research study is the correct course of action for them, a right better known as autonomy. The consent form is often the only written document given to a participant with

information pertaining to the study and at times it is the only explanation of a study that he or she will receive (National Academy of Sciences, 1995). The consent form then needs to fully explain the study in terms that the participant will understand.

In order to ensure that consent forms not only contain a standard range of information but are also flexible enough to be individualized to research projects in various fields of inquiry, the Department of Health and Human Services issued code 46.116 detailing basic language consent forms must contain. A list of required topics taken from code 46.116 can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Basic language required for consent forms

1	A statement that participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.
2	An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject.
3	For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation as to whether any compensation and an explanation as to whether any medical treatments are available if injury occurs and, if so, what they consist of, or where further information may be obtained.
4	A statement describing the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of records identifying the subject will be maintained.
5	A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the subject.
6	A description of any benefits to the subject or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research.
7	A description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject.
8	A statement that the study involves research, an explanation of the purposes of the research and the expected duration of the subject's participation, a description of the procedures to be followed, and identification of any procedures which are experimental.

Source: DHHS (http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html#46.116)

The consent form itself can be a difficult document to read and many studies reveal that the overall comprehension level of participants is generally lower than what might be expected

(Buccini, Caputi, Iverson, & Jones, 2009; Marshall, 2006; Schwartz & Appelbaum, 2008; Stead et al., 2005; Stunkel et al., 2010). Participants who sign consent forms are often largely uninformed about the procedures of the research study for which they have volunteered (LoVerde et al., 1987), regardless of their education level (Stead, Eadie, Gordon, & Angus, 2005), the language used on the consent form (Russell et al., 2005), or the life-threatening nature of the research (Fitzgerald, Marotte, & Verdier, 2002). The reasons for the lack of comprehension vary as the studies investigate different variables, but it is usually assumed to be a combination of consent forms being too difficult for participants to understand and/or being too long for them to read (Albala, Doyle, & Appelbaum, 2013; LoVerde et al., 1987). Variables such as participants apathy towards the form have yet to receive attention from empirical investigations. Research in the medical fields has found that participants show higher levels of comprehension after reading a shorter form (Flory & Emanuel, 2004; Freer et al., 2009; Stunkel et al., 2010), though it should be noted that these forms are still longer than what most SLA researchers are likely using, ranging from 10 to 20 pages in length. In terms of difficulty of the consent form, most studies have shown that using simpler language can help improve comprehension (Flory & Emanuel, 2004; LoVerde et al., 1987), though it is not always easy to know just what level of language should be considered simple. The often recommended reading grade level for consent forms is the 8th grade level (Agre & Rapkin, 2003; Paasche-Orlow, Taylor, & Brancati, 2003; Perry, 2011; Schwartz & Appelbaum, 2008); however, that recommendation appears to be made for L1 English speakers, with no recommendations existing for L2 learners.

Paasche-Orlow, Taylor, and Brancati (2003) investigated the reading grade level of IRB template forms provided on the websites of various universities and found that the forms were quite difficult to read. Researchers are urged to download these template forms, change selected

portions to fit their particular needs, and then use the forms without needing to make major alterations. Paasche-Orlow, Taylor, and Brancati found that most of the selected forms exceeded the generally recommended 8th grade reading level, with an average level of the 10.6th grade level.

Consent form difficulty in reading

Guidelines and suggestions often mention the 8th grade reading level as a reasonable maximum level of difficulty for consent forms. The most commonly used measure of reading grade level is the Flesch-Kincaid reading grade level test (Kincaid, Fishburne, Rogers, & Chissom, (1975) and it has been used in a number of studies on informed consent form complexity (Breese, Burman, Goldberg, & Weis, 2007; Jefford & Moore, 2008; Paasche-Orlow, Taylor, & Brancati, 2003). The basic formula for the Flesch-Kincaid looks at the number of syllables per word and the number of words per sentence. An alternative test, the SMOG or simple measure of gobbledygook (McLaughlin, 1969), has also been used (Breese et al, 2007) and measures the number of polysyllabic words per sentence. Both tests provide outcomes correlated to American school grade levels, but only take length of word and sentence into consideration. Using shorter words, regardless of how complex or frequent the word is or using the same words but in longer sentences will result in a lower reading score. The tests are relatively fast and inexpensive to run, Microsoft Office will provide a Flesch-Kincaid score if it is called for, and provide researchers with an obtainable goal, the 8th grade level. Criticisms of tests such as the SMOG and the Flesch-Kincaid are that they focus too heavily on quantifying difficulty, disregard vocabulary choice (beyond word length), and do not consider formatting or visual cues (Sand, Eik-Nes, & Loge, 2012).

By reducing the reading level of the consent form, it is often believed that comprehension

will increase. Stunkel et al. (2010) tested two forms, an easy to read condensed consent form and a standard consent form. The forms differed in length (14 compared to four pages) and reading grade level (8 to 8.9). The researchers found no difference in the participants' understanding of the consent form, though it is not clear if a 0.9 increase in grade level would be enough to cause participants to score differently on a comprehension task. In contrast, Young and Hooker (1990) found a statistical difference in their study comparing an easy form (6^{th} grade) and a difficult form (16^{th}). It is not surprising that participants who read the consent form written at the 16^{th} grade level understood the contents less. The 16^{th} grade level would require an upper level college education of at least an undergraduate education if not higher. However, it must be noted that consent form difficulty can range and it would not be surprising to see forms that were rated close to the 16^{th} grade level in use in SLA studies (see Chapter 4 for discussion of form grade level).

Research into consent form design has been reported in various publications, often in the medical field or journals dedicated to research ethics and IRBs (see for example: Albala, Doyle, & Appelbaum, 2013; LoVerde, Prochazka, & Byyny, 1987; Sand, Eik-Nes, & Loge, 2012). Findings from studies that focus on issues of consent forms have largely found that the forms are too long, contain language that is too difficult, and that participants are not able to understand the content. Again, it must be remembered that many of these studies focus on material from medical or other hard sciences. It is not uncommon for medical consent forms to be between 10-20 pages long (Beardsley, Jefford, & Mileshkin, 2007) and to carry consequences for the health and well-being of the participant that goes well beyond what could be expected in almost any SLA study.

One area of reading difficulty that has not been investigated, is the degree of infrequently used words found on consent forms. The general rule for making readings comprehensible to

ESL learners is to include between 95-98% of frequent or known vocabulary on the document (Hazenberg, & Hulstijn, 1996; Hirsh & Nation, 1992; Schmitt, Cobb, Horst, & Schmitt, 2015). Consent forms are likely to contain many examples of uncommon English words that ESL students are not likely to encounter in day to day conversation. Stead et al. (2005) found that native speakers of English had difficulty with words such as *double-blind*, *placebo*, and *randomized*. If L1 users have difficulty with vocabulary used on the form, then it is likely to be problematic for L2 learners as well.

Comprehension of consent forms

Investigating how much a participant understands about the consent form he or she just signed is difficult for a number of reasons. Sachs et al., (2003) note that current ethical practices often require that participants sign a consent form prior to data collection, meaning that it is usually not possible to observe someone signing a consent form without first having that participant sign a consent form. Using a comprehension task as a post hoc analysis of how well the form was understood also carries difficulty as there will be a conflation between comprehension and memory.

Though many articles measure the comprehension of consent, most do not define what comprehension means. Buccini et al., (2009) used a Delphi consensus approach (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963) to create a standardized definition for comprehension of informed consent. A Delphi consensus approach attempts to synchronize the opinions of various experts in order to define or model a topic. In the case of Buccini et al., the authors were attempting to create a definition of comprehension for informed consent. The authors first created a working definition of consent and then asked a panel of international experts to alter the definition as they saw fit. The authors then synthesized the feedback into a new definition and sent it back out for new

comments. After several cycles of revision, Buccini et al., (2009, p. 21) created the following definition of comprehension of consent:

1. There is evidence that a potential participant has integrated his/her current knowledge with the consent information;
2. The evidence occurs at the time the potential participant decides whether or not to take part in the research study;
3. At a minimum, the integrated consent information includes the consent requirements stipulated by national and international ethics regulations.

The definition is arguably vague, but needs to be so to fit the needs of the international research community and diverse fields of research. The first part of the definition attempts to guarantee that participants enhance their own knowledge base with new information from the consent form, ensuring that participants are well informed about the study. However, the drawback to this portion of the definition is that participants might have a faulty or incomplete understanding of research to begin with, and thus will enter into research with incorrect notions of what is expected of them. For example, one assumption participants might have of SLA research is that it is only interested in grammar mistakes when really the researcher might be investigating interaction, social identity, or a more personal issue. While this disconnect might not lead directly to a problem, it does leave the participant in a vulnerable position as he or she might be guarded against making linguistic errors but not paying heed to the sensitive information being dispensed. The second part of the definition specifies that this enhanced knowledge occurs at the very onset of research, instead of after data collection has begun. This is important because participants might find it difficult to discontinue participation in research once they have begun, especially if the researcher has a relationship with the participant's instructor or language center.

Participants not being able to discuss the information on the consent form directly after reading and discussing it with the researcher might call into question whether or not they are truly informed of the study. Buccini et al., leave open the types of information required in the consent form by allowing the content to change depending on the context of the research. Again, in the USA this information can be found in Department of Health and Human Services code 46.116 (see Table 1). This open policy allows researchers to develop consent forms in the local tradition of the people they are investigating.

Comprehension tasks

One method of assessing whether or not participants understand the consent process is to test their knowledge of what was contained on the form after they have completed reading it. Several studies have attempted to do this in the past, usually by creating their own in-house comprehension task. These tasks often involve several questions and are based on Department of Health and Human Services code 46.116. Yet, as noted by Joffe, Cook, Cleary, Clark, and Weeks (2001b) "there is no widely accepted method for defining or measuring the outcome of the informed consent process" (p. 139). It should be noted that 14 years after this statement was made, no method of determining comprehension of consent has yet become widespread. Joffe et al., (2001b) attempted to create a standardized tool for assessing consent for medical research called the Quality of Informed Consent survey (QuIC). To do this, the researchers designed a two part task that measured participants on 13 different dimensions of consent taken from US federal regulations. The first part asked participants questions that can be answered using a yes/no/maybe approach while the second part asked them to use a five-point Likert-scale to measure their self-identified ability to understand various consent issues. For example, participants were asked how well they understood their ability to leave the research study at any

time using a five point scale. One downside to the approach used by Joffe et al., is that participants are able to simply circle a response to the question, which does not indicate what they know, only that they claim to know it. A fill-in-the-blank or open ended response option would better ensure that participants have really integrated the knowledge of the consent form into their own knowledge base.

A different test to the QuIC is the Deaconess Informed Consent Comprehension Test (DICCT) (Miller, O'Donnell, Searight, & Barbarash, 1996). Both the QuIC and the DICCT were originally designed to be functional tests, used to check the comprehension rates of patients before they enrolled in a clinical study. While Miller et al., left the cutoff score to be determined by the individual researcher, it can be assumed that a particularly low score should severely limit the entry of a patient into a trial, until a further explanation of the research project can be rendered. The DICCT is a 14 question oral survey with questions that are based on the essential elements of consent (see Table 1). The DICCT is written in lay language, and was assessed at the 8^{th} grade level by a Flesch-Kincaid readability test. For this test, patients are asked the 14 questions and provide oral responses. One benefit of DICCT over the QuIC is that all answers are open-ended, thus participants are unlikely to guess a correct response or overestimate their understanding of the consent form.

To date, no test exists that can be used exclusively for the social sciences. This can be problematic as converting comprehension tasks from the medical field to the social sciences can be difficult, especially if questions are to be written for ESL participants. While information on the various consent forms is usually similar for all branches of science, different aspects are highlighted for each. For example, alternative procedures to the experimental method are not often a part of SLA consent forms, though are commonplace in medical research. Another

difference is that risks in the social sciences usually focus on the lack of physical risks, or simply state that there are no known risks, while medical consent forms go into great detail on the topic.

Consent form research outside of SLA

While not as prevalent as research on L1 speakers, there is evidence of how L2 learners read and understand consent forms. Breese, Burman, Goldberg, and Weis (2007) investigated the level to which various factors affect the comprehension of informed consent, primarily focusing on education level and first language (English, Spanish, or Vietnamese). The authors found a small correlation with education level but did not find that the first language of the participant was predictive of consent comprehension. The only measure of proficiency in the Breese et al. study was the stated ability to read in English and thus non-nativeness was viewed as a dichotomous variable. Additionally, the non-native speakers came from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds making it difficult to assess how much of the variance in the data was due to language and how much was due to education or other factors.

Barata et al. (2006) conducted focus groups with Canadian immigrants from Portugal and Latin America and discussed topics related to medical research participation. Various themes emerged from the focus groups such as trust and the value placed onto research. The groups varied, with the Portuguese group interested in establishing connections with researchers and conceptually understanding the research project, while the Latin American group were inherently distrustful of research. There was also a strong desire to be well informed about the research process even though the two groups differed on the amount of information they understood about medical research. In terms of informed consent the participants thought that it was important to read and understand the form, though many encountered issues doing so due to illiteracy in their first language, which the forms were written in.

In a large review of non-native speakers taking part in cancer trials in Canada, Oliffe, Thorne, Hislop, and Armstrong (2007) found that non-native English speaking participants were overwhelmed by the amount of information presented to them on the documents. Additionally, participants tended to ask for assistance and advice from family or friends to differing degrees then what is normally seen in first language studies.

Suggestions for how to improve the informed consent process for ESL learners, or at least suggestions for how to increase the likelihood that the form is understood, have also been discussed in the literature. McCabe et al. (2005) attempted to translate a consent form from a diabetes study into Navajo but found that participants were not well informed after reading the document. Various terms and research traditions did not appear to translate from one language to the other. Marshall (2006) provides several recommendations for improving the documentation including respecting cultural traditions, using simple and appropriate language, using culturally meaningful approaches to consent, using appropriate documentation strategies (oral or signed consent), and improving consent by making the process more dynamic instead of a one-time event. While Marshall's suggestions highlight key issues in consent, no attempt was made at producing material that followed these guidelines, and it is not clear how one could or should go about doing this.

Medical researchers have legal and ethical reasons to ensure that participants are able to adequately read and understand the consent process that go beyond what many social science researchers deal with. The articles discussed in this section highlight several of the issues faced by medical researchers, which are largely the same issues that concern scientists in the social sciences. Producing forms that are useful and understandable can be difficult but it is an area where the expertise of SLA researchers can be used. The next section will discuss the

contributions provided by SLA researchers to the literature of informed consent.

Research ethics articles in SLA literature

The SLA literature has been largely silent on the topic of research ethics in the past, though two special issues on the topic have been published; issue 3 of volume 89 of *The Modern Language Journal* titled *Methodology, Epistemology, and Ethics in Instructed SLA* (Ortega, 2005) and issue 5 of volume 28 of *TESL Canada Journal* (Kouritzin, 2011).

The articles in the *Modern Language Journal* tended to focus heavily on research methodology and epistemology with minimal mention of research ethics, though Ortega (2005b) and Spada (2005) did discuss the topic at length in their articles. Spada (2005) discussed conducting research in instructed SLA in the Canadian context. The author mostly focused on issues relating to ecological validity of classroom-based research but in her segment on ethics, discussed collaboration efforts between participants, students and instructors, and researchers. Also included in this article was a call for more research with tangible benefits for language users and to make research more accessible to non-academic individuals. Ortega's article focused almost entirely on research ethics. Her main argument was that "it is not the methods or the epistemologies that justify the legitimacy and quality of human research, but the moral-political purposes that guide sustained research efforts" (p. 438). Ortega's main points dealt with the practicalities of research by providing three principle guidelines for researchers to incorporate into their own ethical lens. These guidelines are "the value of research is to be judged by its social utility; value-free research is impossible; and epistemological diversity is a good thing" (p. 430). Ortega's view of research ethics seemed to stem from an idea that the goal of SLA research is to improve, (somewhat) directly pedagogical methods. However, SLA as a field is an amalgamation of various disciplines ranging from linguistics to psychology. It is difficult to

suggest that Ortega's social ethical view of ethical research will be shared by the community at large, especially given that calls for reform have largely gone unanswered.

The articles in the *TESL Canada Journal* special issue tended to focus heavily on reflective experiences had by the authors, which is the general trend for research ethics studies in SLA (see De Costa, 2014; Hobbs and Kubanyiova, 2008; Janusch, 2011; Lee, 2011; Li, 2011; Ngo, Bigelow, & Lee, 2014; Shohamy, 2004; Spada, 2005; & Wiltse, 2011). An example of reflective work can be seen in Lee (2011) who reported on ethical issues that arose during her dissertation data collection. In the original study, Lee's participant was being racialized by her institution and fellow instructors to the point where the participant eventually left the teaching profession. As Lee witnessed the events unfold, she was faced with the question of speaking out or staying silent. In the 2011 article, Lee discusses the events and how she managed them. Articles such as Lee (2011) are excellent teaching tools as they allow researchers to gain a behind the scenes view of how research is conducted; however, it can be difficult to know how representative the issues presented are. A corollary can be seen in Bowern (2010), who noticed that many writings from linguists about IRBs were inherently negative and problematic. However, when the author surveyed linguists conducting field work, she found very few complaints about IRBs with the largest being the need to spend additional time to complete all necessary forms and procedures. Bowern's study showed that relying on anecdotal evidence of research ethics might bias our perception of how events actually play out in research and highlights the need for more empirical studies of research ethics in SLA.

Very few articles in the SLA literature have directly discussed the usage of consent forms in research, especially in regards to how well participants understand them. Tarone (1980), in an early article discussing research ethics in the ESL context, focused heavily on procedural ethics

required to conduct research and provided a sample consent form that could be used by researchers, though it is not clear how many researchers adapted this form for their own use. Bigelow and Tarone (2004) discussed issues involved with using informed consent forms with refugee and immigrant populations, as these groups are often illiterate in the target language and at times in their first language as well.

Two studies in the special issue of TESL Canada Journal (Kouritzin, 2011) discussed consent forms as well; Li (2011) and Koulouriotis (2011). Li (2011) discussed her own experience as a novice researcher asking her participants to sign consent forms. As a Chinese-Canadian researcher conducting research on other Chinese speakers in Canada, Li discusses the awkward feelings that she felt while asking people whom she had already been in contact with to sign a form, a unique experience for all involved. Interestingly, after several years in the Canadian context, Li reflected on how she no longer felt strange asking for signatures and how the whole process just became something one does at the beginning of the research process. Koulouriotis (2011) in her article interviewed three different ESL researchers about various research ethics issues. Koulouriotis found that all three of her participants understood the reason for acquiring consent and each wanted their participants to understand the research process better. Yet the researchers questioned whether a signed consent form is the best or even a good method of obtaining this consent. Among other ideas that surfaced during the interviews was whether consent was culturally understandable to all participants, and the idea that consent ought to be continuously negotiated instead of only once.

One area of concern for the ethical treatment of non-native speakers in research has to do with the fact that they are often considered a vulnerable (Perry, 2011) or captive population (Tarone, 1980) because a "...power differential is felt between the population and the

experimenter, a differential which could operate to the disadvantage of the subjects" (Tarone, 1980 p. 384). The power differential can be increased if the non-native speakers are students in a classroom, due to a perceived inability to deny a researcher or instructor (Leentjens & Levenson, 2013). One of the basic tenets of modern research is that all participation is supposed to be freely consented to without coercion. The use of non-native speaking students as research participants then is an area where extreme caution should be applied, as this group of participants does not always have the linguistic or cultural awareness to fully understand the consent process (Perry, 2011; Tarone, 1980).

In terms of non-peer reviewed resources for SLA researchers, there have been many attempts to codify what is or what should be considered proper research techniques. For example, Mackey and Gass (2005) dedicated an entire chapter to dealing with how to navigate an IRB application and many of the other ethical considerations one should take before starting a research project. Other research textbooks and resources (Eckert, 2013) discussed the need to produce comprehensible and appropriate consent forms for ESL learners. While texts like these are helpful to researchers, the suggestions need to be empirically verified to ensure that they are really beneficial to potential participants.

Summary of literature review

SLA researchers regularly study populations of participants who natively speak a different language than the one used on consent forms. According to Department of Health and Human Services standards, an informed consent form should "be provided in language that is understandable and culturally sensitive to those being asked to participate." (http://answers.hhs.gov/ohrp/categories/1566). Later in the same document, the Department of Health and Human Services stresses that "subjects who do not speak English should be presented

with a consent or permission document written in a language understandable to them." One question that has to be answered is what *understandable* means to participants whose reading ability might differ greatly from the median of the sample population and who do not all have sufficient proficiency to read a legal document. Regulations tend to view ESL learners as a monolithic group instead of existing on a sliding continuum of proficiency, and thus it is difficult to know if information is pertinent to high level learners, low level learners, or both. Language such as "should be understandable" or "at the Nth grade level," indicating what level of reading ability should be acceptable for the document, are common in training materials, but are vague and difficult to implement in real life.

One often cited solution to the language barrier problem is to provide translated consent forms in the first language of each participant. For many SLA projects, especially those that take place in the classroom, there are several issues with this solution. First, it is not always feasible to provide consent for all first languages spoken by participants. Research based in the classroom could have the need for multiple translated consent forms, some in languages where official or even unofficial translators are difficult to find, resulting in higher costs for research or the possible exclusion of certain language speakers. Second, it is not always possible to know what languages potential participants speak prior to enrolling them in the experiment. Finally, translating consent forms into different languages does not guarantee that the concepts within the consent form will be understood any better, as studies of L1 consent forms have shown, even native speakers have difficulty understanding consent forms (McCabe et al., 2005; Wong-Kim & Song, 2007). Not understanding consent concepts could be exacerbated by the fact that SLA participants might potentially come from cultures that have different, or even lack the concept of informed consent.

While discipline-specific reviews of SLA research practices have increased in frequency since the turn of the millennium, most of these important studies have focused on methodological or statistical issues (Norris & Ortega, 2000; Plonsky & Gass, 2011) with far fewer focusing on the broader issues of research ethics (for examples see Kubanyiova, 2008; Lee, 2011; Ortega, 2005a, 2005b). The limited amount of research literature on the topic has typically been spent documenting issues that have arisen in various projects the authors worked on (Hobbs & Kubanyiova, 2008; Koulouriotis, 2011; Kubanyiova, 2008; Lee, 2011) while others have attempted to change the way research ethics are approached in SLA (Ortega, 2005a, 2005b). Training materials in research ethics developed specifically for SLA have been extremely limited to a few publications such as Chapelle and Duff (2003) or Tarone (1980). Textbooks dealing with research methodology have also included chapters or space on research ethics (see Mackey & Gass, 2005, 2012), but the discussions are typically very limited.

It is impossible to quantify the importance of research ethics to the sciences. Yet, the SLA literature is largely devoid of any in-depth focus on the topic. The field is mostly reliant on long held practices passed down from mentor to student, or to material covered in related fields. Given the rise of meta-reflection that has been occurring in SLA research over the past decade in terms of methodology, the field is long overdue for a reflection of ethical practices. In this dissertation, I propose a beginning to this reflective process by investigating the first step of most data collection, the consent form. I will investigate the complexity of the consent documents used in SLA studies and the comprehension levels of a student population that is often utilized in SLA studies, ESL students.

Research questions

With an ever increasingly global society, the need to learn additional languages will only

continue to grow. In conjuncture with this trend, the field of SLA has grown and will continue to expand to include new Ph.D. programs, more conferences worldwide, and ever more nuanced journals. Now is an appropriate time to take a step back and ensure that research is being conducted in the most ethical light possible. The informed consent process is a good starting place for this process as it affects almost all research with human subjects. L2 learners, especially students, are particularly vulnerable in research as they might not understand the research culture or their rights as participants. Thus, ensuring that L2 learners are properly informed about the research prior to taking part in any study should be seen as a benefit to them and to our science. The aim of this research project is to better understand SLA consent forms and the comprehension that L2 learners have of them. There are three overarching research goals for this project summed up in the following research questions.

1. What is the average level of difficulty for informed consent forms in SLA research?
2. How well do ESL learners comprehend information presented on informed consent forms?
    A) Is there a difference in ESL learners' comprehension of informed consent forms according to level of L2 proficiency?
    B) Do ESL learners' comprehension of consent forms differ statistically from native English speakers?
3. How do ESL learners view the consent process and what information contained on the consent forms do they deem important?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is threefold. First, I examined the difficulty of informed consent forms in SLA research. This quantitative analysis looked at several important aspects of consent form, such as the difficulty level of the writing, the length of the form, and the amount of vocabulary that should be known to ESL learners. The second purpose of this study was to examine how much information ESL learners were able to understand and remember after reading a consent form. For this portion of the study, language learners read either a difficult or easy consent form and then were asked to complete a comprehension task based on standard informed consent information. Finally, the third purpose of this study was to investigate what ELS learners thought of informed consent forms in order to better understand their knowledge of and opinions about consent procedures in the United States. This research is novel in the field of SLA as few studies have focused on research ethics or ESL consent knowledge (see Chapter 2 for a review of this literature).

Study design

Table 2 shows the structure of the data collection for this dissertation. Each stage of the data collection will be discussed in detail in the following subsections. In brief, the first phase of data collection consisted of gathering and creating materials used later in the study. ESL consent forms were collected and analyzed while a Delphi consensus model (discussed in a later section) was used to produce a comprehension task. A small pilot study tested the various materials created in phase 1 and took place before the beginning of data collection in phase 2. In the second phase, two consent forms were chosen to represent either a difficult or easy to read

consent form. Participants read the sample consent form and then completed the comprehension task. In the final phase of the study, participants took part in focus group interviews aimed at better understanding their view of the research process.

Table 2: Flow of study design

	Tasks completed
Phase 1	Researcher: 1. Collected consent forms from SLA researchers 2. Created comprehension task using Delphi consensus model
Pilot Study	Tested comprehension task with sample ESL population
Phase 2	Students completed: 1. Reading easy/hard consent form 2. Comprehension task 3. Background questionnaire 4. Vocabulary Levels Task 5. Reading and signing debriefing form
Phase 3	Focus group interviews with participants

Design and plan of current dissertation

Setting

Data for the three segments of the study were collected at different times and locations. Part one, which involved the gathering of consent forms and the Delphi consensus model was completed online. SLA researchers and ESL experts were contacted via email and dissertations were searched using various databases.

Data for the comprehension task was collected in the classrooms of the participants. Each classroom design was subtlety different but largely followed a similar structure. Students were seated in individual desks and placed into rows that faced towards the front of the classroom.

The final phase of the study, focus groups, took place in various conference rooms. The conference rooms consisted of a large table with seating for roughly 15 people. A video camera and boom microphone were placed at one end of the table and students were asked to sit in seats

that were close to the recording equipment.

Participants

Comprehension task

A total of 112 ESL students from a University affiliated intensive English program (IEP) took part in the comprehension task. Students were recruited from the two lowest levels, 1 and 2, as well as the highest levels, 4, and 5. In terms of gender there was quite a gap in the participant pool, with the majority of ESL students being male (n=75) when compared to female (n=37). On average the students were 22.2 (SD=4.95) years old. There was a range of first languages spoken by the population; Arabic (n=42), Chinese (n=32), Portuguese (n=30), Japanese (n=7), and Thai (n=1).

A control group of L1 English speakers (n=38) was also utilized. The control group was comprised of students enrolled in undergraduate language teaching courses at the same university as the IEP students. Differences between the populations existed beyond just their first language, which for the control group was exclusively English. In the control group there was a larger number of females (n=33) compared to males (n=5), and the population was marginally younger (M=20.5, SD=1.32).

The division of students in the IEP was used to help sort the population into higher and lower language proficiency groups. However, results from the Vocabulary Levels Test (Laufer & Nation, 1999) indicated that some students did not share the same level of vocabulary knowledge as others at their IEP level. Taking into consideration the fact that IEP levels might not reflect English proficiency, in part because learners can advance through levels by passing a course instead of by proficiency testing, the Vocabulary Levels Test was used to split the sample population into two groups – High proficiency and Low proficiency. Additionally a native

speaker (NS) group, who did not take the Vocabulary Levels Test, was used as a control throughout all data collection. The mean score of the Vocabulary Levels Test was 13.4 correct answers out of 36. Using the mean score of 13.4 as a cut off for being in the upper or lower proficiency group would result in many students being placed into a group that ran counter to their current IEP level. While using only IEP categorization is problematic, the Vocabulary Levels Test measures only one skill area, vocabulary. The goal then was to find a cut-off score that would preserve as much of the IEP level while taking the Vocabulary Levels Test into consideration. Removing the middle 20% of students around the mean, those who scored between 11.5 and 14.5, resulted in groups that showed high correlation between the original IEP levels and the Vocabulary Levels Test, $r(130)=.722$, $p<.001$. Table 3 shows how students were categorized according to their IEP levels into the High/Low/NS group.

Table 3: IEP group compared to Vocabulary Levels Test grouping

	Low group	High group	NS
1	15	0	0
2	13	2	0
4	13	47	0
5	0	3	0
NS	0	0	38
Total	41	52	38

Comparison between IEP and vocabulary levels test grouping

The Vocabulary Levels Test appeared to accurately categorize low IEP level students into the low level proficiency group as only two students from levels 1 or 2 were moved into the high proficiency group. On the other hand, 13 students were moved from the high IEP level into the low proficiency group, potentially caused by students moving through the various IEP levels without gaining proficiency.

Focus group

The focus groups were held over the Summer and into the Fall semesters of 2014 while the comprehension task data was collected in the Spring and Fall of 2014. Since data collection ranged over the course of three academic semesters, a few students took part in both the comprehension task and then the focus group. The exact number is unknown as it was not expected that students would move two levels over the course of a single semester, and so were not asked if they had participated in the previous stage on the background questionnaire. Some participants, roughly five or six, disclosed their dual participation during the focus group. The two sections of the study were different in terms of the data they elicited. The comprehension data attempted to uncover how well ESL learners understood the consent forms they read, and thus used minimal deception in that the participants did not know prior to taking the comprehension task that they were reading a mock-consent form. The focus group data on the other hand attempted to gain further insights into the perceptions that ESL learners had of consent forms and research, with all information disclosed ahead of time. Focus group data consisted of meta-reflection of research beliefs from the participants' point of view, and as such should not have been impacted by students taking part in the comprehension task prior to the focus group. The reverse did not occur as comprehension data collected in the Fall was from level 1 students who could not have been enrolled in the IEP during focus groups data collection from the previous semester.

In total, 31 students participated in the 6 different focus groups. There was a roughly even split between males (n=18) and females (n=13) with an average age of 22 (SD=2.84) years old. In terms of first language, the majority of the students spoke Portuguese (n=22), Arabic (n=5), Japanese (n=1), and Korean (n=1). One student did not complete a background questionnaire so

beyond the fact that he was in a level 2 class, as that was the only level recruited at the time, nothing can be known about his background. The overall population of the IEP at time of data collection was largely Portuguese, Arabic, and Chinese speaking students. Beyond speculation, it is not clear why Arabic and Chinese speakers were underrepresented in the population pool of the focus groups as they were equally represented in the classes visited for recruitment.

Since students were asked to sign up for specific slots when they were available to come to data collection times, it was not possible to control who would attend each session beyond the fact that students were restricted to times that matched their IEP level. The upper level students, those who were taking classes in levels 4 or 5 of their English program, were all Portuguese speakers from Brazil. In focus group 1, two students came. Ten students came for group 3, and 11 came for group 4. It is not clear why group 4 had 11 people present as only ten slots were offered for that day. It is possible that a participant invited a friend or a student decided to come without signing up. Data for group 2 is excluded from this project due to the fact that only one student came to that session. While our interaction was interesting, focus group data thrives on the building of conversation between participants and researcher, which was the motivation for using focus groups in the first place. The group meta-reflection allowed for participants to combine ideas and suggest corrections for inaccuracies. Focus groups 5 and 6, were made up of low level learners from levels 1 and 2 of the IEP and were largely Arabic speakers.

Table 4: Focus group biographical data

Focus Group	n	IEP levels	Gender	Age (SD)
1	2	4, 5	Male= 1 Female= 1	22.00 (1.41)
3	9	5	Male= 5 Female= 4	22.11 (1.76)
4	11	5	Male= 6 Female= 5	21.64 (1.43)
5	5	1, 2	Male= 2 Female= 2	21.25 (2.50)
6	3	2	Male= 2 Female= 1	20.00 (2.00)

Biographical data on focus group participants

Instruments

In this section all materials used during the data collection will be discussed. Examples of each instrument can be found in Appendix C.

Consent form – easy and difficult

Consent forms were gathered from a variety of online sources, including published dissertations and through email requests. The exact process will be discussed in the next section. Two informed consent forms were selected for use as research instruments from the collected forms. While the two forms did differ in content and language, they were both originally created to be used during large classroom based research, thereby ensuring ecological validity. The easy or simple to read form had an average reading level of 7.45 while the difficult form was rated at 10.45 as will be shown in Chapter 4 and 5. The two forms were chosen as they were ranked above or below the normally suggested rating of an 8th grade level. Once the forms were selected, all identifying information was removed and replaced with mock names, phone numbers, addresses, and emails. Additionally the forms were formatted so that they would easily fit onto a single page. Directions were included at the top of each form and a box was included

for participants to attach their randomly generated ID number.

The two consent forms differed in complexity, length, and other measured differences but were both originally passed by an IRB for inclusion in a research project. Information was added or amended to each form as needed. Both forms had the name of the researcher changed to John Smith and a mock email (smith@msu.edu) and phone number (555-333-1111) used. Additionally, in the easy form, a time limit of 60 minutes was included as was a line about confidentiality so that the information covered would match the difficult form. In the difficult form, a line about obtaining extra credit without completing the research was added. While the forms differed in terms of topic of the study and exact wording, the intended answers on the comprehension task were largely the same. The major differences between the two forms was in their stated purpose and the benefits offered by the studies.

Background questionnaire

A background questionnaire was created for this study and was used during both phase 2 and 3. Questions included gender, age, IEP level, home country, first language, time learning English, and whether or not participants had previously been part of research. A similar form was created for the native speaking control group, though this form focused only on gender, age, L1, and past research participation. All variables were selected as they were thought to be important for understanding why students scored a particular way on the comprehension task.

Vocabulary test

In order to determine the vocabulary level of the participants, a version of Laufer and Nation's (1999) Vocabulary Levels Test (Productive) was used. The webpages http://www.lextutor.ca/tests/levels/productive/2ka.html and http://www.lextutor.ca/tests/levels/productive/3ka.html were used as source material. These

pages contain 18 sentences, each with a target word from the 2000 and 3000 word frequency levels respectively. The target word was removed from the sentence with only a few letters remaining. Only one word in the English language was supposed to correctly fit the sentence. In order to augment this task into a pencil and paper task, each sentence was copied and pasted into a text document. A blank line was used to indicate that letters were missing from the particular word. An example question would read as follows: *1) I'm glad we had this opp_____ to talk*. Participants were told to fill in the blank with ***ortunity*** to complete the word. Directions and a box for an ID number were included at the top of the page. Again, complete examples of the task can be seen in Appendix C.

Comprehension task

The Deaconess Informed Consent Comprehension Test (Miller, O'Donnell, Searight, & Barbarash, 1996) is a task designed to test an individual's understanding of a consent form prior to enrolling him or her into a clinical study. The 14 questions are open-ended and asked orally by the researcher directly to the participant. The task was originally designed to so that participants would be directly questioned after they had read an informed consent form but prior to actually enrolling for the study. The hope was that the researcher would be able to explain any misconceptions that the participant still had about the research process. The questions were modeled after the eight essential elements of consent found in the Department of Health and Human Services code 46.116 (Table 1). The questions were originally written for medical research and were rated at an 8th grade reading level. The original DICCT questions can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5: Original DICCT questions

	Questions
1	What is the purpose of the study?
2	When should you begin using the medication?
3	After you begin using the medication, how often are you supposed to use it?
4	What are the possible risks or discomforts associated with the study?
5	Describe the benefits that may be expected for you and others as a result of the research?
6	Can you tell me any other treatment that is available for your infection if you weren't participating in the study?
7	Who can you contact if you have questions regarding the study and about your rights as a research subject?
8	If you become physically injured or ill as a direct result of participating in the study, whom do you contact?
9	If you become physically injured or ill as a direct result of participating in study, what compensation is available?
10	If you become physically injured or ill as a direct result of participating in the study, who will pay for any necessary medical treatment?
11	Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. What will happen if you refuse to be in the study?
12	Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. What will happen if you agree to be in the study and later change your mind?
13	How would your decision whether or not to be in the study affect your present or future medical care with the study doctors or Deaconess Hospital?
14	Can you tell me who is allowed to see your medical records for this study?

The Deaconess Informed Consent Comprehension Test taken from Miller, O'Donnell, Searight, and Barbarash (1996)

In order to augment the original DICCT questions so they fit into the SLA context and were comprehensible for both upper and lower level ESL learners, a Delphi model of consensus was used (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963). A Delphi model is an attempt to "obtain the most reliable consensus of opinion of a group of experts" (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963 p. 458) and does so cyclically. In the current model, I first eliminated questions that were either duplicated or deemed

to be irrelevant for SLA studies due to their medical nature (questions 2, 7, 9, 10). Next I reworded questions so that they would reflect a social science study instead of a clinical trial. I added three questions that were thought to provide additional important information to use as distractors, bringing the total to 13 questions for the revised version of the DICCT. I next emailed the revised questions to five experienced ESL instructors and asked them to rewrite the questions so that a low level ESL learner would be able to understand them. In the first round of revision, all five reviewers responded with comments and suggested possible changes to the questions. I then rewrote the questions by synthesizing the feedback. The newly revised questions were sent back out to the reviewers for a second round of revision. In the second round, four of five instructors responded but with minimal feedback. The original plan was to use three rounds of revisions, however, feedback on round two was so minimal that consensus was judged to have been met. The new question set was rated at a 2.6 grade level according to the Flesch-Kincaide grading level scale. This approach to question creation thus produced a set of questions that were deemed to be largely understandable by the target audience and can be seen in Table 6.

Structured interview questions

A standard interview protocol (available in Appendix C) was created for focus groups. Ten questions were included in the protocol based on initial findings from the comprehension task and required information from consent forms. The protocol was written in language that should be understood by ESL learners. It was thought that lower level learners might have difficulty understanding the questions and thus for interviews involving lower level learners, the nature of the question was left, while wording was simplified and explained upon. Participants were urged to answer in English, the lingua franca of the focus groups. However, some

participants had difficulty finding the correct word and would ask for assistance from a fellow participant who spoke the same language. Participants were told that if they could not respond to a question in English then they could respond in their native language and it would be translated later. No participant used this method, though there are many instances of negotiation of meaning found in the dataset.

Table 6: Revised comprehension questions

	Questions
1	What is the researcher trying to learn from this study?
2	How long will it take you to finish this study?
3	What risks (bad things) are there in this study?
4	What benefits (good things) are there in this study?
5	How can you earn (get) the money/extra credit if you do NOT participate in the study?
6	Who can you contact (call or email) if something bad happened to you during the study?
7	What will happen to you if you say no to being in the study?
8	What will happen if you say yes to be in the study now but want to say no later?
9	How does your decision to be (or not to be) in the study change the way the teachers at the ELC think about you?
10	Who can see the things you do for this study?
11	Will this study improve your English skills?
12	How is your teacher involved (helping) in this research?
13	What will the researchers do with the information from the study?

Modified questions after Delphi consensus approach

Procedure

Consent forms

Consent forms were collected using two separate methods. First, consent forms were requested from SLA researchers that matched the following criteria: (1) the consent form was written for an ESL study and was in English, (2) it was not translated into a different language

for the participants at the time of use, and (3) the original study must involve the use of an intact class or a large lab based experiment. Next, informed consent forms were collected from published dissertations that met the same criteria previously outlined. In total, a convenience sample of 20 consent forms was collected and used as the data pool for this portion of the study.

After consent forms were collected, all identifying information was replaced with mock information of roughly the same length. For example, if a researcher was named Bob Smith, his name was replaced with Tom Jones. Mock information was used to conserve the original length of the document so that accurate length could be measured. Length was measured in page number, word count, and sentence count. All counts were provided by Microsoft Word.

After length was measured, the consent forms were formatted into a standard version in order to run computer-based readability tests. All punctuation, including periods, commas, and colons were removed. Computer processing of readability uses sentences as the bases of analysis and views periods as ending a sentence. The example sentence: *You can email Dr. Smith at smith@email.com*. actually would contain three sentences according to a computer: (1) *You can email Dr.*, (2) *Smith at smith@email.*, (3) C*om*. Other formatting included the removal of all section headers. Some researchers used full sentences as headers while others used simple words or phrases. Since leaving a phrase such as *risks*, a common section header, as its own sentence or including it as part of the next sentence would have artificially inflated, or deflated the scores, all section headers were removed. Next, for simplicity's sake, all sentences were placed onto their own line and all additional formatting (bold, italics, bullets) was removed as it is not taken into account in readability scores.

The consent forms were run through readability-score.com, a website that automatically calculates Flesch-Kincaid and SMOG reading grade levels, length, and text data such as syllable

and word count. A sample form was tested in three separate programs and calculated by hand, resulting in similar outputs. Readability-score.com was selected over the other tools as it calculated all relevant data from the consent forms in one location and was faster than calculating the information by hand.

Two widely used tests in determining the readability level of a text are the Flesch-Kincaid readability score (Kincaid, Jr, Rogers, & Chissom, 1975) and the Simple Measure of Gobbledygook (SMOG) (McLaughlin, 1969), both used in this study. The Flesch-Kincaid is the more common test of readability and can be automatically generated inside of Microsoft Office Word. The Flesch-Kincaid scale compares two different numbers, the average number of syllables per word and the average number of words per sentence. The syllable length number is divided by the words per sentence to provide an overall readability. The test results in two scores, one a level of readability from 0 to 100, with 100 being easier to read, and a scale according to grade level (i.e. a sixth-grade reading level). The SMOG test requires 20 sentences from each consent form, 10 from the beginning and 10 from the end. All words that are larger than two syllables are counted and then this number is square rooted and increased by three, revealing the graded reading level. The SMOG is simpler to calculate but is at a disadvantage as it requires at least 20 sentences, which short consent forms might lack. Both Flesch-Kincaid and SMOG scores will be reported in Chapter 4 but only the Flesch-Kincaid will be discussed in other sections as it is the test most often reported by researchers (see for examples; Breese, Burman, Goldberg, & Weis, 2007; Jefford & Moore, 2008; Paasche-Orlow, Taylor, & Brancati, 2003).

Consent forms were compared against the New General Service List (NGSL) to see how many words on the forms were at or above the 1000, 2000, and 3000 word-frequency levels. To do this, the word list was downloaded from http://www.newgeneralservicelist.org and then

organized into three long tables. A macro was used that would search each consent form for any instance of a word on the NGSL at a particular level and remove it from the form, leaving only words that were above the designated level. This was done cyclically so that words on the 1000-word level list were removed and reported before words at the 2000 level were removed and so on. Additionally, proper nouns that should be known to a participant, but would not be counted on a word frequency list, were also removed, included proper nouns such as names of buildings, streets, or language centers.

Pilot Study

Between phases one and two, a pilot study was conducted to test the quantitative materials for phase two of this study. The participant pool was drawn from a special topics course for ESL learners being taught at the business college of the university where the study was conducted. The course met twice a week for an hour and focused on improving the oral proficiency of the students. The students were six male Korean graduate students in their late twenties or early thirties. As this was a pilot study, no further biographical data was collected. According to the instructor of the class, the students were roughly at an intermediate high level, which is in concordance with my observed interaction with the group.

The participants all verbally agreed to take part in the research project and then read a sample consent form that was originally used for a previous study. While reading the consent form, the participants were asked to highlight words that were unknown to them. Once the participants finished reading the form, they were asked to "sign" the form by checking a box used to indicate that they understood the meaning of the document. Finally, the participants all took a comprehension task (described below) in order to test how well they actually understood the consent form. The primary purpose of this pilot study was to (a) test the questions from the

comprehension task for confusing wording, (b) establish the amount of time required to complete the activities, and (c) check for any unforeseen issues related to the testing materials. After completing the activities, a debriefing session was held to ask students' opinions on the task. No issues were reported with the questions or directions. Participants did not highlight words they found to be unfamiliar with and thus stronger oral directions were added for the main study. No other changes were instigated from data collected during the pilot procedures.

Comprehension task

The comprehension task data collection was conducted in the classroom of the participants. As class time was being used for the data collection, all students were required to participate; however, students were told that they would receive instructions for opting out of the study at the end. Only two students opted out of the research.

Participants were randomly handed a consent form (either difficult or easy) and given oral directions. They were told to carefully read the form and to underline any words they did not know. They were also told to circle any larger section of words like a sentence or paragraph that they did not understand. Participants were not told that they were reading a consent form for a mock-study. They were also not told about the true purpose of the research and so were under the impression that they were reading a real consent form for a real research study that they would begin participating in shortly.

Once participants read the form, they were instructed to "sign" the form by checking a box indicating that they understood the consent form and agreed to participate in the research. Signatures could not be used in this phase of the study since the mock-consent forms would be used as data and a signature would cause a lack of confidentiality. Once students had checked the box, they were individually asked if they understood the form and if they had any questions.

Some students asked about the meaning of words they underlined but no participant asked questions regarding the actual studies they were about to enroll into.

Students read and signed the consent form at their own pace. Again, it should be pointed out that participants had completed all the necessary steps required to enroll themselves in a research project. After each student signed the form, I collected their document and gave them the comprehension task and provided them with individual directions for how to complete it. The participants were told to use the information from the consent form they had just read to answer each question. Full sentence responses were not required and students were asked to write as much as they could remember from the consent form. Additionally, no directions were given that specified which language to use when filling out the form; however, all participants did so in English. Participants were told, and read in the directions, that if they did not know the answer to a question that they could leave it blank or write something along the lines of "I don't know" or "I don't remember." If the participant did not believe the consent form actually contained the information being asked about in the question, they were instructed to write "not on form." Students were not placed under any time constraints during this process.

Once students had completed the comprehension task, they were given a background questionnaire to fill out. For the native speakers, this was the end of data collection. The process of reading the form, completing the task, and filling in the background questionnaire took roughly 15-20 minutes for all ESL levels and only about five to ten minutes for native speakers.

For the ESL students, after filling out the background questionnaire they were asked to sit quietly and wait for other students to catch up. Once all students had completed the comprehension task and all materials collected, the vocabulary levels test was distributed. The directions, including two examples, were read aloud in class. Students then worked on the task.

This process took roughly 10 to15 minutes. Students seemed to enjoy the task for its game-like qualities. Once the students had finished the task, they were given a debriefing form (also given to the native speakers after they filled out a background questionnaire) and asked to read it carefully. At this point, students were told how to opt out of the study, again, only two students did so. The remaining time was then used for discussion of various topics related to research ethics, graduate school, and other random topics of interest.

Focus groups

Focus group interviews were conducted in a large conference room. Students were seated around a table. A camcorder was set up on a tripod and placed at the "front" of the table. Depending on the number of participants, the researcher either sat off camera, or very close to the camcorder and students were asked to sit close to the camcorder. Students were given a background questionnaire and a consent form to sign. Participants were given unique ID numbers based on their seat and focus group number starting with students who set camera-left (they would appear on the left hand side of a recording). So F1S1 would be the student who sat in seat one or the closet to the camera on the left hand side in focus group 1.

After all materials had been collected, participants were given a second copy of the consent form they had just signed to use as a reference or to take notes on. Participants were given one final option to ask questions before the camcorder was started. An additional sound recorder was also placed in the middle of the table in case the camcorder or boom microphone failed. No equipment issue occurred. The interview took roughly one hour to complete for each group. Once all questions (found in Appendix C) had been asked, students were given the opportunity to ask any remaining questions they had. Once all recording equipment was turned off, students were given the chance to speak off-the-record. All groups exercised this option but

conversation tended towards topics such as graduate school, life in town, and other banal topics.

Data Processing and Analysis

Consent form data

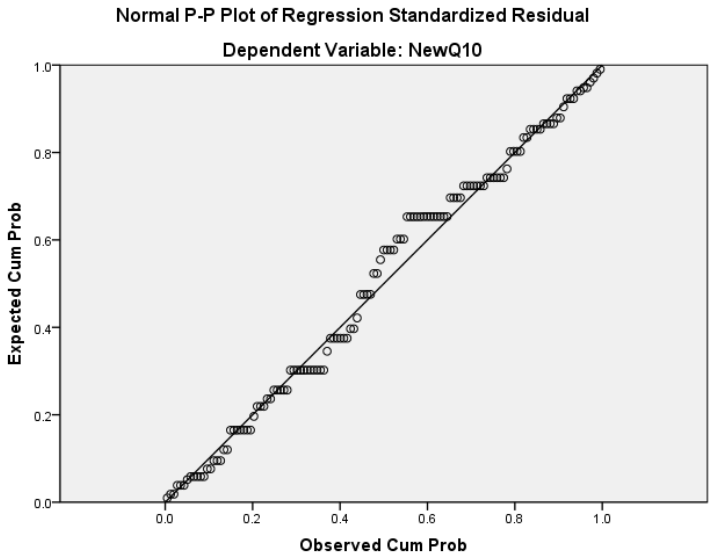
The preparation of the consent forms was covered in a prior section. The objective of this analysis was to investigate the overall difficulty level of the form in terms of reading level, length, and vocabulary level. To this end, descriptive statistics were used to explore the findings and will be fully explored in Chapter 4.

Comprehension task

Like the difficulty analysis of the consent forms, descriptive statistics were used to investigate various outcomes from the comprehension task. Additionally, a multiple regression was used in order to understand how the variables of form type (hard or easy) and proficiency were predictive of the comprehension task. The data in this section of the study was non-normally distributed and so non-parametric testing, including Mann-Whitney U tests to compare various groups were be utilized.

The data for the regression model showed that all assumptions needed to run a multiple regress (Larson-Hall, 2010) had been met. Figure 1 shows the plot of the residuals. There is small deviation from the line but the data appear to be linear in nature.

Figure 1: P-P Plot of regression standardized residuals



The standard residuals are slightly elevated but at -2.34 and 2.34 are within the bounds of 3 mentioned in Larson-Hall (2010), indicating that there were no outliers in the data. Cook's distance was <.001 and 0.046, well within the range of -1 and 1. Mahalanobis distance was 2.42 and 3.046, below the suggested 11. All numbers are represented in Table 7.

Table 7: Regression assumptions

	Minimum	Maximum	Accepted range
Standard Residuals	-2.34	2.34	-3 to 3
Cook's Distance	<.001	.046	-1 to 1
Mahalanobis Distance	2.42	3.046	Under 11

Assumption tests for multiple regression model source Larson-Hall (2010)

Scoring and validity of rating

Scoring on the comprehension task was dichotomous, 1 for a correct response, 0 for an incorrect or blank response. The open-ended nature of the questions meant that participants might partially answer a question correctly which occurred 18 times in the dataset. All instances of partially correct answers were given a score of 1, as a partially correct response indicated at

least some level of comprehension of the information. To ensure that scoring was valid, a second rater was given a random set of 20% of all comprehension tasks. She was asked to rate the responses using dichotomous correct/incorrect scale. A simple percentage agreement was used and showed that the external rater agreed with my original judgments at 94.3%.

Focus group

The focus groups were conducted using a structured interview protocol. The same 10 questions were asked to each group with similar follow up prompts. However, focus group interviews thrive on the interaction between participants and so all groups took on their own identity. Some groups were more reserved with participants responding after reflective thought, while other groups appeared to view the data collection session as a friendly gathering where jokes and laughter were permitted. The video recordings were first transcribed by the author using standard video playback software. After the recordings were transcribed, they were broken into sections based on the question asked so that groups could be compared.

As suggested by Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, and Daley (2000), the data from the focus groups was analyzed using a constant comparison analysis as "[f]ocus group data can be analyzed via constant comparison analysis, especially when there are multiple focus groups within the same study...allow[ing] the focus group researcher to assess saturation in general and across-group saturation in particular" (p.6). Open coding was conducted by color-coding the various questions asked throughout the interviews so that comparison across groups could occur. Questions were largely independent of each other, as they did not build a narrative but instead each concentrated on one particular issue relating to informed consent. Questions were analyzed and open coding was applied to each participants' response. During the axial coding phase, all open coding was collected and condensed within each question, producing micro-themes. The various focus

groups answered the same series of questions, though with slightly different wording and timing, and most discussion was similar for each question regardless of the group. These micro-themes then represent the behavior of the focus groups on a question by question basis. A similar process took place with the micro-themes. Various questions that dealt with related topics such as benefits and compensation (theme 2) or difficult sections and suggestions (theme 3) were combined to form macro-themes. The final two macro-themes emerged from patterns that were noticed across questions such as a general feeling of apathy towards the forms (theme 1) and issues of confusion over research practices (theme 4). Each of these four macro-themes will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

Ethical Considerations

Approval for this project was granted by Michigan State University's Institutional Review Board. Overall the project posed limited to minimal risks for all participants. All data was anonymized to the maximum extent possible. For the consent forms collected as research material, all identifiable data was removed prior to any analysis being conducted. For all other data, no names were collected beyond signatures provided for consent forms/debriefing forms. Participants were given randomized identification numbers. Participants who took part in the focus group were video and audio recorded which might make them identifiable if someone was able to gain access to the materials. However, all digital files, including videos, are kept on a password protected computer. This computer is also always kept with the author or in a locked and secure location.

Participants were never at risk of bodily harm during this study. However, risk and harm cannot just be measured in terms of probability of injury. Class time was used for this research but any benefits that might come out of this research will likely not directly impact the lives of

the participants. When conducting research it is important to balance the potential for harm or risk, in this case the loss of class time, with benefits. Participants in this research project were not asked to do anything that would fall outside of the normal purview of classroom activities; reading, responding to open-ended questions, and vocabulary tasks. Even though the research was not directly geared toward class content, the participants were able to still do activities that might have had a benefit to their language learning.

Another way to argue for the ethical validity of this research is to consider it from a social justice perspective. These participants might be donating their time to this project without direct benefit. However, they are helping the ESL community at large. For many people, this type of reason is sufficient to justify the minimal risk or harm involved, as will be discussed later in Chapter 6.

The comprehension task did use minimal deception as a means of gaining insights into the knowledge of the participants. Minimal amounts of deception are normally tolerated in research, assuming that it does not lead to increased harm to the participant and that the truth, or as much of the truth behind the project as possible, is disclosed to the participants at the end of data collection. The deception in this study, the fact that participants were not told that the consent forms they read were actually part of the data collection, was revealed to the population at the end of each data collection session. The students were told that they would not in fact have to take part in the research outlined in the consent form and that reading the consent form and answering the questions on the comprehension task was the actual purpose behind the project. Further, students were encouraged to ask questions about the process if they had any once data collection was completed. Most participants did not ask questions and those that did were unrelated to the research project, instead focusing on other topics such as American holidays, life

as a graduate student, or the weather. As will be discussed in later chapters, participants appeared to view data collection as an opportunity to interact with a native speaker of English.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS FROM CONSENT FORM ANALYSIS

Introduction

Of the various studies that have investigated consent form difficulty, the majority have focused solely on length (Beardsley, Jefford, & Mileshkin, 2007) and reading grade level (Paasche-Orlow, Taylor, & Brancati, 2003). No empirical data exists for the difficulty level of ESL consent forms used in SLA studies. As such, one of the goals of this dissertation is to gain a better understanding of the difficulty level at which ESL consent forms are currently written. In this chapter, I will present the descriptive data from the relevant measures of difficulty for the sample pool of consent forms. The measures investigated in this section are length, reading grade level, and vocabulary usage.

The exact methods for collecting and anonymizing consent forms were discussed in Chapter 3. In brief, forms were solicited from SLA and ESL researchers. The forms were designed for ESL studies, used in large scale data collection sessions, and were not translated into the L1 of the participants. In total, 20 ESL consent forms were collected. Each form was written by a different researcher and approved by a local IRB for inclusion into a research protocol.

Length

Federal guidelines do not set forth regulations on the minimum nor maximum length of consent forms and so it is difficult to know how long the average consent form is. Studies published in the medical field indicate that consent forms of 10 or more pages are quite common (Stunkel et al, 2010); however, it is not clear how long average SLA consent forms are. Table 8 displays the length of the collected consent forms in terms of page length, number of sentences,

and word count. The average number of pages per document is 1.85 (SD=1.11), with a range of one to five pages being reported. Using only page length can be deceiving as some forms such as M and H made use of different number of pages yet used roughly the same number of words (610 and 655 respectively).

Table 8: Length of ESL consent forms

	Word Count	Page Count	Sentence Count
A	285	1	18
B	456	1	24
C	290	1	20
D	598	1	31
E	774	3	39
F	751	2	48
G	328	1	17
H	655	3	33
I	1641	5	106
J	462	1	23
K	395	1	19
L	1301	4	77
M	610	1	33
N	274	1	16
O	730	2	35
P	407	1	23
Q	400	2	17
R	556	2	27
S	409	2	27
T	389	2	14
Average	585.55 (336.27)	1.85 (1.11)	32.35 (21.94)

Descriptive data for length of sample consent forms

Reading grade level

The average SMOG rating was 10.04 (SD=1.16), marginally lower than the Flesch-Kincaid average of the 10.82 (SD=1.54) grade level. A one-samples t-test showed that the average reading level according to the Flesch-Kincaid score of of 10.82 was statistically higher than the acceptable cut-off of the 8th grade level $t(19) = 7.97$, $p<.001$, $r=0.87$. Consent forms ranged in difficulty from 7.45 to 13.60, meaning that at the highest, the consent forms would require a college level education to read and comprehend the materials. Only form C (7.45) was below the 8th grade level, though forms A and I were close to the target at 8.85 and 8.90.

Words covered

The 1000, 2000, and 3000 word levels of the New General Service List (NGSL) were used to determine the frequency of the vocabulary on the collected consent forms. The words found on the NGSL represent vocabulary frequency according to corpora studies with the first 1000 words as the most frequent with those closer to the 3000 level being less common**.** In order to make a form easier to read for non-native English speakers, it is expected that the vast majority of the vocabulary will be found at the 1000 word level with an additional percentage found at either the 2000 or 3000 band.

Table 10 shows the raw number of word tokens above each NGSL level, or the number of words not found on that particular NGSL list. Table 11 shows the same information but in percentage form. The analysis was cyclical and thus once a word was removed, it was not added back for the next cycle. Taking form C as an example, we can see that a total of 261 words on the consent form were at the 1000 word level. Of the remaining words, all but 16 can be found at the 2000 word level, and four at the 3000 word level. Nine words were left after the 3000 word level and represent instances of vocabulary items were not included on the 1000-3000 level bands of

the NGSL. An easier to read form should have the bulk of its vocabulary contained at the 1000 word level as it would be more likely that ESL learners would have encountered them before.

Table 9: Reading level difficulty of ESL consent forms

	SMOG Grade level	Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level
A	8.80	8.90
B	10.40	11.10
C	7.20	7.70
D	10.50	11.00
E	10.60	11.90
F	8.80	9.20
G	9.40	10.50
H	10.00	11.30
I	8.80	9.00
J	11.10	11.80
K	11.30	12.50
L	8.80	9.20
M	10.20	10.70
N	10.20	11.30
O	10.80	11.60
P	10.00	10.50
Q	11.30	12.60
R	10.40	11.50
S	9.60	9.60
T	12.60	14.60
Average	10.04 (1.16)	10.82 (1.54)

Descriptive data for reading grade level of sample consent forms

Table 10: Vocabulary not covered by New General Service List

Form	Total words	1000 level	2000 level	3000 level	Above 3000
A	285	243	19	9	14
B	456	381	38	16	21
C	290	261	16	4	9
D	598	496	45	20	37
E	774	654	53	20	47
F	751	641	59	20	31
G	328	277	24	10	17
H	655	569	49	17	20
I	1641	1410	95	16	120
J	462	376	44	13	29
K	395	322	37	13	23
L	1301	1150	81	9	61
M	610	514	49	19	28
N	274	219	21	10	24
O	730	604	59	29	38
P	407	362	19	5	21
Q	400	342	22	15	21
R	556	467	39	14	36
S	409	339	41	9	20
T	389	325	32	5	27

Descriptive data for vocabulary coverage of sample consent forms

Table 11 shows the cumulative percentage of vocabulary items covered at each level of the NGSL. The percentage shows the amount of vocabulary items that are covered on the consent form broken down by NGSL level. For consent form A, it can be seen that 85% of all words were found at the 1000 word level, 91% at the 2000-word level and 95% at the 3000 word level. The average percentage of words covered for each level was 84.58 (SD=2.57) for the 1000 level, 91.96 (SD=1.75) for the 2000 level, and 94.55 (SD=1.35) for the 3000 level.

Table 11: Vocabulary covered by New General Service List

	Percentage NGSL coverage		
	1000 level	**2000 level**	**3000 level**
A	85.20	91.92	95.09
B	83.11	91.45	94.96
C	90.00	95.52	96.90
D	82.94	90.47	93.81
E	84.49	91.34	93.93
F	85.35	93.21	95.87
G	84.45	91.77	94.82
H	86.87	94.35	96.95
I	85.92	91.71	92.69
J	81.38	90.91	93.72
K	81.51	90.89	94.18
L	88.39	94.62	95.31
M	84.26	92.30	95.41
N	79.93	87.59	91.24
O	82.74	90.82	94.79
P	88.94	93.61	94.84
Q	85.50	91.00	94.75
R	83.99	91.01	93.53
S	82.89	92.91	95.11
T	83.55	91.77	93.06
Average	84.58 (2.57)	91.96 (1.75)	94.55 (1.35)

Percentages of vocabulary coverage of sample consent forms

Table 12 shows the most common 39 words found on the consent forms that were not included in the 1000-3000 word list, with each item occurring at least four times. An additional 120 items occurred three or fewer times and can be found in Appendix A. Several of the words on this table might be considered research jargon and are unlikely to be used in day to day interaction by English speakers. Examples of this research jargon include: *consent, confidential,*

questionnaire, investigator, transcribe, publish, pseudonym, anonymous, compensate, IRB, and *withdrawa*l. Of these research jargon words, only *consent, publish,* and *compensate* appear on the academic word list (Coxhead, 2000), the rest appear to be highly infrequent in standard and academic English signaling the overall difficulty of the vocabulary used on consent forms.

Table 12: Consent form vocabulary above 3000 word level

Words	Count	Words	Count
English	46	anonymous	6
consent	33	assignment	6
ESL	25	discontinue	6
confidential	24	dissertation	6
questionnaire	24	minimal	6
audio	23	pragmatic	6
investigator	23	signature	6
transcribe	14	Allowable	5
classroom	13	compensate	5
publish	13	disclose	5
pseudonym	11	privacy	5
semester	11	additional	4
obtain	10	conference	4
oversee	8	convenient	4
password	8	discomfort	4
completion	7	IRB	4
fax	7	literate	4
instructor	7	proficiency	4
learner	7	withdrawal	4
oral	7		

Summary of results from consent form analysis

In summary, the average ESL consent form was roughly two pages long, and contained 585 words or 32 sentences. The average grade level was between the 10^{th} and 11^{th} grade, higher

than the recommended 8th grade level. The amount of vocabulary covered on forms ranged depending on the NGSL level. At the 1000-word level around 85% of words were covered but this increased to 91% and 95% at the 2000- and 3000-word level. These results will be integrated into a larger discussion of consent form complexity later in the discussion chapter.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS FROM THE COMPREHENSION TASK

Introduction

This chapter will present the findings from the second phase of data collection and focus on the results from the modified version of the Deaconess Informed Consent Comprehension Test (DICCT) (Miller, O'Donnell, Searight, & Barbarash, 1996). The formation of the modified DICCT for ESL speakers was discussed in Chapter 3. In summary, the original DICCT was rewritten so that it would be more concise and better adapted for ESL learners. Redundant questions were removed and a Delphi consensus model was used to produce questions that were deemed easy to read for low level ESL learners. The original DICCT was rated at an 8^{th} grade level according to a Flesch-Kincaid readability test, while the modified version was rated at the 2.6^{th} grade level.

Does the difficulty of a consent form matter?

One important question when discussing how difficult consent forms are is whether or not a more difficult form leads to less informed participants. In this research two different consent forms from the original 20 were selected to represent the hard and easy level forms. Table 13 shows the two forms in terms of the difference of items measured. Form C was selected as the easier form since it was rated low on all categories. Form M was used for the difficult form as it was, at the time of selection, highest on all categories of interest. Both forms were short at one page in length, though form M contained almost twice as many words as form C did. Additionally, both forms did manage to meet the required 95% vocabulary coverage generally assumed to be needed to ensure comprehension.

Table 13: Easy and Hard forms

	Easy	Hard
ID	C	M
Words	290	610
Pages	1	1
Sentences	20	33
Average readability	7.45	10.45
1000 word level coverage	90%	84%
2000 word level coverage	95%	92%
3000 word level coverage	97%	95%
Polysyllabic words percentage	10%	16%

Descriptive data for easy and hard form reproduced from Chapter 4

Participants were randomly given either a difficult or easy form to read and then asked to take the comprehension task. In terms of means, low level learners answered marginally more questions correctly when given the easy form (m=4.10, SD=2.82) when compared to the hard form (m=3.20, SD=2.63). The same pattern holds for high level learners as the easy form resulted in a score of 6.76 (SD=2.35) compared to the hard form 5.96 (SD=1.97). The native speaker group actually produced more correct answers after reading the hard form (m=7.14, SD=1.42) as compared to the easy form (m=6.60, SD=1.42). How these scores relate to each other will be discussed in the inferential statistics below.

Table 14: Means for easy and hard form

		N	m	SD
Low	Easy form	21	4.10	2.82
	Hard form	20	3.20	2.63
High	Easy form	25	6.76	2.35
	Hard form	27	5.96	1.97
NS	Easy form	17	6.60	1.42
	Hard form	21	7.14	1.42

Descriptive data from comprehension task broken down by easy or hard form read

The means for these scores actually hide the fact that some questions were answered overall better when participants read the easy or the hard form. In other words, it is possible that the wording or content of one form lead to a better understanding of particular concepts. Table 15 shows the difference between the percentage of each question answered correctly for the easy and the hard form broken down by proficiency level. A negative number indicates that the question was answered more frequently after reading the hard form. As an example, 11% more low level learners answered question 1 correctly after reading the hard form as compared to 28% who answered question 4 correctly after reading the easy form. Many questions have roughly even splits between the two form types. The easy form resulted in higher scores on question 5 for all groups while question 1, and to a smaller extent question 10, were answered more accurately after reading the hard form. Low-level learners benefited from the easy form on questions 3, 4, 7, and 8. High-level learners responded better on question 9 when given the easy form.

Table 15: Percentage difference between easy and hard form correct responses

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Low	-11%	2%	22%	28%	4%	-7%	16%	32%	5%	-2%
High	-13%	-6%	4%	1%	20%	-13%	4%	-6%	24.%	-10%
NS	-39%	-5%	-5%	0%	52%	13%	-12%	-6%	-36%	-17%

Percentage of individual questions answered correctly after reading either easy or difficult form.

Interaction between form type and proficiency

A standard multiple regression was run on the data comparing the type of form (easy or hard) and the proficiency level of the participants reported (High, Low, NS). The results of the regression indicated that the two factors accounted for 29.3% of the variance (R^2=.293, F(3,127)=17.545, p<.001) The model used native speakers as the constant and found that only

membership into the low level group was predictive of the score on the comprehension task (β=-.488, *p*<.001). High level learners did not uniquely contribute to the model (β=.100, *p*=.231) nor did the type of form read (β=-.085, *p*=.255). Overall the regression shows that native speaker and high level learners performed similarly on the task while outperforming the low level learners, which was also visible in the descriptive statistics. Form type was statistically not an issue meaning that participants scored similarly on the comprehension task regardless of the forms reading grade level. Over 70% of the variance in the dataset cannot be attributed to either the type of form used nor the English proficiency of the participant, but is attributable to some other set of variables, which will be speculated upon in the discussion section..

Table 16: Regression table

	B	**SE B**	**ß**	**t**	**p**
Constant (NS)	7.012	.658		10.664	<.001
Form type	-.439	.384	-.085	-1.14.	.255
Low level ESL	-2.701	.458	-.488	-5.898	<.001
High level ESL	.563	.468	.100	1.203	.231

Results and descriptive data of multiple regression

Comprehension task descriptive data

The difficulty of the consent form read did not statistically impact the scores on the comprehension task and so means reported here combine the outcome scores for all participants. The participants' overall mean scores on the comprehension task was 5.66 (SD=2.58) or roughly five to six questions answered correctly. In terms of each proficiency group, the mean score for the low group on the task was 3.66 (SD=2.74), for the high level group 6.35 (SD=2.18), and for the native speaker group 6.89 (SD=1.49). Low level learners on average answered three to four questions correctly while both high level learners and native speakers scored between six to seven correct responses. From the descriptive data it can be seen that the high level group and the

native speaker group performed similarly on the task, and both appear to outperform the low level group.

Table 17: Means and SD for comprehension task

	N	m	SD	Percent correct
Low	41	3.66	2.74	37%
High	52	6.35	2.18	64%
NS	38	6.89	1.49	69%
Overall	151	5.66	2.58	57%

Means and standard deviations for comprehension task by proficiency. Easy and Hard forms are combined in this table.

The individual questions from the comprehension task are reproduced in Table 18. These questions were created by using a Delphi consensus among five ESL experts and were written at a Flesch-Kincaid score of 2.8. These questions should have been comprehensible by both low and high level ESL learners, as well as the native speaking population. Table 19 shows the percentage of participants per proficiency group who answered each question correctly. Again, note here that there is very little difference between the performance of the high proficiency and native speaker group, while both again outscore the low level learners, indicating a general trend in the impact that proficiency plays in comprehending an informed consent form. The question answered correctly the most frequently for all groups was question 7, which was related to participants refusal to participate in research and outcomes if they choose to do so. For both ESL groups question 9 was the most difficult. This question dealt with how participation in research will affect the students' standing at the IEP. Further evidence of difficulty with this topic will be put forward in the next chapter. For native speakers, the most difficult question to answer was question 5. It should be noted that low level learners also had issues with this question as it had the second lowest response rate.

Table 18: Comprehension questions reproduced

	Questions
1	What is the researcher trying to learn from this study?
2	How long will it take you to finish this study?
3	What risks (bad things) are there in this study?
4	What benefits (good things) are there in this study?
5	How can you earn (get) the money/extra credit if you do NOT participate in the study?
6	Who can you contact (call or email) if something bad happened to you during the study?
7	What will happen to you if you say no to being in the study?
8	What will happen if you say yes to be in the study now but want to say no later?
9	How does your decision to be (or not to be) in the study change the way the teachers at the IEP think about you?
10	Who can see the things you do for this study?

Questions asked on the comprehension task

Table 19: Percent of correct answers on comprehension task

	Low	High	NS
Q1	22%	50%	68%
Q2	40%	67%	79%
Q3	41%	73%	74%
Q4	32%	73%	76%
Q5	17%	54%	47%
Q6	39%	46%	58%
Q7	61%	85%	95%
Q8	41%	62%	68%
Q9	7%	40%	63%
Q10	44%	65%	68%

Percentage of correct responses per question.

Participants who took the comprehension task could possibly answer zero to ten questions correctly. Table 20 shows the distribution of participants who answered a particular number of questions correctly. Roughly 50% of the low-level learners answered three or fewer questions correctly, with around 20% not able to accurately respond to any question. As indicated

by the means, high-level learners and native speakers tended to be clustered around answering six questions correctly. None of the native speakers were able to accurately answer all ten questions, while around 6% of high-level learners did.

Table 20: Percentage of correct responses on comprehension task

Answered Correctly	Low ESL	High ESL	NS
0	20%	0%	0%
1	7%	4%	0%
2	15%	2%	0%
3	5%	4%	0%
4	12%	12%	3%
5	12%	15%	16%
6	10%	13%	29%
7	12%	17%	8%
8	5%	17%	32%
9	2%	7%	13%
10	0%	6%	0%

Percentage of participants who answered a particular number of questions correctly.

Vocabulary not understood

Participants were asked to underline any unknown or difficult words and to circle any difficult phrases or sections while they read the consent form. Only one participant circled a phrase and 53% of participants underlined words. No participant from the native speaker group highlighted words or phrases, which is to be expected as they were all native speakers of English and the forms were written at a grade level that should have been accessible to them. Table 21 shows a breakdown of the number of participants from each level who underlined words on the form. As might be expected, more lower level learners tended to underline words than did upper

level students. A Mann-Whitney U test revealed that participants who underlined words did not perform better on the comprehension task compared to those who did underline, U=1508.00, *z*=-.325, *p*=.748, *r*=-.03.

Table 21: Participants who underlined words by proficiency group

	Did not underline	Underlined words
Low proficiency group	43%	58%
High Proficiency group	61%	38%

Number and percentage of students who underlined words on consent form by proficiency

Additionally, it might be expected that the participants who read the more difficult form would have been more inclined to highlight words, as more examples of polysyllabic and less frequent words were used on the hard form. Table 22 shows that a slightly smaller percentage of participants who read the hard form did in fact underline any words. Additionally, the only group who showed a higher level of underling words were low level learners who read the easy form.

Table 22: Participants who underlined words by form type

		Did not underline	Underlined words
Low	Easy form	29%	71%
	Hard form	60%	40%
High	Easy form	60%	40%
	Hard form	63%	37%

Number and percentage of students who underlined words on consent form by difficulty level

Table 23 shows all words underlined on both the easy and the hard consent form according to their New General Service List (NGSL) levels. The columns in the table represent the number of times a word was underlined while the rows indicate which NGSL band level the word can be found at. As was mentioned in Chapter 4, many of the words listed in column 7+ might be considered research jargon. Items include *benefit, risk, participate, withdraw, compensation, confidentiality, investigator, and risks.*

Table 23: Words underlined on consent forms

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
1K	Affect, Agreement, Application, Certain, Contact, Data, Decide, Fill out, Gain, However, Involve, Issues, Law, Learners, Limit, Might, Project, Questions, Receive, Role	Kept Loss Stored Practice Protect Whether	Abilities Discontinue Instead Response	Allowable Knowledge Performance Purposes	Identify Indicate	Concerns Determine	Particular (7) Benefit (10) Risk (15)
2K	Complaint, Connected, Explanation, Introduction, Invited, Researcher, Secret, Volunteer	Collected Electronic Maximum Register	Background Extent Otherwise		Consequence Entirely		Acquire (12) Participate (29)
3K	Whenever	Input			Dialog Entitle Evaluate Penalty Publish	Voluntary	Humor (7) Withdraw (11) Compensation (12) Self-paced (12)
4K+	Obtain	Anonymous Incomplete		Consent	Questionnaire	Cabinet	Confidentiality (7) Investigator (10) Refuse (19)

Words underlined on consent form arranged according to their NGSL level

Summary of results from comprehension task

The results of the comprehension task indicate that English proficiency level does impact how well a person understands the consent form after reading it. Both native speakers and high proficiency learners were able to accurately respond to six to seven questions while low proficiency speakers averaged three to four. In terms of reading grade level on the consent forms, a lower reading grade level did not cause participants to produce more accurate responses when compared to participants who read a form at a higher grade level. Finally, participants underlined

a variety of vocabulary words that were unknown to them, some that were beyond the 3000 level band on the NGSL while some of the most frequently underlined words were at the 1000-2000 level. Many of these words, especially those underlined 7+ times or those at or above the 3000-word level might be considered a form of technical research language, matching with some of the findings from Chapter 4. These findings will be integrated with those in Chapters 4 and 6 in the discussion chapter.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of six focus group interviews and introduces the four themes found throughout this portion of the dataset. Data was collected over the Summer and Fall semesters of 2014. All participants came from the same intensive English program (IEP) and were paid 15 dollars for their participation. Focus groups were divided into upper level speakers (focus groups 1, 3, and 4) and lower level speakers (focus groups 5 and 6) based on their IEP levels. Focus group 2 was excluded from analysis as only one person attended. All groups responded to questions with similar content; however, lower level participants required more negotiation of meaning and used their first language more often by asking other participants for clarification of particular points before answering.

Excerpts from the interviews will be used throughout this chapter to highlight the various themes. All participants were given an ID number when they arrived in order to secure confidentiality. The naming convention was standardized to allow for easy comparison between participants. An example ID would be F1S2, which means that this was the second student (S2) in the first focus group (F1). Students were numbered in a circle starting from camera left. Two students came in late to focus group 4 and were given large numbers - F4S15 and F4S16.

The same 11 topics were discussed throughout each interview. The exact timing and wording of the questions changed due to the flow of conversation and to compensate for differences in proficiency levels of the participants. An example of a change in question is seen in Table 24 where the original question is shown on the left and the question asked during focus group 6, a low proficiency group, is on the right. The question as asked included more

scaffolding in terms of vocabulary and only asks about the teacher. Follow up questions prompted information about the IEP. While the wording changed for each question, the focus was maintained and targeted at specific aspects of consent forms which can be seen in Table 25.

Table 24: Types of augmented questions

Original question	Question asked
In research you can always say no or stop being part of a study any time. If you do say no, or stop, how does that affect the way the teachers at the IEP think about you?	Ok, so when you volunteer, you agree to do it because you want to. In research like this, you always have to agree and you did that by signing {points to form}. However, you can always say "I'm done" get up and walk out right? Anytime you want. There is nothing I can do. If you would do that how would your teacher think?

Difference in question wording between expected question and actual question asked

Table 25: Focus group protocol

	Questions	Topic
1.	What kinds of compensation would you want for being part of a research?	Compensation, why participate in research
2.	What is a risk to you?	Risks
3.	What types of benefits would make you want to be part of a research project?	Benefits
4.	Who has access or can see the things that you do in research?	Confidentiality
5.	In research you can always so no or stop being part of a study any time. If you do say no, or stop, how does that affect the way the teachers at the ELC think about you?	Voluntary withdraw
6.	Who should you contact if something happens while you are part of the research?	Seeking assistance
7.	What role does your teacher play in research?	Confidentiality, power dynamics
8.	What will the researcher do with materials collected from you?	Purpose of study, use of material
9.	Which parts of the consent form did you not understand?	Understanding
10.	How much of this form did you actually read?	Amount read
11.	How could consent forms be made easier to understand?	Suggestions

Questions asked during the focus groups and the targeted themes

Overarching themes

Focus groups were initially organized as a means to supplement the data found in the quantitative analysis, especially in terms of investigating if the consent forms were too complicated and which elements of consent were understood by the learners. However, the dynamic nature of the interviews often led to discussions regarding research as a meta-topic, instead of focusing solely on consent forms. While many different topics were discussed throughout the interviews, four macro themes emerged that might help explain findings from the previous two chapters. The themes are (1) Consent forms might not be important to participants, (2) Reasons for taking part in research, (3) Consent form difficulty and participant suggestions, and (4) Confusion over research practices. Each theme will be discussed in a separate section below along with various comments produced by the participants.

Consent forms might not be important to participants

Questions regarding risks were discussed at the beginning of each focus group and the topic was brought up several times throughout each interview. When asked if any risks were inherent in the current study, most participants responded like those in in Excerpt 1, with a simple ‘no’. However, this is not indicative of all participants as can be seen in Excerpt 2, which begins with several participants stating that there are no risks in the study. However, after additional prompting, F4S7 does report that the potential of offensive questions or misuse of recordings might be a considered risk.

Excerpt 1: No risk

07:43	Researcher	So what about this kind of research could you think of anything that would be risky or dangerous for this kind of research?
07:49	F1S1/F1S2	No.
07:51	F1S1	I don’t think so.

Excerpt 2: Limited risks – personal information disclosure

09:50	Researcher	When you do research, there is always risks involved, there is always some sort of danger. Could you think of any kinds of danger in, well first of all I'll ask this, before you look before looking down, did I say there were any risks in this research?
10:07		{multiple no}
10:09	F4S4	There is no risk.
10:09	F4S7	There's no risk.
10:09	Researcher	There's no risk, ok. Could you think of any risks that might happen in this research?
10:17	F4S7	Only if I say any personal information you can use it. But I don't know if you are going to use it.

Excerpts 1 and 2, as well as other examples in the dataset appear to show that participants believed the study to contain limited risks. Further evidence of this perception of a nonchalant attitude toward the consent information and the study, can be seen in Excerpt 3 as well as in Excerpts such as 4-11, and 19C, which will be discussed in detail later. In Excerpt 3, the topic being discussed relates to risks in research. F6S4 outright states that risks are minimal or nonexistent due to the fact that the study is "about English," indicating that while other types of research carry danger, English studies are, or are thought to be, relatively safe. A disregard for risks in SLA or linguistics, or what F6S4 terms English, studies might be indicative of participants viewing risk solely in terms of physical harm.

Excerpt 3: Just English

16:26	Researcher	Can you think of any bad things or risks that might happen in research?
17:07	F6S4	No, just Ph.D. in English not chemicals.
17:28	F6S4	It's about English. {shrugs}

Participant selective reading

Near the end of each focus group, participants were asked to retroactively assess how

much of the current consent form they read prior to signing it. They were then asked to estimate the number of pages a consent form could contain before they would sign without reading it all. The consent form used for the focus group was a single page, less than the average SLA consent form length of 1.8 pages as stated in Chapter 4. Unlike the comprehension task, participants in the focus group were only given one form, the one they signed and that was collected at the beginning of the study. Participants were given a duplicate copy of the consent form to refer back to during the interview. For this study, participants were given the consent form as they walked into the room but were not given a time limit for how long they had to read and sign the form. Participants were not uniform in their estimated percentage read as some claimed to have read the entire form while others only read around 20% of the document.

The lack of reading can be seen in Excerpt 4, which begins with the researcher asking what percentage of the consent form the participants read. While F3S6 states that he read the entire consent form, other students mention that they had read less. The consent form, which can be seen in appendix C was broken into six separate headings and several students claim to have not read the final heading (#6) about IRB contact information. F3S9 states that he has read consent forms in the past and that he does not expect to have any issues in this research, again signaling a view that reading consent forms might not be important. In a similar fashion, F3S2 dismisses the information found in this section by using a mocking tone and saying that the consent form "is always similar. It is confidential blah blah blah," indicating that this participant was somewhat familiar, or felt that he was, with consent forms and that to read them might not be a productive use of time. This group of participants also stated that at two pages they would only read about 45% of the form and 35% at three pages.

Excerpt 4: It is confidential blah blah blah

48:28	Researcher	So did everybody read the form? Out of 100% or I read every single word. What percent did you read of this form when I first gave it to you?
48:34	F3S6	100%
48:35	F3S9	I didn't to read to read the number 6.
48:37	F3S2	Me neither.
48:39	Researcher	You were a bit behind though right? You were the last one in.
48:43	F3S6	I read all.
48:42	F3S9	Yeah but also because I mean, as I told you I have done it before and I never read it and I I think like I am not going to have any problem and I am not going to contact them so.
49:00	F3S7	Actually, don't I didn't read the last part the first time that I did you research here, I same..I am not sure if it is the same or a little similar.
49:10	F3S2	Like the consent is always similar. It is confidential blah blah blah, and you just know the one word and ok I get it.
49:21	Researcher	Yeah some of the things, like part six you have to put in there. You can't really change that at all it has to go in. People say that. Which makes it really hard, because some of these words are not easy to read. You cannot change them into easier English words. Um ok, so out of 100% you read 90-100% of it {general agreement}. What if this were two pages long? Would you still read it?
49:49	F3S4	Maybe 45%
49:50	Researcher	45%
49:50	F3S9	Yes.
49:52	Researcher	What if it were three pages long?
49:52	F3S5	Three pages?
49:56	F3S4	35%
49:56	Researcher	35%? @
49:55	F3S2	Just the {taps page in different places} tops.
49:59	F3S1	That's something interesting because if I saw that you were in a hurry that you wanted to see everyone doing the participating, I would say "ok, just" {pantomimes signing} but if you gave us give me time. You can read first, everybody stays here reading the content. This work. So I will read because I know it is important. Also, so if I know that you are talking about this. {points hard to consent form}
50:24	Researcher	You would have read. Of course you would have read it if you knew. @ @@

The amount of text claimed to be read per document shifted from individual to individual. It is difficult to know exact percentages of the number of students who did not read all of the consent forms, as not all students provided responses to this question. However, of the four lower level learners that did respond in their group, two said that they did not even fully read the one page provided to them for the focus group. Half of the upper level students reported that they read the majority of the form, but many claimed to skip sections or to skim the entire document. In Excerpt 5 a group of upper level students claimed to have read most of the document prior to data collection. In the excerpt, there is discussion that as the length of the document increase towards five pages, that participants would read less and opt to just sign the form largely without reading it. In other groups, participants state that they read between 20-80% of the document, while others claim to have just scanned and signed the form, even at one page in length.

Excerpt 5: How much would you read if...?

47:29	Researcher	So all you mostly read most of this {indicates consent form}. So what if it were two pages long, would you have still read all of it?
		{many no/head shakes}
47:42	Researcher	What percentage would you read if it were two pages long?
47:44	F4S15	Just the risks.
47:48	Researcher	Just the risks?
47:49	F4S15	Focus on the risks and what could be bad.
47:52	F4S3	Benefits and the purpose.
47:53	F4S8	What we will do.
47:56	Researcher	So its still about 60%, so that is most of it.
48:10	Researcher	Yeah? This is hon, you can be completely honest. I mean this is [good to know.
48:17	F4S7	[I mean this is not a big deal. I don't have to be very concerned so I could skip a lot of information. But if it was about medicine I would read all of the papers. And I would ask you for more time. Like can I read it in my home?
48:53	Me	So last one I promise. If it were five pages long would you read any of it

		or would you just sign?
49:02	F4S7	I would just. {pantomimes signing}
49:04	Researcher	Just sign.
49:06	F4S8	Just different paragraph {moves hand over the paper} and then I will {pantomimes flipping through}
49:12	F4S2	Read some of the first sentence maybe skim some of the middle of the .. {agreement}
49:47	F4S3	I would read all but not so carefully. {lots of agreement}

Taken all together the excerpts from this section largely indicate that participants did not feel an overwhelming need to carefully read consent forms. Statements such as those by F4S7 in Excerpt 5, show that participants decided that forms did not contain information necessary to them while F4S7 states "I mean this is not a big deal. I don't have to be very concerned so I could skip a lot of information." This skipping of information might be the cause of the relatively low scores found on the comprehension task in Chapter 5.

Reasons for taking part in research

Two questions were asked in order to ascertain what participants thought about compensation and benefits for being part of research. Various models of research ethics stipulate that research on human participants should strike a balance between benefits and risks. Additionally, it is advised that compensation should be based on the amount of effort required and risks endured during the study. While there has never been an empirical investigation into what sort of compensation ESL participants would want to receive for participation, offering money or extra credit are likely to be the most used options. When directly asked what forms of compensation the participants in the focus group were interested in, the overwhelming answer was in fact first extra credit or money and then the opportunity to practice English. Both answers are present in Excerpt 6, as well as the idea of wanting to help another person with their work.

Excerpt 6: Why participate

02:17	Researcher	So if somebody would come to your class and say I have this awesome project. What would you need them to give you before you would want to come?
04:13	F1S1	Extra credit sometimes, depends on the classes.
04:17	F1S2	I would say like it depending it depends on the research. But basically I wouldn't like look for something material just like you know participation maybe helping.
04:31	F1S1	Improving my English.
04:31	F1S2	Yeah I mean it I a good opportunity to like conversation you know.

Responses in Excerpt 7 show that money and extra credit were the most desired forms of compensation for taking part in a research study. In Excerpt 8, F4S6 also mentions that he wants to help in research so that he can learn something about the process. A similar idea can be seen in Excerpt 6 and in Excerpt 8 where F5S1 is interested in the experience of taking part in research. This was echoed by other students who thought that the novel experience of being a participant was worth an hour of their time.

A final reason that was brought up in various focus groups was the idea that gaining extra practice in English was the most important reason for attending the data collection session. This is suggested by F5S1 and F5S5 in Excerpt 8. This type of knowledge might assist future researchers when planning a research project. Offering participants a bonus hour of conversation might be a good method to prompt student participation in research.

Excerpt 7: I want to help you

03:38	Researcher	What kinds of compensations do you think makes people want to participant in research?
03:39	F4S8, F4S7, F4S3, F4S2	Money {almost in unison}
03:39	Researcher	Money? Ok.
03:42	F4S9	I think extra credit too. {lots of agreement}

03:47	F4S7	Something that you can earn like receive something like money credit to help you.
03:55	Researcher	So that helps you, good.
03:56	F4S6	You help me, I help want to participate.]
04:03	F4S7	[yes
04:05	Researcher	You WANT to participate? Why?
04:07	F4S6	Um because can help me in the future maybe I can learn something with you or with your research. Yeah I think.

Excerpt 8: To practice English

08:08	Researcher	Yeah the compensation for this is you guys get $15. Ok um. So my question is, what kinds of compensation do you want to come and.. So why did you come today?
08:27	F5S5	To do some practice. {F5S1 agrees}
08:31	F5S4	For me, to practice English.
08:33	Researcher	To practice English.
08:48	F5S5/F5S4	Extra credit.
08:50	F5S2	That's important yeah.
08:52	Researcher	Extremely important. Ok um anything else?
09:09	F5S1	During study abroad I want to have and express] experience.
09:12	Researcher	[experience
09:21	F5S5	Experience different experience for uh if we want to do uh research uh research in the future. And uh improve myself with that kind of camera?

Some participants felt that the use of money or extra credit for research was unwarranted. Excerpt 9 is an interesting example where the participants were discussing the question: Is it possible to get too much money for participating in research? F3S8 states that it is never possible to get too much, but is rebuffed by F3S2 who thinks that $50 (a hypothetical amount mentioned earlier) would be too high. The interesting aspect of this exchange can be seen at time 6:27 when F3S5 states that "the problem is people will just think about the money, the amount of money and will forget about the purpose of the research." The same sentiment is stated at 7:26 when

F3S4 points out that money and extra credit will "attract people to participate to the research but it some way to select just people who are looking for a grade or looking for money." The points made in this excerpt are interesting as they indicate a potential problem in ESL research, that money and extra credit might be selective factors for students who may not be perceived as being academically strong.

Excerpt 9: Money and extra credit

05:41	Researcher	Ok, so you guys, the consensus, or a lot of people have said that money is good, that extra credit is good. Is it possible to give too much money?
05:50	F3S9	Is it what?
05:51	Researcher	Is it possible to give too much money?
05:53	F3S8	Money is never too much. @
05:54	Researcher	Never too much. @
05:54	All	@@@
05:59	F3S2	No like if you offer $50 I think it is too much.
06:05	Researcher	Too much? And you wouldn't come?
06:05	F3S6	It's not fair with because you need to pay for all the participants and I think it is uh like too much money]
06:18	F3S2	[N, a lot of people will come but I think it is not necessarily too much.
06:21	F3S9	I would be ashamed by that @
06:27	F3S5	The problem is people will just think about the money the amount of money and will forget about the purpose of the research.
		{lots of agreement}
06:40	F3S7	Extra point is a good idea sometimes. Unless you are forced to come because they need the grade and they don't care about the research more than the money.
06:51	F3S1	One thing about credits is because its optional. Its like here (points to consent form) it says if you don't come its ok if you don't want to participant its ok you not lose grade for that. The reason extra.
07:04	F3S7	Who needs grades and who don't care about the research. People's grades don't have time to come and become research just who's too desperate to come. @@
07:26	F3S4	I think its good uh give money or another grade it's something to attract people to participate to the research but it some way to select just people

who are looking for a grade or are looking for money.

07:40 {Lots of agreement}

Consent form difficulty and participant suggestions

Consent form difficulty

At the end of each focus group, I asked participants to describe which sections of the consent form they found to be difficult to read and what suggestions they might offer to make the documents easier to read for other students. For the most part, participants claimed to find the documents easy to read, which does not match with findings from the comprehension task, nor with the accuracy in which students discussed consent forms during the focus groups. There was a general lack of responses given for these questions which might be caused by fatigue or due to the fact that participants could no longer remember specific issues they had with the document after spending an hour focused on its content.

Of the five focus groups only groups 5 and 6, the two low level groups, reported any section of the consent form difficult to read. In Excerpt 11, F5S5 thought that section five *Privacy and Confidentiality*, was difficult, though he then states that he understood close to 70% of that section and that the "whole page or paper is easy." In a different focus group, F6S1 states that he found the final section, six, to be problematic though does not continue with this train of thought. Section six discusses the role of the IRB and provides contact information for that organization. This section was written by the IRB and was required to be included largely unchanged in the form (research specific contact information was included). Other participants stated that he didn't even read this section. Excerpt 10 shows section six of the focus group consent form detailing IRB and researcher contact information (with emails retracted for the researchers). Participants might skip this information because they do not foresee a need to

contact the IRB if risks are perceived to be non-existent, because they do not understand the role the IRB plays, or simply because it is at the bottom of form and they felt like reading further was unnecessary. Further studies would need to be conducted to find out why this information was deemed unimportant.

Excerpt 10: Contact information from focus group consent form

> If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researcher.
>
> | Main Researcher | Primary Investigator |
> |---|---|
> | Mr. Scott Sterling | Dr. Shawn Loewen |
> | email | email |
>
> If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 408 W. Circle Dr., Room 207, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Excerpt 11: Not that hard

49:01	Researcher	What parts of this form were difficult to understand. So maybe just look back and think part one, there are six parts.
49:38	F5S5	Five.
49:41	Researcher	Five was hard?
49:47	F5S5	Not too much, I understand 70%. Yeah I think the whole page or paper is easy.
50:02	Researcher	Its easy?
50:02	F5S2	I think all is easy not too difficult.

Student suggestions

The final question asked of participants was for them to provide possible suggestions for improving consent forms. Responses to this line of questioning were relatively brief as many

participants were eager to leave or to change the topic to something less academic. Many participants wanted more use of bolding or glossing difficult vocabulary items as they thought that this would make the information more salient. Some thought that using pictures could help reduce confusion. Some students wanted a longer, but simpler form, while others thought that the briefest possible form would be best, regardless of the vocabulary used. Again, many participants claimed that the form was easy to read, and did not offer any suggestions.

Confusion over research practices

One area of confusion was in the vocabulary used on the consent form. At times, participants directly asked for a definition of vocabulary items, such as can be seen in Excerpts 12 and 13. In 12, the word *participant*, the favored term in SLA to refer to someone on whom research is being conducted, was unknown to students, while in Excerpt 13, the participants were unsure of the meaning of *benefit*. Both excerpts show examples of research jargon used on the consent form that was unknown by some participants. This data corroborates the previous findings from Chapter 4 that described the difficulty of the vocabulary used on consent forms according to the New General Service List and the words circled by participants in Chapter 5. All three instances can be seen as triangulating the idea that certain research based vocabulary might be unknown to many participants.

Excerpt 12: What is a participant?

05:37	Researcher	Let me ask another question when you are a participant. Do you know that word participant?
		{several no}
05:38	Researcher	No? Ok, um a participant who is somebody who does something. So right now I am a researcher and you guys are the participants in the research.
06:08	F6S1	It is the same as participate?
0608	Researcher	Exactly, yeah yeah, exactly, it is the noun of that. So participation is an action so a verbish, a participant is the person who participates.

Excerpt 13: What is a benefit?

14:43	F5S4	What does it mean benefit? @@ So benefits we don't understand benefits.
14:55	Researcher	Ok. So a benefit is something that helps you as a person. So, um studying abroad is a benefit because you can learn language. Because you can make friends. Because you can get a better job later. These are all benefits of studying abroad.

A second confusing aspect of research can be seen in participants' understanding, or misunderstanding, of the roles that various players held in the research. Some participants thought that their instructors played no part in the research while others considered the offer of extra credit and time to recruit the participants in class as de facto involvement in the research. Near the end of focus group five, we began to discuss the role that their teacher played in the research process. The participants state that their teacher might give them extra credit but they agree that she won't listen to the tapes. At minute 40:56, F5S5 states that the instructor might ask me about their speaking, a statement that other participants agreed with. Additionally, near the end of the excerpt, F5S5 states that the instructor might take attendance, or ask who came to the research, so that extra credit could be given out. Even after discussing the topic of who can and cannot view their data, and confidentiality of data, these students were still under the assumption that their teacher would be able to track their involvement in the research, at least to the extent that they had come and participated. It is difficult to tell if students felt pressured or coerced into participating in the research, especially if they were under the belief that their instructor would eventually have knowledge of their involvement in the process.

Excerpt 14: How is your teacher involved

40:16	Researcher	So how is your teacher involved, or how is she involved, or what does she do for this research?

40:34	F5S2	Um my teacher.
40:36	Researcher	Your teacher, for this research.
40:44	F5S5	I think it will give us credit.
40:45	Researcher	She might give you credit.
40:48	F5S1	Extra.
40:49	Researcher	Extra credit, uh huh. Does she do anything else in this research?
40:56	F5S5	Maybe ask you about how our speaking {agreement}, maybe how is her student.
41:05	F5S1	How is the research.
		[topic change]
41:46	Researcher	Ok, so your teacher might ask me how you did. What else. Did she help me write the questions is she going to listen to the tapes?
		{several no}
42:04	F5S5	She doesn't.
42:09	Researcher	So her part in the research is just to what, what does she do as part of this research?
42:20	F5S1	She just asks us how is this.
42:25	Researcher	She might ask you how this was, um she helped me to recruit or get you guys to come. She gave me class time
42:36	F5S5	Uh maybe she attendance for this, so if someone is not coming she doesn't give them credit.
42:52	F5S1	I think so.

When discussing the teacher's role in the research, focus group four had stated similar ideas to focus group five, in that the instructor provided time to recruit students and that the data collected was confidential. However about ten minutes prior to this portion of the interview when we were discussing issues of confidentiality, the interaction in Excerpt 15 occurred. The excerpt begins with me asking students to consider a hypothetical research project in which focus groups are used but questions involve the Intensive English program (IEP) they are enrolled in. Many participants express concern over their data being shown to members of the IEP, either teachers or administrators. F4S15 points out "we don't know who's your friend from the IEP

teachers." And "maybe you have a brother or sister and this brother is you don't want your brother fired." Both utterances seem to indicated that participants, even if they understood that I was not an instructor (see Excerpts 19A-C), thought that I might have close ties with the IEP and might share information with them, especially if the information discussed in the focus groups was potentially harmful to the career of my "brother or sister." This sense of collusion between researcher and instructor/administration might leave participants feeling coerced into participation, especially as the power dynamic heavily favors the teacher/researcher (Klitzman, 2013; Perry, 2011; Tarone, 1980). This concern over interactions between researchers and instructors might also result in participants guarding their responses or not providing true opinions on topics, an issue that could adversely affect many research projects. On the one hand, we see that participants are aware of their teacher's non-involvement in the research, but they are not sure to what degree the IEP is connected to the study. Similar trends were found in results from the comprehension task where participants often thought that the IEP was directly involved with the research project, or that their teachers would be able to read their responses and help them improve their English.

Excerpt 15: Who is your friend?

19:58	Researcher	But what if we did the other research, the one that was about the IEP. Would you be concerned then?
20:03		{several yes}
20:05	F4S2	Probably yes.
20:06	Researcher	But they have the same rules.
20:10	F4S7	But the purpose is different.
20:14	F4S15	And we don't know who's your friend from the IEP teachers.
20:20	F4S9	Yeah maybe.
20:20	F4S15	Maybe you have a brother or sister.
20:24	Researcher	True true.

20:26 F4S15 And this brother is you don’t want your brother fired so, maybe.

The next series of excerpts (16-18) discuss the topic of confidentiality. It should be noted that the consent form used for the focus groups does not specifically state who can and cannot see the data. In fact, out of the 20 forms collected and analyzed in Chapter 4, twelve failed to mention who would be able to view data once it was collected. In retrospect, this information was inadvertently left off of the focus group consent form due to an assumption that participants would understand that confidential meant that only researchers could view data. Confidentiality is a topic that is always addressed in initial IRB applications and researchers are usually required to ensure that data is not only secure, but that if it is revealed, either leaked or purposefully used in a study, then it should not be linked to a particular participant. Confidentiality is an important concept for research in the USA, however, it is not clear that research participants have the same understanding of confidentiality as do IRBs or researchers.

In these focus groups, participants were being recorded with a camcorder and an auxiliary audio recorder. When asked who could see the data being recorded the responses varied. For the most part groups correctly identified that I and my adviser would be able to view the recordings, as we were both named on the consent form they signed. Some participants thought that a translator might be brought in to listen to difficult sections or to help identify what was being discussed. This can be seen in Excerpt 16 where participants correctly identified the research team as able to view the data but also postulated that other colleagues might be able to see the data as well. F3S4 mentions that “two people is enough” but continues saying that if I show the typed conversation to “another audience or to the congress” that he would not mind because he would not be present. Other comments, however, show their general disregard for confidentiality

as well.

Except 16: I won't be there

18:35	Researcher	Right, I get to see it but who else can see the tape?
18:40	F3S2	Your partner in research.
18:41	Researcher	Right, my adviser.
18:45	F3S9	Your colleagues.
18:47	F3S7	Maybe someone can watch it. I don't know.
18:49	Researcher	Well I question right. You are all being video taped. Who is going to be able to see this?
18:54	F3S4	I think just two people is enough. But you can show the typed conversation to another audience or to the congress no problems cause I be not appearing there.
19:13		@@@@
19:16	F3S1	For me is fine. I don't see any problem to show this to someone else.
20:13	F3S9	Just if you allow somebody else to see it. Because you possess the video. @

Continuing in the same trend, we can see that in Excerpt 17, F3S2 is not sure if I will be the only person who can access the data. F3S9 mentions that "people who participate" can see the data but it is not clear if this means people in that particular focus group, any focus group participant, or anyone who is working on the research. At the end of this excerpt several people mention that co-workers can see the data but their meaning is never clarified as the focus of the conversation was directed elsewhere. Not fully understanding confidentiality might mean that some participants do not fully express their opinions on research topics out of concern that those opinions might be shared with an instructor or administrator at their IEP.

Excerpt 17: Co-workers

17:06	Researcher	Who can see this information? Who can watch the video or listen to the audio tape?
17:21	F3S2	Only you?

17:23	Researcher	Only me?
17:27	F3S9	People who participate.
17:27	{several people}	Co-workers.

Excerpt 18 shows a curious case that developed during the focus groups. Like several of the other groups, the members start to list off people who can view the data, myself, my adviser, a translator, and the possibility of other students, presumably other PhD students. F5S4 then mentions that he does not think that teachers can view the data and then follows that with "any peoples" which I took to mean, only a small group of people, can see the data. Interestingly, F5S2 then states that he does not care who sees the data since he wants to be famous. He mentioned this at least one other time during the interview, and a comment was also later made about him to the same effect. This line of inquiry was never followed up on, but it would be interesting to see if younger generations view a lack of privacy or anonymity in research as normal compared to older participants, something often remarked upon in regards to social media or other issues of privacy. However, this excerpt is also interesting for the comments that F5S4 makes near the end. Here, he is attempting to make the point that he would care who views the data depending on the type of information presented. In his example, if he speaks ill towards his teacher, then he would want that information to be closely guarded, while if the topic was more banal, then he would be less likely to care. F5S3 appears to realize that some information might be problematic if it is leaked to the wrong individual, but it is not clear what information this participant would care to share and what he would want closely guarded.

Excerpt 18: I want to be famous

26:34	Researcher	Good, ok. So several people can is that ok? Hear and see what you say. Is that ok?

26:42	F5S5	Yeah that's ok.
26:45	F5S4	Any people?
26:49	Researcher	The people you listed. So me, adviser, translator, maybe some students.
26:54	F5S4	Yeah maybe.
26:57	Researcher	You're ok?
26:59	F5S4	Not teachers @@
27:01	Researcher	So teachers can't see. Who else can't see?
27:09	F5S4	Any peoples.
27:11	Researcher	Right so only certain people, right. Very small group?
27:18	F5S2	About me, any people I want to be famous. @
27:22	F5S4	Sometimes this question is very hard. I want this question and I don't want any people to answer to this question for me. Maybe this question easy.
27:34	Researcher	Ok if you have a good answer you don't care?
27:38	F5S4	Uhhh yeah, sometimes the question is very hard. How example how NAME teacher. Is good or is not good. Maybe I want to answer this question and I don't want any people to see it. You and just your adviser. Understand me?
27:58	Researcher	So if the research, ok how can I say this. You don't care who sees it as long as there aren't risks or bad research. If you could get in trouble from what you say you want smaller people to see it. Is that fair? Is that what you mean maybe?
28:28	F5S4	Yes.

In terms of research confusion, Excerpt 19 is a long and detailed excerpt and will be broken into subsections in order to make references to specific sections easier. Excerpt 19a begins with me asking the participants to explain what I am going to do with their data. They correctly identify that I am going to transcribe the video and then watch it later as I will not be able to remember all of the details. However at minute 32:51, F3S1 states that he is not clear what the purpose of the research is, but also that he does not care. F3S2 and F3S1 state that they are not sure what I am evaluating for this study, even though we have been conducting the

interview for over 30 minutes at this point. Participants then note that the consent form does not specify the exact purpose of the focus groups nor does it explain what I will do with the data. Finally, at 34:03 F3S1 states that he does not understand what a focus group is.

Excerpt 19A: What am I going to do with this video?

32:03	Researcher	What am I going to do with the video?
32:07	F3S2	Watch it, evaluate what are you saying.
32:07	F3S8	Watch it evaluate it.
32:10	Researcher	Watch it and evaluate it? Watch it and evaluate it. Maybe What else am I going to do with it or what else might I do with it?
32:20	F3S5	Pay attention to detail because now you are just talking to us and you cannot take notes. So it is important to check what happens what exactly. Yeah.
32:30	F3S7	Approve.
32:30	F3S3	Write what you say.
32:32	Researcher	I am going to type out a transcript. What else?
32:36	F3S4	And have a register of what happened in this day in this section of the research.
32:47	Researcher	Anything else that I might do?
32:50	F3S2	What our behavior?
32:50	Researcher	Watch your behavior.
32:51	F3S1	Yeah, I think it's not clear for me what is the purpose. {lots of agreement}. Personally it is ok, its clear it is a group conversation. I I don't know what you are going to do with this.
33:05	F3S2	What are you evaluating with this research?
		@@@@
33:08	Researcher	Now you're asking the right questions!
		@@@@@@
33:11	F3S1	ask you what is the exact topic we are talking about?
32:20	F3S6	{with dramatic hand movements} Its something like related to this @@
		@@@@@@
33:22	F3S1	Didn't answer, no idea.
33:23	F3S6	"Maybe I am watching you"
33:26	Researcher	So now, now the question what am I doing?

33:30	F3S2	Yeah what?
33:31	F3S9	What are you doing?
33:33	Researcher	What does it say I am doing?
33:34	F3S6	We don't know.
33:36	Researcher	Does it say what I am going to do on here. {points to consent form}
33:37	F3S9	No.
33:37	F3S2	Ohhh
33:38	Researcher	No, so why do you think I am going to watch the tape. Why do you think I am going to transcribe it? Where do these ideas come from? I never said that.
33:49	F3S2	Yeah, you never said that. @@
33:53	Researcher	I never said what I am doing right. Now you all look really worried, like uh-oh.
33:54	F3S6	Maybe with the music and change the video and things like that.
34:03	F3S1	I still don't know about focus groups. {points to consent form title}

Between the two excerpts I spend a little time explaining what a focus group is and then asking why they thought I would treat the data in the way they previously described. Again, there is an attempt to explain what I might do with the research when F3S6 breaks in and asks what my major is, again displaying a lack of understanding about just what the research is based on. F3S2 is under the assumption that I am a teacher, maybe even one at the IEP, of which I was not at the time of the recording nor had been for several years. This is a further indication that participants might not be aware of the backgrounds of researchers nor know that research is not always connected to their coursework. Even when I reveal that I am a linguist, there is not unanimous understanding of what that means. It is difficult to state that these participants were well informed when they did not understand the type of data being collected.

Excerpt 19B: What am I going to do with this video?

34:03	Researcher	Why do you think, like where do these ideas come from that I am just going to do, just going to watch the tape, just transcribe it, and look for

		something.
34:40	F3S6	Make behavior, like you can watch the video and I don't know maybe.]
34:49	F3S7	[describe
34:49	F3S6	Yeah describe our behavior related to this discussion.]
35:54	F3S2	[how many people doing in the research like.
34:59	F3S6	One minute, what's your major? {directed at me}
35	Researcher	Wow, now all these questions are coming out right!]
35:04	F3S2	[he's a teacher, are you a teacher?
35:05	Researcher	I am not a teacher. No.
35:06	F3S2	You're not a teacher??
35:09	Researcher	No.
35:09	F3S6	You are a]
35:10	F3S2	[can I go? @@ {points to door but makes no move to leave} @@@@@@
35:12	Researcher	But you guys you all signed the document right? You have been answering my questions for 40 minutes. Now your like uh-oh. So where do these assumptions come from?
35:23	F3S6	They were really good questions, you're a psychologist?
35:23	Researcher	No no I'm a linguist.
35:25	F3S6	Ok {sigh of relief}
35:30	Researcher	Yes yes yes.
35:28	F3S3	A what?
35:28	Researcher	A linguist, I study languages. And how people learn languages.

Continuing the conversation, F3S9 states that previous knowledge of research told him that the purpose behind the research was supposed to be kept secret. There is some truth to this claim, and most research makes use of minimal deception, or at least not full exposure of the main reason behind the study (Steneck & Bulger, 2007). There is discussion of biasing the data when F3S4 correctly guesses at the purpose of the study, which was actually disclosed during

recruitment and briefly at the start of the focus group. At 37:17 F3S1 states that he was attempting to guess at the purpose behind my seemingly random set of questions. F3S2 then states that she thought that she was the only person to not know the purpose, and presumably didn't want to ask out of embarrassment. This portion of the data shows that even when participants state that they do not have questions about the research, they may just be holding back so as not to appear uninformed.

Excerpt 19C: What am I going to do with this video?

35:32	F3S9	I think most of us have had experience in research. So I am sure that all of us were thinking something in our brain, @@ at the yeah I would not ask you earlier because I thought that you could not tell us the purpose of the research] because it is something that you have to keep in secret because if we knew the purpose maybe it would be like I don't know in English.
36:06	F3S4	[yes
36:18	F3S3	Influence.
36:18	F3S9	Yeah it would influence the results in a bad way. I mean in a way that you didn't want.
36:25	Researcher	We would say bias.
36:26	F3S9	Bias! Yes that is what I was thinking.
36:31	F3S4	My guess is that the focus of the research is about something related to how we interpret the prompt or something like that. Because this prompt doesn't ask us show to us nothing like specific because when you run medical research for example everything that the patient or the guinea pig will should know will be typed here like uh the consequences of this this and this is real purpose we start out with something blah blah blah but here we can't read this.
37:17	F3S1	I agree with you because I was thinking about this. Guessing what the purpose is.{lots of agreement} @@
37:25	F3S2	I thought that it was just me that didn't know!@@ @@@@
37:30	Researcher	So you thought it was just, ok that is interesting.
37:31	F3S2	So everybody knows but but every..
37:34	Researcher	So why didn't you ask? Because I asked at the beginning if anybody had questions. And everybody was like 'no, no no, we're good.' Right.

37:41	F3S1	How we interpret this kind of thing. Because when I am reading things like this forms to fill out fill in fill out I don't know.
37:50	Researcher	Both
37:50	F3S1	Ok so, and are are we really reading or just signing. This is what I think.

Overall, most groups had similar but less exciting discussions on this topic. Most students were able to accurately guess what the purpose of the study was, and how I was going to use the recorded data. How they were able to guess and what they were basing that information on still is not understood, and might be an interesting location for future research..

Summary of findings from the focus group interviews

It is difficult to decide if the participants in the focus group were well informed about the research project that they were taking part in. Participants largely understood that there were no or limited risks in the study; however, the groups largely dismissed risks due to the nature of the research project. Other areas of consent forms such as confidentiality were not as well understood, and were again largely dismissed. Participants were not sure who would be able to view their data nor how the data would actually be used by the researcher. Similar to the risks, participants also viewed a low need for confidentiality in the current research project. A potential area of concern is in the fact that participants were largely unaware of the purpose behind the research project, as well as the type of data being collected (linguistic verses some other form of data). There was also confusion over the role of the research and my connections to the IEP. A more positive finding from the dataset was that, while participants considered earning extra credit or money as preferred compensation, they also viewed participation as an opportunity to practice English, a method of trying a novel experience, and as an altruistic way of helping other people. The findings from the focus group will be integrated into a larger discussion in Chapter

7. Table 26 shows a comparison of the findings from the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the current study.

Table 26: Summary of findings from focus group interviews

Quantitative findings	Qualitative findings
Forms averaged 1.8 pages, and ranged from 1-5.	Participants skimmed or scanned the one page consent form. Would sign document without reading if three or more pages long.
Forms used a lot of technical research language and infrequent vocabulary.	Participants required clarification on terms such as focus group, participant, and benefit. Negotiation of meaning was necessary to discuss various aspects of consent forms.
Consent forms were largely written above the general recommendation of the 8th grade level.	Participants claimed that form was easy to read, however, they showed areas where they were largely uninformed about research practices.
Participants scored poorly on comprehension task. Low level learners answered three out of ten and high level learners/native speakers answered six out of ten question.	Issues such as confidentiality and risks did not appear to be important to learners due to the nature of the current study (English, linguistics). Participants displayed gaps in their understanding of research practices: confidentiality, purpose of study, role of instructor/researcher/IEP. Participants skimmed the document.
Form difficulty did not appear to alter scores on comprehension task.	
	Desired compensation includes extra credit and money. Participation viewed as novel experience, method of gaining English practice, and method of helping others (researcher).

Comparison of results form the quantitative (chapter 5) and qualitative (chapter 6) results.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

Introduction

To date, no empirical research has investigated the difficulty level of consent forms in SLA research nor looked at the outcomes of participants reading the forms. Other branches of science, primarily medical fields, have a detailed history of attempting to produce documents that are both relevant and readable by participants (for examples see; Cardinal, Martin, & Sachs, 1996; LoVerde, Prochazka, & Byyny, 1987; Sand, Eik-Nes, & Loge, 2012). It should be noted that comparing SLA studies to medical research can be problematic for two different reasons. First, many medical studies often exclude second language speakers from participating in research geared towards understanding consent forms in order to reduce the number of conflating variables. Second, SLA research generally deals with investigations into how language is learned or taught and utilizes methodologies that carry a low risk of harm while medical research involves topics related to health and uses methodologies that can pose a large amount of risk to the participants. It is difficult to know how participant behavior in the current study, where risks were negligible, is generalizable to other fields where research carries significantly higher chances of harm and outcomes are drastically more important to the participant's life. In the current research climate, all research involving humans as participants is governed by the same ethical rules (DHHS code 46.116 as an example). Throughout this discussion, I will be primarily drawing references from the medical fields, where research on consent forms is plentiful, and SLA studies, the topic of the current dissertation. I will attempt to draw comparisons between the two whenever possible.

How complex are SLA/ESL consent forms?

The first research question dealt with the difficulty level of current consent forms in second language acquisition research, particularly when it involves the usage of people who speak English as a second language. Studies in the medical field have two overarching concerns for producing comprehensible consent forms, length and the reading grade level of the documents. In terms of length, many medical studies are concerned with minimizing the length of the form overall while still maintaining all necessary information (Beardsley, Jefford, & Mileshkin, 2007; Freer, McIntosh, Teunisse, Anand, & Boyle, 2009; LoVerde et al., 1987). It is difficult to find an average medical consent form length as the documents' sizes change depending on the procedure being conducted. Various sources have put forward averages that range from 11 pages (Beardsley et al., 2007) to 20 pages (Brody, 2001). Such long consent forms are potentially problematic for ESL learners who might not be able to nor want to read long complicated documentation. Indeed, participants in the current study claimed that they would be unlikely to read consent forms that exceed three to five pages in length. Again, it is difficult to draw generalizations from the participants' performance on the current study and assume it would be applicable in medical research, as the risks and complexity of the research is vastly different. Studies that have investigated the comprehension rates of ESL learners enrolled in medical research have found that language proficiency plays a small role (Breese et al, 2007) but do not adequately explain why it is a factor or even how proficiency was measured. Other studies begin with the assumption that non-native speakers will not understand consent forms and so look for alternative means of producing the documents so that potential participants will be informed about the study they are enrolling in (Garcia-Retamero & Dhami, 2011; Quinn et al., 2012). The assumption that non-native speakers will not understand the consent forms is perhaps

misguided as, high level learners in the current study understood consent forms to the same degree as native speakers.

For SLA consent forms, the average length was 1.8 pages with a range between one to five pages. While many studies that discuss the length of the consent forms do so in terms of page number, it should be noted that the average words per consent form was around 585 words. Some forms such as M (the difficult form) had 610 words but was only one page long, the same page count as form C (the easy form) which had 290 words. Researchers have much leeway when it comes to the formatting of their documents and so matters such as text size, margin settings, and spacing are variable. A form such as M, converted to 1 inch margins, double spaced, and 12 point font would increase the page size from one to three pages. It is not clear if condensing or manipulating the consent form so that it is only one page long would result in participants taking more time to read the form or reading it in more detail.

The other main concern for many medical studies is the reading grade level of the document, which is usually reported in terms of a Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (Kincaid, Rogers, & Chissom, 1975). The current study utilized both a Flesch-Kincaid and a SMOG (McLaughlin, 1969) reading level but only discussed the Flesch-Kincaid. According to many sources (Agre & Rapkin, 2003; Paasche-Orlow, Taylor, & Brancati, 2003; Perry, 2011; Schwartz & Appelbaum, 2008) the 8th grade reading level is often considered to be the appropriate level for consent forms to be written at, whether this is the correct level for a non-native speaking population is never discussed. The average reading level of the collected consent forms in the current study was at the 10.82 grade reading level, which was statistically higher than the recommended grade level. The 10.82 grade level was close to the average readability level found by Paasche-Orlow et al. (2003) of IRB template forms of 10.6. Potentially this means that many SLA researchers might

either be adapting IRB forms for their research but leaving them largely unchanged in terms of reading grade level or that the researchers are forced to use specific wording handed down by the IRB. The end result is a document that is rated quite high in terms of reading grade level.

One complicating factor from this study is that form difficulty did not change the outcome of participants on the comprehension task. This might mean that forms written as low as the 7th grade level are still above the ability of the ESL learners in this study, or that forms written at the 10th grade reading level were within the ability of the students. Future replications of this research might want to use forms that are well below the 8th grade level to see if greatly simplifying the form changes comprehension rates.

The final area of measured difficulty was in the vocabulary level used on the consent forms, an area not covered by previous research. The average level of vocabulary coverage on the consent forms according to the New General Service List (NGSL) 1000 to 3000 levels was 84.58% for the 1000 level, 91.96% for the 2000 level, and 94.55% for the 3000 level. The generally assumed requirement for reading comprehension is that 95-98% of the vocabulary should be found at or below the 3000 word level (Schmitt, Cobb, Horst, & Schmitt, 2015). Around half of the consent forms used in this study come close to or just exceed the 95% cut off. When combined, the high level of infrequent vocabulary along with the overall high reading level of many consent forms might contribute significantly to participants not being able to understand the consent documents.

The nature of the vocabulary used on the forms was also problematic. Many of the items found above the 3000 level band might be considered research terminology or research jargon. Examples of frequently used words at the 3000 word band were *consent*, *confidential*, *questionnaire*, and *investigator*. Results from the comprehension task, where participants

highlighted difficult or unknown words, also showed that terms such as *confidentiality*, *investigator*, and *refuse* were all heavily targeted as unknown words by participants. However, it is not just low frequency items that were unknown to learners. The most highlighted term, *participate*, can be found at the 2000 word level. Other terms such as *risk*, *benefit*, and *particular*, all found at the 1000 level band, were also problematic for many participants. The idea that learners are unaware of the meaning behind such often used terms like *risk* and *benefit* is troubling as various forms of research ethics stress that ethical research should be balanced between the two and a major goal of informed consent is to explain how participants will be affected by these concepts. The inability to understand the terminology of consent forms again calls into question how informed the participants were.

One method for simplifying the consent form would be to use more frequent synonyms such as *secret* or *concealed* instead of *confidential* or *agree* instead of *consent.* However, these synonyms do not necessarily have the same meaning as the original, and at times might carry a different implication as well. Participants might question why their data is to be kept secret or wonder if they are engaging in activities that are legal or just. Another possibility would be to gloss the terms, however, this would result in a longer consent form, which the focus group participants agreed would be a negative thing. Other methods have been attempted from using pictures (Garcia-Retamero & Dhami, 2011) to using multimedia (Quinn et al., 2012) all with varied outcomes. A multimedia presentation has the added benefit of being rehearsed and polished prior to showing it to participants. Picture descriptions might include items that visually show participants what they will be asked to do during the study; however, it is difficult to imagine how one would show a lack of risk in picture form. Using pictures or other media such as video to explain informed consent might be applicable to IEP students but needs to be tested

to see if those types of methods would produce better outcomes than the current written forms.

The findings from this research question should be viewed as an initial starting ground for the comparison of consent forms in SLA research. Forms in ESL research are typically shorter than what is found in the medical field, which is to be expected given the disparity in the risks and concerns of the research. On the other hand, the reading grade level of SLA forms is actually quite high for the target audience. Causes for this elevated level might be the fact that no agreed upon reading level has been established in SLA research traditions, while documents written for medical research are often required to be written at the 8th grade level by local IRBs. It is not clear whether or not the requirement in the medical field works, as tests of comprehension typically still result in low scores. The vocabulary used on the forms could also be contributing to the difficulty level of the forms. Only around half of the collected consent forms met the lowest recommended level of 95% vocabulary coverage at the 3000 level band of the NGSL for learners to be able to understand the document. The amount of infrequent vocabulary items might have made it difficult for language learners to understand the document as they read. However, as discussed earlier it is not clear how to reduce this high level of infrequent vocabulary as the research jargon used on these forms is difficult to replace and at times is required by IRBs.

Three explanations for the high reading grade level and vocabulary usage seem appropriate for the SLA context. Both the Flesch-Kincaid and the SMOG compute complexity in terms of word length; syllable count per sentence in the Flesch-Kincaid, and polysyllabic word count per sentence in the SMOG. If researchers are interested in maintaining a low page count for their consent forms, then they might be inclined to use longer or more technical words, a finding in line with Sand, Eik-Nes, and Loge (2012) who found that the majority of consent

forms used technical medical vocabulary without explaining it to the reader. As an example, the word *confidential* might be used instead of *data not shared with others,* using the longer word would result in an increased reading level while using the phrase would result in a longer consent form. A second reason could be that reading grade levels as measured by the Flesch-Kincaid are not important to SLA researchers, who might use intuition of ESL learners as methods of making the documents easy to understand. It is also possible that SLA researchers are not aware of such measures as the Flesch-Kincaid or know how to calculate the scores and thus do not produce documents that are within the prescribed levels. The final reason could be that SLA researchers are writing consent forms with the goal of obtaining IRB approval and are not as concerned with how easy the document is to read for ESL learners. Empirical investigations would need to be conducted to see which, if any, of these explanations is contributing to the high reading level.

How well did participants internalize consent information?

The second research question dealt with the comprehension of consent forms by ESL learners. In the current study, participants read and signed either a hard or easy consent form, completing all steps required to be enrolled in a research study. They then took a comprehension task based on the DICCT (Miller et al., 1996) in order to gauge how much of the form was internalized by the learner. Results of the task revealed that participants scored relatively poorly overall, indicating that they did not have a firm grasp on the details listed in the consent form. As will be discussed throughout this discussion chapter, it appears that the most likely reason for this performance was the lack of careful reading, evidence of which can be found in the focus group data where many participants admitted to skimming the document before signing as well as their general disregard for the content of the consent forms.

Other studies that have measured the rate of comprehension of adults after reading

consent forms largely agree with the findings from the comprehension task. Again, it should be noted that direct comparisons between studies is difficult as the topic and field of study (i.e. medical or clinical) and the task used to measure the comprehension change. However, studies such as Breese et al. (2007) found that respondents answered roughly 62% of questions correct on the task, similar to the performance of high level ESL learners and native speakers in this study. Breese et al. also found that having a higher education level (college compared to less than high school) and having English as a first language (compared to Spanish or Vietnamese) correlated to having a higher comprehension score. The Breese et al. study failed to independently assess English proficiency, as the only measure of proficiency was the stated ability to read. It is not possible to tell how much of an influence proficiency might have had in this study, only that non-native speakers performed worse on the task when compared to native speakers. Stunkel et al., (2010) showed slightly higher accuracy rates of roughly 73% correct and again found that education level played at least a small roll with higher education being associated with higher comprehension rates. The Stunkel et al. study did not include ESL learners as participants. Taken together, these studies indicate that participants internalize some information about the consent form but only responded correctly to roughly 60-70% of questions on comprehension tasks, making it difficult to tell if they are truly informed about the study.

In the current study, low level learners tended to respond to three to four questions accurately, though around 20% answered zero questions correctly, while both high level learners and native speakers answered six to seven questions correctly. The original DICCT was used as a tool to evaluate the comprehension of participants prior to enrolling them into a study. No cut off score was established and indeed it is not clear if or at what number a cut score should be established. It is unreasonable to think that every person who reads a consent form will

understand 100% of the information and so it might be expected that missing one or two questions would be the norm. It is also not clear that all 10 questions should carry equal weight in their importance. A lack of understanding potential risks (Q3) or the voluntary nature of research (Q7 and Q8) may be more problematic than not understanding alternative means of gaining extra credit (Q5), though participants might be most interested in learning about their compensation for participation. Nevertheless, by missing three or more questions, participants are by default beginning to show gaps in understanding important consent information. If we consider missing two or fewer questions as being well informed of the consent process, then around 45% of the native speakers, 30% of the high level learners, and only 7% of the low level learners meet this criteria. A different way of looking at this information would be to see which two questions were answered least frequently per group. The native speakers showed issues relating to questions five (alternative means of extra credit) and six (researcher contact information), for high level learners questions nine (confidentiality) and six (researcher contact information), and for low level learners questions nine (confidentiality) and five (alternative means) were the most problematic. Both ESL groups displayed difficulty remembering information regarding confidentiality, which was also evident in the focus group interviews. Assuming that answering eight out of ten questions correctly on the comprehension task makes one informed, only 27% of the participants in this data could be said to be well informed about the research project that they had just enrolled themselves into. This number drops to only 9% if we assume a need to accurately answer nine questions, and 2% for 100% accuracy. The two forms used in the current study then appear to have been problematic for all participants regardless of proficiency.

The results from the difficulty of ESL consent form analysis showed that many of the

documents are fairly difficult to read. It was hoped that learners who were presented an easy form compared to a more difficult form would be able to score better on the comprehension task. Results from the current study align with Stunkel et al., (2010), who found no correlation between participants' comprehension of the form type they read. Young and Hooker (1990) did find statistical difference in comprehension between a difficult and easy form, however, their forms ranged from the 6th grade for the easy form to the 16th grade level for the hard form. One might want to question using such a high reading level as the difficult form, as the 16th grade level requires a college if not post-college level of education and would probably fall outside of the range of expectation for most native English speakers to understand. However, six of the ESL consent forms collected for this study were rated at above the 11th grade level, with one being rated at the 13.6th grade level indicating that forms as high as the 16th grade level are potentially being used in SLA studies.

Returning to the results of this study, the 7.45 to 10.45 grade level range used for the easy and hard form did not result in a difference in the comprehension scores. There are several ways of interpreting this data. First, it might be the case that both forms were within the reading ability of the participants causing a ceiling effect. Alternatively the forms might have been too difficult for both groups resulting in a performance that was lower than expected. Again the main reason for the low scores on the task appear to have more to do with the general apathy that participants had towards the forms than it did with the difficulty of the language itself. While taking the task, it was obvious that some participants were not carefully reading the forms prior to signing it, an observation confirmed by many participants in the focus groups admitting to skimming the form.

As has been alluded to in this discussion chapter, there was a statistically significant difference between the performance of the three groups on the comprehension task. Native

speakers and high level proficiency learners had statistically similar results on the comprehension task, and both groups outperformed the low level learners. In terms of pedagogical outcomes, this is very promising. The general goal of an IEP is to produce students who can interact with materials to the same degree that native speakers can and so will be able to do well in normal university courses. The negative side of this finding is in relation to research ethics, where the goal of the consent form is to produce readers who understand the consent information and the research project that they are enrolling in to. In this light, the desire of researchers would be that all three groups would perform highly on this task, indicating that they have internalized all or most information on the consent form. The fact that the forms are better suited for higher level ESL students has potential ramifications for other research. Most studies of consent form comprehension exclude second language learners in order to reduce the number of conflating variables in the dataset. Studies that do include ESL participants such as Breese et al. (2007) do not differentiate between proficiency levels. The only benchmark used for participation in Breese et al. was the ability to read in English. It is probably unrealistic to expect researchers from other branches of science, especially those who are not second language experts, to understand language proficiency or how to measure it. The same conditions might also be applied to IRB members. Even in the Federal guidelines put out by the Department of Health and Human Services and other branches of research oversight have little to say about ESL learners. Non-native English speakers are little discussed in other research projects but when they are, they tend to be organized into a single monolithic group. If high level learners are able to comprehend consent information at least as well as native speakers, then their exclusion from research on linguistic merit alone is unwarranted. However, this data should force IRBs to evaluate consent forms that are to be used with ESL learners as being based on the proficiency

level of the target participants instead of viewing ESL as a monolithic group.

How do participants view consent forms?

The third research question asked in this study centered around the beliefs and opinions of ESL participants in regards to both research and the consent process. The focus groups were designed to produce evidence that would complement the observations found in the comprehension task. Focus group participants appeared to dismiss the importance of consent forms, especially in terms of risks and confidentiality and openly discussed skimming the consent form or skipping entire sections that they deemed unimportant to read. The lack of importance placed on the consent forms was potentially the major reason that participants performed poorly on the comprehension task. If the participants did not see the value in closely reading the document then it would be unlikely that they would be able to internalize much of the information contained within the text.

Focus groups have been conducted on the topic of informed consent with ESL learners in the past. Stead et al. (2005) discussed various topics related to medical consent and found that participants had difficulty understanding topics such as placebo, randomization, and double-blind studies. Participants in the current study also displayed issues with understanding various vocabulary items with terms such as *participant* and *benefit* being discussed in Chapter 6. Chapters 4 and 5 also showed areas of highly infrequent vocabulary being used, especially in regards to research terminology. Barata et al. (2006) conducted focus groups with Canadian immigrants from Latin America and discussed topics related to the value of trust placed onto researchers and the desire to be well informed about medical research. Trust was evident in the current study as participants overwhelmingly were unclear about the purpose of the research or use of data, but still decided to stay and participate. It is unclear from the current focus groups

how well informed the participants wanted to be about the research they were partaking in, but judging from their lack of reading the consent document, it might have been little.

Buccini et al. (2009) set out to create a definition for the comprehension of informed consent. Summarizing their definition, comprehension of informed consent should involve (1) integrating current participant knowledge with study specific material, (2) #1 should occur at the same time as a participant decides to partake in research, and (3) consent forms should contain information deemed pertinent by local, national, or international organizations. What is not clear from the definition is what kinds of information participants are expected to know about science or research prior to reading a consent form. The participants in the focus groups were asked how the data being recorded would be used later and guessed that the data would be transcribed and used as notes by the researcher. While the participants were accurate in their guesses, this did not have to be the case. For example, the recordings could have been used to form a corpus or developed into vignettes for other researchers to read and rate. The consent form they signed, and my own explanation of it, did not specify how the data would be used or how it might be shared at a later date. Participants were unable to express why they believed that data would be used in the way they described. Their beliefs about how research is conducted might be based on preconceived notions of what science is or on educated guesses. Several focus groups displayed their lack of understanding the research project as can be seen excerpts 19A-C. In these excerpts participants question not only the usage of the data, but they begin to question what exactly a focus group is, and who I was as a researcher. While some participants thought that I was a teacher at their IEP, others were confused over what exactly a linguist is. It does not seem accurate to state the participants could be truly informed about a study when they were unsure what type of data was being collected (linguistic verse psychological) even after 40 minutes of

interview time. Most participants are not trained scientists and so expecting them to have a detailed understanding of how the consent process or other areas of research work is unrealistic. It is also unrealistic for researchers to understand how much participants know about science prior to enrolling them into a study. Thus while integrating the participants existent knowledge with the information on the consent form is an admirable goal, it does not seem like an obtainable one.

Another issue in determining whether or not the participants were really informed about the research involves the idea of coercion. Participants are supposed to be able to freely elect to join research or not, without incurring any type of penalty. However, when students are recruited for participation into a research study from a classroom there is a chance that they will feel pressured to participate (Leentjens & Levenson, 2013). Participants in the focus groups were under the impression that I was either a teacher at their IEP or that I was in close contact with their teachers, neither of which were true. However, the belief that I was tightly connected to their IEP might have impacted their desire to partake in the research. Some participants believed that I would report back to their instructor so that they could earn extra credit or because the instructor might be curious about my impression of the students. On the comprehension task, questions eight and nine discussed topics related to refusing to participate in research and how refusing to take part in research might affect the IEP's view of them as students. Question nine was the least accurate question for both ESL groups but was correctly answered by 63% of native speakers. Again this appears to shed light on how well informed the participants truly were in both the comprehension task and in the focus groups as this material was covered on all consent forms.

In discussing the benefits and compensation provided to students in the focus groups, the

conversation often shifted to the topic of what participants viewed as important for their participation in the research. Ideally, people would take part in research out of feelings of altruism, but in reality there is usually a need to compensate the participants for their time (Klitzman, 2013). Money and extra credit were always mentioned as desired compensation by the participants in the focus groups. However, some did express concern over using extra credit as it would attract students who needed it, in other words academically challenged students. Beyond extra credit and money, several participants envisioned participation in research as a novel experience that they were able to do while abroad or as an opportunity to practice English with a native speaker of the language. The idea of using research as experience and opportunity are rarely if ever discussed in the literature as a potential compensation for being involved in research. In Ortega's (2005) discussion of an ethical lens for SLA research, she postulated that ethical work should be "judged by its social utility" (p.430). However, this and most views of research ethics do not take into consideration how participants feel about donating their time, effort, or language to research. If research projects are seen as valuable experiences for ESL learners, then this alone might justify the existence of research that has little social utility outside of the realm of theoretical or applied linguistics.

Limitations

Like all research projects, the current dissertation had limitations that were at times outside of the control of the researcher and other times were choices that were forced to be made. The overall number of consent forms (n=20) collected for this study is relatively small, especially when compared to the vast amount of research published every year. The aim of this portion of the data collection was to access the difficulty level of consent forms and it was decided that the best method for doing this would be to use consent forms that were meant for a

large data collection session such as in a classroom or a language lab. This type of research typically would not allow for participants to ask many questions, leading the consent form to contain most if not all pertinent information for the research. Additionally, the stipulation that forms could not be translated into the various L1s of the participants was also a limiting factor as several researchers claimed to translate all of their forms. When contacted, many researchers did not have consent forms that matched the selection criteria or if they did, had lost the material. While many dissertations did have consent forms attached to them, there was very little description of the consent process written in the dissertation. Finding 20 appropriate consent forms was at times a challenge and in future research, it would be advised to lower the restrictions for inclusion of the consent forms into the dataset, potentially only requiring that the form was approved by an IRB and used in an ESL study. Broader selection criteria would also allow for greater generalization into various other findings.

Asking participants to retroactively explain how much they understood of the form after reading it (the comprehension task), forces participants to remember details that they had just read, potentially causing a conflation between memory and comprehension. It is possible that participants were able to read and understand the consent form prior to signing it, but then were not able to recall the information they had just read. The current study views comprehension not only as the ability to understand the consent form while reading but also as the ability to internalize the information (Buccini et al., 2009). Thus participants' ability, or lack of, to reproduce information on the comprehension task appears to show issues relating to the internalization the content of the consent forms. Even if the comprehension task is viewed only as one of memory, then the overarching results would be that participants cannot remember basic information about the research project moments after signing the document, indicating a

potential flaw in the consent process.

Two real consent forms were selected for use as research material in the current study. Real consent forms were used to provide ecological validity, as the forms were originally designed for ESL learners and were approved by real IRBs. Creating new consent forms or augmenting a consent form to either make it more difficult or easier to read might result in documents that felt artificial or contained wording that appeared odd or out of place. The two forms used as research material for the current study represented different research projects written by different authors and so contained elements that differed beyond length, reading grade level, and vocabulary coverage, which were the primary indicators of difficulty in the current study. Other differences include formatting, stylistic choices, and topic or purpose of the study. However, all consent forms are supposed to cover similar materials (those found in code 46.116) and so the majority of the intended answers on the comprehension task were the same regardless of which form was read. It is possible that the qualitative differences between the two forms account for why no difference was found between the easy and hard form and should be incorporated into any future replications of the current study.

In the focus groups, the difference in participation numbers across groups was inconsistent. Ten people signed up for each data collection session, but at times 11 or only two people came. Ten or eleven people in a focus group is quite a large number of people and also resulted in all participants speaking less. In general, some participants seemed more comfortable with the focus group design and monopolized time, while other participants were more inclined to only produce two or three sentences worth of dialog. This lack of talk time resulted in difficulties finding patterns in the participants' responses and also allowed a few students to contribute more input in the final product. The goal of a focus group is to leverage the co-

construction of the discussion and thus it is difficult to provide equal participation time to all. The interactive nature of focus groups provides interesting insights into the participants' worldview, future researchers should limit the number to a manageable size in order to allow all participants better access to speaking time.

The participants in the focus groups might not be representative of populations at many IEPs as most of the upper level students were Brazilian, and no Chinese speakers participated at all. It is not clear why the Chinese population at the IEP did not chose to participate in the focus group sessions, even after many had originally agreed to do so. Chinese students currently constitute a large proportion of many IEP populations, and their lack of involvement in the current study was disheartening. Potentially, the use of money (15 dollars) as compensation for the current research project was not strong enough to entice participation. Future research might do well to make use of Theme 2 from the focus groups and offer participants extra practice time or free conversation hours for participating as compensation.

Implications

Research based implications for this study include the idea that the current model of informed consent in ESL research might not be appropriate for the target audience. The idea that a language learner will be able to or will want to read a form at the beginning of a research project and understand the implications for agreeing to be part of a research project are questionable at best. From this research it is not clear if the forms were too difficult to read or if the participants did not pay particular attention to the details. Regardless, the fact remains that participants volunteered and consented to take part in a research project without full understanding of it. Alternative means of increasing comprehension of consent should be tested. Possible methods might be to include the usage of bolding, bulleted lists, or other formatting

properties. Additionally, it might be possible to use IEP course time to inform learners about research and signing documents. IEP students are often the target of research, so spending class time discussing the various issues might be a beneficial use of time. Lessons could also include topics such as asking for assistance while reading a form or asking for more time, topics that could be used in day-to-day life as well as in research.

From a research perspective, there are things that could be done in order to help ensure that participants truly understand what they are registering themselves for. One solution might be to have researchers create or adapt a version of the comprehension task used in this study. Participants could orally provide responses and the investigator could correct any mistakes or fill in any gaps in the information. This should ease the burden of comprehension on the part of the participant while they are reading the form and simultaneously increase their understanding of the research process as a whole.

Another idea that has been used in the medical field is to provide a consent flyer (Klitzman, 2013). Here, the participants would be provided with a document that is not necessarily written in prose format but instead bullet points. Each bullet point would be used to highlight certain segments of consent and only include the most important information. The medical flyers are typically shorter, though potentially longer than current SLA consent forms, and the information is made easier to find by using textual enhancements.

Another solution that might be possible for some research projects would be to send a consent form to the participant prior to their arrival. If the investigator goes to a classroom to recruit students, then he or she would be able to hand the forms out early. Emailing the document might also be a useful way to communicate early with the participants. There would be no guarantee that participants would read the forms ahead of time but those who would want to read

them would have the option, which might be beneficial to lower level learners.

Finally, even though the difficulties of translation were discussed in Chapter 1, some researchers might still find the activity desirable. In order to ensure that a translated consent form contains all essential elements of the original document, the research might want to have the form translated back from the L1 of the participants into the original English. The researcher could then reread the document and verify that all elements still carry the same meaning in either the translated or original document. Researchers might also want to work closely with translators and discuss the project in detail, allowing the translator to have a stronger understanding of the core concepts of research instead of having him or her simply translate the form from one language to the next. Finally, researchers might want to offer both the original and the translated consent form to the participant so that he or she will be able to read both and potentially understand the project better.

Future research

The general lack of non-personal meta-reflection aimed at research ethics in the SLA literature allows for many future areas of growth. Possible gaps that could be exploited by future researchers includes areas such as investigations into how ESL researchers' beliefs about research ethics affect the way they write consent documentation or carry out research projects. Understanding the beliefs and values of SLA scholars could also help to develop better training materials. One belief in particular that is worthy of exploration is to see what opinions SLA researchers have about consent forms. Are they writing the documents with the ESL learner in mind or are they just attempting to have a box check marked by the IRB during the approval process? Anecdotal evidence and general rules of thumb used by SLA researchers need to be examined to test their validity. Measures should be taken that ensure that these untested ideas are

in fact beneficial to ESL learners. Ideas such as the maximum reading level, length of documentation, and types of vocabulary used all need to be verified using empirical means instead of intuition.

Another area of future research would be to expand upon the analyses used in this research. One expansion would be to include more examples of consent forms in the complexity analysis. Using more forms would allow for a better understanding of how various researchers produce forms.Also, looking at measures such as the formatting, stylistic choices of the author, sentence transitions, or other qualitative measures might allow for a better understanding of form difficulty than simple quantitative measures such as SMOG or Flesch-Kincaid scores.

Finally, more focus groups could be used to expand upon our current knowledge of how ESL learners view research. Possible topics include; better scenarios so that discussion could range beyond the current study topic and into hypothetical studies, questions relating to the role of the researcher and research to IEPs, or questions targeting the beliefs and abilities of ESL participants towards reading consent documents. Additionally, more variety in the population pool would be beneficial as it would allow for more voices to be heard.

Conclusion

This dissertation found that consent forms used for ESL studies were written beyond minimal recommendations in terms of reading level and vocabulary usage. A comprehension task revealed that many participants agree to take part in research but are largely uninformed about the process as a whole. Taken together these two findings show that consent forms are not achieving their desired goal of producing participants who are adequately informed in terms of research processes to make a decision on whether or not participating in a study is actually in their best interest. Focus group interviews highlighted participants' lack of completely reading

the forms and their general dismissal of the importance of topics such as confidentiality or risks.

Research that is conducted ethically is vitally important to any branch of science and SLA is no different. For many years, informed consent forms have received little discussion in the SLA literature and largely lacked any empirical investigation into their usage or design. This research project is only the first step towards improving the current methods used to obtain informed consent in SLA research, one that I would like to continue into the future.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Words on collected consent forms at 4000+ word level

Table 27: Collected consent form vocabulary at 4000+ word level band

Word	Count	Word	Count	Word	Count
English	46	conference	4	aptitude	2
consent	33	convenient	4	compliance	2
ESL	25	discomfort	4	comprehension	2
confidential	24	IRB	4	coursework	2
questionnaire	24	literate	4	delete	2
audio	23	proficiency	4	demographic	2
investigator	23	withdrawal	4	dissemination	2
transcribe	14	ascertain	3	eligible	2
classroom	13	aspect	3	fieldnotes	2
publish	13	authorize	3	freely	2
pseudonym	11	behalf	3	lab	2
semester	11	cabinet	3	notify	2
obtain	10	candidate	3	partial	2
oversee	8	certify	3	similarity	2
password	8	doctoral	3	spontaneous	2
completion	7	duration	3	subpoena	2
fax	7	foresee	3	supervisor	2
instructor	7	informal	3	tailor	2
learner	7	phonemic	3	tutorial	2
oral	7	scenario	3	willingness	2
anonymous	6	strictly	3	anticipated	2
assignment	6	vocabulary	3	adverse	2
discontinue	6	unrelated	3	advisor	2
dissertation	6	identification	3	accordance	1
minimal	6	legally	3	accuracy	1
pragmatic	6	accent	2	aloud	1
signature	6	administer	2	analgesic	1
Allowable	5	advancement	2	anesthesia	1
compensate	5	adverse	2	anthropologist	1
disclose	5	America	2	assurance	1
privacy	5	appendix	2	bonus	1
additional	4	apprehension	2	calendar	1
campus	1	illustrative	1		
cease	1	integrity	1		
cellar	1	intermediate	1		
chancellor	1	leisure	1		
clip	1	lieu	1		
closure	1	matriculate	1		
competent	1	microphone	1		
convey	1	neutral	1		
coordinator	1	notebook	1		
curriculum	1	objection	1		

Table 27 (cont'd)

developmental	1	pencil	1		
dialect	1	pertain	1		
dictation	1	photocopy	1		
discern	1	placement	1		
discourse	1	practitioner	1		
discretion	1	preconceive	1		
discrimination	1	prejudice	1		
documentation	1	punishment	1		
drawer	1	qualitative	1		
empower	1	recycle	1		
entail	1	regulatory	1		
erase	1	relational	1		
eventual	1	script	1		
faculty	1	shred	1		
familiarize	1	skip	1		
feedback	1	souvenir	1		
fixation	1	syllabus	1		
fluency	1	undergraduate	1		
foundational	1	verbal	1		
header	1	violate	1		
hereby	1				
humanity	1				

All vocabulary items found at or above the 4000 level band of the NGSL

APPENDIX B

Transcript coding scheme

Table 28: Coding scheme for focus group interviews

Symbol	Meaning
@	Laughter
@@	Two beats of laughter
@@@	Long sustained laughter
{ }	Meta-information about interaction
[	Interrupts speaker
]	Ends interruption

Coding used in transcripts

APPENDIX C

Study materials

Hard form

Read the following consent form and check the box at the end. While you are reading, please **UNDERLINE** any words you do not know. Please **CIRCLE** any sections that do not make sense to you. Once you have finished please raise your hand.

Project Name: Factors Predicting the Understanding of Play by Adult ESL Learners

John Smith phone: 555-333-1111 email: smith@msu.edu

Introduction and Explanation of the Study: You are invited to participate in this research study. This study evaluates students' knowledge of English humor. If you volunteer to participate, you will first fill out a language background questionnaire and take a short test on the computer. Next you will be shown several situations with incomplete dialogs. You will be asked to select a funny response that completes the dialog. This project is self-paced. It is expected to take around 60 minutes.

Risks and Benefits: There are no known risks connected with participation in this study. Your language abilities may benefit from this study in that you may gain a clearer understanding of your knowledge of English humor. Your language reading may benefit from the extra reading practice. You might also laugh which is always a good thing!

Confidentiality: Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. This means that all information collected will be kept secret and will only be used for research purposes. The researcher will never use your name or any information that identifies you. Instead you will be given an ID number (unrelated to any official ID# you may have) to identify your data. Whenever data from this study is published, your name will not be used. All data collected will be kept in a locked cabinet at MSU for at least three years after the project closes. Electronic data will be kept on the investigator's password protected computer; however, no participant names will be stored on the computer. All data will be collected by the investigator listed on this application. Only the researcher will see and use the data, but the Institutional Review Board (IRB) can also see the data.

Compensation: You will receive extra credit in your class for completing this study. If you do not want to do the study, you can still get extra credit. You can ask your teacher about this.

Your participation: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary which means that you choose to participate. You may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to answer certain questions or discontinue your participation at any time without consequence. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision to participate will in no way affect your course grade.

Researcher's contact information
If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part

of it, or to report an injury, please contact the investigators (John Smith, Second Language Studies, Suite 1 UPLA Building, East Lansing, MI 48824; e-mail: smith@msu.edu; phone: 555-333-1111.

IRB's contact information
If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Subject's consent
Check this box if you have read this consent form and understand what it says ☐

Easy form

Read the following consent form and check the box at the end. While you are reading, please **UNDERLINE** any words you do not know. Please **CIRCLE** any sections that do not make sense to you. Once you have finished please raise your hand.

Research Information

We are asking you to participate in a research project.

Purpose of research: The goal of this research is to determine whether there is a particular way that second language learners acquire English.

Age limit: You must be over 18 to participate in this research.

What you will do: First, you will have a discussion in English and play some language games. Then you will sit at a computer. You will read sentences in English and answer questions about the sentences (true or false). Your performance in this study is private. We will not publish your name. This will take 60 minutes.

Compensation: You will receive extra credit in your class for completing this study. If you do not want to do the study, you can still get extra credit. You can ask your teacher about this.

Risks and benefits: There are no risks to this study. You will get free practice in English and get to have fun playing games.

Confidentiality: No one will know if you take part in this study. I will not share your information with anyone. Your name will not be used.

Your rights to participate, say no, or withdraw: Participation in this study is voluntary; you can say no. You can also change your mind and decide not to do it without any problem. If you don't want your test used for the study, your decision will not affect your grades, your classes, or anything else at Michigan State University or any other place. You can also decide not to answer any particular question without any problem.

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by completing the questionnaire and reading the English sentences.

Contact information for questions and concerns: If you have any questions about this study, please contact the researcher (John Smith, PhD, Assistant Professor- Second Language Studies, B-10 Wells Hall, Tel: 555-333-1111, smith@msu edu).

You can also contact the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at

517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msuedu or regular mail at 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824. You do not have to give your name to do this.

Subject's consent
Check this box if you have read this consent form and understand what it says. ☐

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

ID #_____

Please fill out the following background information about yourself.

1. What is your current age? _____
2. Gender: ☐Male ☐Female
3. What is your current ELC level?

   ☐Level 1 ☐Level 2 ☐Level 3 ☐Level 4 ☐ EAP ☐ I am not in the ELC
4. What is your home country?_____
5. I have studied English for: (make your best guess)
   _____ year(s) before high school
   _____ year(s) in high school
   _____ year(s) in college (not MSU)
   _____ year(s) in a country where English is spoken (do not include this trip)
6. I have been in the USA for _____ months (make your best guess)
7. What is your native language?_____
8. Have you participated in a research project before? ☐Yes ☐No
   a) Did you participate in research in the USA? ☐Yes ☐No
   b) Could you explain the research?

Vocabulary levels test

Each sentence below has a word that is missing the last several letters. Your job is to try and fill in the rest of the word by writing the missing letters in the blank.

Example: *My friend went to the store yes*_____ . You should write *terday* in the blank (yesterday).
*Have you seen the new mo*_____ *at the cinema?*

---

1. I'm glad we had this opp_____ to talk.
2. There are a doz_____ eggs in the basket.
3. Every working person must pay income t_____ .
4. The pirates buried the trea_____ on a desert island.
5. Her beauty and ch_____ had a powerful effect on men.
6. La_____ of rain led to a shortage of water in the city.
7. He takes cr_____ and sugar in his coffee.
8. The rich man died and left all his we_____ to his son.
9. Pup_____ must hand in their papers by the end of the week.
10. This sweater is too tight. It needs to be stret_____ .
11. Ann intro_____ her boyfriend to her mother.
12. Teenagers often adm_____ and worship pop singers.
13. If you blow up that balloon any more it will bu_____ .
14. In order to be accepted into the university, he had to impr_____ his grades.
15. The telegram was deli_____ two hours after it had been sent.
16. The differences were so sl_____ that they went unnoticed.
17. The dress you're wearing is lov_____ .
18. He wasn't very popu_____ when he was a teenager, but he has many friends now.

19. He has a successful car_____ as a lawyer.

20. The thieves threw ac_____ in his face and made him blind.

21. To improve the country's economy, the government decided on economic ref_____ .

22. She wore a beautiful green go_____ to the ball.

23. The government tried to protect the country's industry by reducing the imp_____ of cheap goods.

24. The children's games were amusing at first, but finally got on the parents' ner_____ .

25. The lawyer gave some wise coun_____ to his client.

26. Many people in England mow the la_____ of their houses on Sunday morning.

27. The farmer sells the eggs that his he_____ lays.

28. Sudden noises at night sca_____ me a lot.

29. France was proc_____ a republic in the 18th century.

30. Many people are inj_____ in road accidents every year.

31. Suddenly he was thru_____ into the dark room.

32. He perc_____ a light at the end of the tunnel.

33. Children are not independent. They are att_____ to their parents.

34. She showed off her sle_____ figure in a long narrow dress.

35. She has been changing partners often because she cannot have a sta_____ relationship with one person.

36. You must wear a bathing suit on a public beach. You're not allowed to bath na_____.

Comprehension task

Use the information you just read in the consent form and answer the following questions. If you think the **answer was not** on the consent form please write **NOT ON FORM**. If you don't know an answer, you can either guess or leave the question blank.

---

1. What is the researcher trying to learn from this study?
2. How long will it take you to finish this study?
3. What risks (bad things) are there in this study?
4. What benefits (good things) are there in this study?
5. How can you earn (get) the money/extra credit if you do NOT participate in the study?
6. Who can you contact (call or email) if something bad happened to you during the study?
7. What will happen to you if you say *no* to being in the study?
8. What will happen if you say *yes* to be in the study now but want to say *no* later?
9. How does your decision to be (or not to be) in the study change the way the teachers at the ELC think about you?
10. Who can see the things you do for this study?
11. Will this study improve your English skills?
12. How is your teacher involved (helping) in this research?
13. What will the researchers do with the information from the study?

Debriefing form

Informed Consent in ESL research

1. WHAT YOU DID:
You participated in a research study. You will not have to do the activities that you read about. People who participate in research are given a reading before they start. This is called a consent form. They are really hard for everyone to read. I wanted to know how much information you can understand about the form.

2. YOU CAN PARTICIPATE OR NOT. YOU CAN STOP AT ANY TIME:
Participation is completely voluntary. That means you can stop anytime you want. If you want to stop please tell me. I will not be upset. Your teacher will never know. You can also tell me anytime that you don't want me to use your answers. It does not matter if it is 5 minutes later or 2 years later. You are helping me. Your teacher will never see the things you wrote.

3. POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:
You are really helping everyone who doesn't speak English as their first language. Your answers will help me and other scientists write easier to understand documents. This way other people will know more about research before they start.

4. POTENTIAL RISKS AND COSTS FOR BEING IN THE STUDY:
You were not in any danger during this process. Also, no one at the ELC (including your teacher) will ever know what you wrote.

5. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:
I will keep all of your answers secret. This means that your name and all information about you will not be told to anyone. You only wrote your number, not your name on all of the documents so I won't even know what you wrote. Remember, if you don't want me to use your answers, you can always tell me and I will destroy your answers.

6. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:
If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researcher .

Main researcher	Primary Investigator
Mr. Scott Sterling	Dr. Shawn Loewen
sterli27@msu.edu	loewens@msu.edu

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 408 W. Circle Dr., Room 207, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Your signature below means that you agree that I can use the answers you just wrote.

_____ _____

Signature Date

Focus group consent form

Informed Consent form for focus group

Informed Consent in ESL research

This is a research study. Researchers have to tell you about the things you will do, tell you that you don't have to do the research, and tell you what could happen to you if you do participate. Please ask questions if you have them. I like questions.

1. WHAT YOU WILL DO:
Today you will be in a group interview. I will ask you several questions and you can answer them if you want. Other people will listen to your answers and can answer too. If you don't want to answer a question, that is ok too. I will use a camera and record this interview. This interview should last about 45 minutes.

2. YOU CAN PARTICIPATE OR NOT. YOU CAN STOP AT ANY TIME:
Participation is completely voluntary. That means you can stop anytime you want. If you want to stop please tell me. I will not be upset. Your teacher will never know. You can also tell me anytime after the interview that you don't want me to use your answers. It does not matter if it is 5 minutes later or 2 years later. You are helping me. This interview will not help or hurt your grade.

3. POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:
You will receive $15 dollars for taking part in this interview. You will also have the chance to practice your English abilities outside of class time. This interview will also be a lot of fun.

4. POTENTIAL RISKS AND COSTS FOR BEING IN THE STUDY:
This interview is free. Plus I am paying you! There are no known risks in this study. You will not be hurt in any way.

5. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:
You will be video recorded for this study. This video will be kept in the strictest confidentiality. This means that your name and all information about you will not be told to anyone. I will keep all of the videos on my computer and it has a password on it. Remember, if you say something that you want to be removed from the videos you can always email me and I will remove it for you.

6. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:
If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researcher .

Main researcher	Primary Investigator
Mr. Scott Sterling	Dr. Shawn Loewen
sterli27@msu.edu	sloewen@msu.edu

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 408 W. Circle Dr., Room 207, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study and that you understand that you will be video-recorded.

_____ _____

Signature Date

Focus Group Questions

1. What kinds of compensation would you want for being part of a research?
2. What is a risk to you?
3. What types of benefits would make you want to be part of a research project?
4. Who has access or can see the things that you do in research?
5. In research you can always so no or stop being part of a study any time. If you do say no, or stop, how does that affect the way the teachers at the ELC think about you?
6. Who should you contact if something happens while you are part of the research?
7. What role does your teacher play in research?
8. What will the researcher do with materials collected from you?
9. Which parts of the consent form did you not understand?
10. How much of this form did you actually read?
11. How could consent forms be made easier to understand?

APPENDIX D

Collected consent forms from Chapter 4

The following pages contain the 20 collected consent forms used in Chapter 4. These forms have been stripped of all identifying information of the original researchers and home institutions. The formatting of the dissertation changed various aspects of the collected consent forms such as the font size, margins, and other formatting areas. Additionally, several of the forms were in PDF format and had to be hand typed. Taken together these changes mean that the forms presented here will not match in any of the length measurements discussed in Chapter 4. An 'X' has been used to remove names of departments, institutions, and other information that might identify the study. An 'X' is also used for people who were not the primary researcher. Phone, addresses, and emails were removed and replaced with [phone], [address], and [email]. The single letter at the top of each form is its identifier so that forms can be matched from Chapter 4.

A

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

1. EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH and WHAT YOU WILL DO:

You are being asked to participate in a research study regarding the effects of a project-based ESL course. At the beginning of the semester, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding English and American culture. During the semester, you will learn how to perform observations and collect data like a cultural anthropologist. Then you will choose a site where Americans can be observed and you will record the things you see and hear. You will keep a journal of your experiences and observations. Later, you will present your findings to the class. At the end of the semester, you will fill out another questionnaire regarding your experiences.

By choosing to participate in the research study, you are giving permission for the researcher to use your class work (the questionnaires, your journal, and presentation) in later publications or presentations regarding the effects of a project-based ESL course. Your name will not be associated with your work.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this research.

2. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW:

Although Level 2 Content is a required course, you may take the course without participating in the research project. In that case, you would complete all the class work, but the researcher would not use any of your work in future publications or presentations.

Participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. If you say yes, you may change your mind at any time and withdraw. Whether you choose to participate or not will have no affect on your grade or evaluation.

3. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:

If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact the researcher:

Name
University phone:
Address fax
e-mail

Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____ _____

Signature Date

B

Participant Consent Form

Research Study Title:

Principle Investigator: Jamie Dancer, Dept. of X, X University.

Secondary Investigator: Megan Franks (PhD candidate), Dept of X, X University.

Objective: To examine non-native speakers' preferences regarding the presentation of reading materials.

Eligibility: You are eligible to participate if you are a second or third year English language major at the University of X. Please note that you must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

Research Study Procedures: This is the second part of a two-part research study that compares non-native speakers' preferences and strategies in reading online (ie reading on a computer screen) versus reading hard copy. You are part of the group that will read hard copy. You will be asked to read 20 short paragraphs in a leisurely fashion, as if you were reading a novel for pleasure. You will then be given a questionnaire that asks about your experience reading these hard-copy materials.

Total Time Commitment: Approximately 60 minutes.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study or decline to participate in any portion of the study.

Risks: No risks are anticipated.

Benefits: Participation in this research will provide you with an opportunity to practice reading in English. You will also contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of language learning.

Confidentiality: Your data will be kept confidential and your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Research materials and data will be kept in the researchers' offices, which are locked at all times, and on password-protected computers.

Contact Information: if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact the Secondary Investigator, Megan Franks, PhD candidate at [email] or by mail at [address], X University, [address] or Jamie Dancer, PhD at [email], by phone at [number], or by mail at [address]. The researcher agrees to answer any inquiries you may have about the procedures. If you have any questions not addressed by the consent form, please do not hesitate to ask. You will receive a copy of this form, which you should keep for your records. If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or

offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the X University's Human Research Protection Program at [phone], Fax [number], or e-mail [email] or regular mail at [address].

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by beginning this study.

C

Research Information

We are asking you to participate in a research project.

Purpose of research: The goal of this research is to determine whether there is a particular way that second language learners acquire English.

Age limit: You must be over 18 to participate in this research.

What you will do: First, you will have a discussion in English and play some language games. Then you will sit at a computer. You will read sentences in English and answer questions about the sentences (true or false). Your performance in this study is private. We will not publish your name.

Compensation: You will receive extra credit in your class for completing this study. If you do not want to do the study, you can still get extra credit. You can ask your teacher about this.

Risks and benefits: There are no risks to this study.

Your rights to participate, say no, or withdraw: Participation in this study is voluntary; you can say no. You can also change your mind and decide not to do it without any problem. If you don't want your test used for the study, your decision will not affect your grades, your classes, or anything else at X University or any other place. You can also decide not to answer any particular question without any problem.

You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by completing the questionnaire and reading the English sentences.

Contact information for questions and concerns: If you have any questions about this study, please contact the researcher (Jamie Smithey, PhD, Assistant Professor- [academic area], [address], Tel: [number], [email].

You can also contact the X's Human Research Protection Program at [number], Fax [number], or e-mail [email] or regular mail at [address]. You do not have to give your name to do this.

D

X UNIVERSITY
Consent to Participate in Research

Project Title:

Principal Investigators:

Dept. of X	Dept. of X
[Address]	[Address]
Phone: [number]	Phone: [number]
Fax: [number]	Email: [email]

Introduction and Explanation of the Study: This study investigates students' use of planning time before an oral task. If you volunteer to participate, you will first take a grammar pre-test for 35 minutes in this class. Then, based on your grammar test results, you may be selected for the experimental session in the English Department Lab. At the beginning of this session, you will be given a 15-minute tutorial to get familiar with how to record your speech and save audio files on the computer. Once you feel comfortable with the recording system, you will be asked to record your reading aloud of one short paragraph for 1-2 minutes and perform an oral task for 5 minutes. The 5-minute oral task may allow some preparation for 10 minutes. Right after the oral task, some of you may be chosen for an interview that lasts about 10 minutes. Your oral performance and interview will be audio-taped for later analysis. The entire experimental session in the language lab may take you at most 60 minutes.

Risks and Benefits: There are minimal risks for participants involved in this research. Those who are not familiar with such voice recording tools as microphones and computers may experience slight anxiety as in a test situation. However, a tutorial before the real experiment which will familiarize you with the recording system may help minimize your anxiety.

Confidentiality: All information collected will be confidential and will only be used for research purposes. The researcher will assign each participant a number unrelated to any official university ID # you may have to identify your data. No names or identifying information will be collected through the experiment, and when results are published in an article or presented at a conference, no names or identifying information will be used. Any audio recordings will only be used for transcription purposes. Your voice recordings will be played to no one other than the researchers.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is entirely voluntary. By participating in this study, you agree to let the researchers use your data. Your decision to participate will in no way affect your class participation. The amount of time for the experiment is equivalent to an hour or so compared to the total 30 hours for language skill practice in the classroom in one semester; therefore, a bonus credit equal to 3% of the total grade will be given for your completion of the experiment. You may decline to participate in the project or you can refuse to answer any

questions at any point at no consequence to you. For example, if you do want to decline from being audio-taped, you may stop the recording at any time during your performance. If at any point you change your mind and do not want to participate, you can tell the researcher. In case you do not want to participate in or withdraw from the experiment for any reasons, you will be assigned an equivalent writing activity so that you can also earn extra credit. You will be partially compensated based on the percentage of the research completed and you can obtain the rest of the compensation through the alternative assignment. Anyone who takes the pre-test will also be given partial credit regardless of whether or not you are selected for the rest of the study. If you have any questions, you may contact Mr. Martin Li by telephone or email listed above.

Subject's Consent: I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I may discontinue or leave the study at any time with no consequences. I indicate my agreement to participate by beginning the grammar pre-test.

E

X University

Consent Form for Participation in Research

Study Title:

Principal Investigator: Harmi Lana, Associate Professor.
Department of X, [office number] X University
[address]
[phone number]
[email]

Purpose of this Study
The purpose of the study is to examine the effect of instruction on the acquisition of request-making expressions.

Procedures
You will be asked to complete a speaking test on computer and participate in a series of three English classes that teach you how to make a request in English. The speaking test will take 15 minutes to complete. The English class will be about 30 minutes each time. There will be no risk or discomfort associated with this study. There will be no cost if you participate in this study. You will receive $50 upon completion of this study. Your speaking test will be recorded and analyzed. The principal investigator and authorized research assistants have access to the data. Expected duration of this study is one year. The study will be conducted in the participants' home institution.

Participant Requirements
Participants need to be first-year students in the English program with age ranging from 19 to 22.

Risks
The risks and discomfort associated with participation in this study are no greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

Benefits
There may be no personal benefit from your participation in the study but the knowledge received may be of value to humanity.

Compensation & Costs

You will receive $ 50 upon completion of this study. There will be no cost to you if you participate in this study.

Confidentiality
By participating in the study, you understand and agree that X may be required to disclose your consent form, data and other personally identifiable information as required by law, regulation, subpoena or court order. Otherwise, your confidentiality will be maintained in the following manner:

Your data and consent form will be kept separate. Your consent form will be stored in a locked location on X property and will not be disclosed to third parties. By participating, you understand and agree that the data and information gathered during this study may be used by X and published and/or disclosed by X to others outside of X. However, your name, address, contact information and other direct personal identifiers in your consent form will not be mentioned in any such publication or dissemination of the research data and/or results by. The researchers will take the following steps to protect participants' identities during this study: (1) Each participant will be assigned a number; (2) The researchers will record any data collected during the study by number, not by name; (3) Any original recordings or data files will be stored in a secured location accessed only by authorized researchers.

Optional Permission
I understand that the researchers may want to use a short portion of any audio recording for illustrative reasons in presentations of this work for scientific or educational purposes. I give my permission to do so provided that my name and face will not appear.

□ YES □ NO (Please initial here _____)

Rights
Your participation is voluntary. You are free to stop your participation at any point. Refusal to participate or withdrawal of your consent or discontinued participation in the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits or rights to which you might otherwise be entitled. The Principal Investigator may at his/her discretion remove you from the study for any of a number of reasons. In such an event, you will not suffer any penalty or loss of benefits or rights which you might otherwise be entitled.

Right to Ask Questions & Contact Information
If you have any questions about this study, you should feel free to ask them now. If you have questions later, desire additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation please contact the Principal Investigator by mail, phone or e-mail in accordance with the contact information listed on the first page of this consent.

If you have questions pertaining to your rights as a research participant; or to report objections to this study, you should contact the Research Regulatory Compliance Office at X University. Email: [email]. Phone: [number 1] or [number 2].

Conflict of Interest
None

Voluntary Consent

By signing below, you agree that the above information has been explained to you and all your current questions have been answered. You understand that you may ask questions about any aspect of this research study during the course of the study and in the future. By signing this form, you agree to participate in this research study.

_____ _____
PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE DATE

I certify that I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study to the above individual and I have discussed the potential benefits and possible risks of participation in the study. Any questions the individual has about this study have been answered and any future questions will be answered as they arise.

_____ _____
SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT DATE

F

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

You, **a student**, are being asked to participate in a research project. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researchers any questions you may have.

Study Title:
Researcher and Title: Carol Comb, associate professor
Department and Institution: X College
Address and Contact Information: [address].

1. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH:
You are being asked to participate in a research study of writing in the content courses.
You have been selected as a possible participant in this study because English is not your first language. You will be asked about the writing assignments that you do in your classes. From this study, the researcher hopes to learn how to better respond to your writing needs.

37. In this study, 12 people are being asked to participate.
38. Your participation in this study will take about 45-60 minutes during and at the end of the regular semester.
39. ***If you are under 18, you cannot be in this study.***

2. WHAT YOU WILL DO:

1. The researcher will meet with you and discuss copies of the course syllabi and the directions for the assignments.
2. You will be asked some questions about writing in this class. You will bring one or more of your written assignments and we will discuss how you completed them. The interview(s) will be digitally recorded and will take approximately 45-60 minutes. The digital recording is required of all participants in this study.

3. POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

9. You will not directly benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation in this study may contribute to the understanding of how to improve writing instruction for students learning English as a second language at X College.

4. POTENTIAL RISKS:

10. There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. Your course grade will not be affected by your participation in this study.

5. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:

11. The data for this project will be kept confidential. You will select a pseudonym that will be known only by you and the researchers. Your real name will not be used on the data.

- The information and data for this project will be kept in a locked area in the researcher's cellar. Records will be kept for one year; only the secondary researcher will have access

to the data.

- Your instructor will not have access to your responses or the survey data. The researchers may have a photo-copy of your regular assignments using your pseudonym.
- The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain confidential. The pseudonym will be used. Information about you will be kept confidential to the maximum extent allowable by law.

6. **YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW**

4. Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no.
5. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. The researchers will destroy any data you had submitted up to that time.
6. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.
7. Choosing not to participate or withdrawing from this study will not make any difference in
    1. the quality of any services you may receive.
    2. benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
8. Whether you choose to participate or not will have no affect on your grade or evaluation.
9. You will be told of any significant findings that develop during the course of the study that may influence your willingness to continue to participate in the research.

7. COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY:

- There are no costs to you, the student.
- There is no credit or extra credit for participation in this study. You will perform your regular coursework for your instructor.
- A $25.00 fuel card is available to be given to you after data collection is complete. You will not receive any other form of compensation for participating in this study.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

If you have any questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researchers:

Sandy Fronz (secondary researcher) [Address] X College [phone number] [email]	Carol Comb (primary researcher) Department of X [Address] [X University] [phone number]

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the X University's Human Research Protection Program at [number], Fax [number], or e-mail [email] or regular mail at [address].

9. DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT.
Your signature below means that you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____ _____
Signature Date

You may have a copy of this form to keep.

G

Participant Consent Form

Research Study Title:

Principal Investigator: Dr. Helga Miller, Dept. of X, X University

Secondary Investigator: Yolanda Wood, Ph.D. student in X, X University

Objective: To investigate developmental patterns of second language writing in two types

Eligibility: You are eligible to participate if you are adult learners of English. Please note that you must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

Research Study Procedures: You will do in-class writing as part of your regular coursework, although the specific topics have been chosen by the researcher. Your teacher will use some of your essays for in-class activities, but will also give the researcher a copy or your essays if you agree.

Total Time Commitment: Approximately 30 minutes each time

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary.

Risks: No risks are anticipated.

Benefits: Participation in this research will provide you with an opportunity to practice writing in English, and you will be given feedback on your writing. You will also contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of second language writing.

Confidentiality: Your data will be kept confidential and your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Research materials and data will be kept in the researcher' office, which is locked at all times, and on password-protected computers.

Contact Information: if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact the Secondary Investigator, Yolanda Wood, Ph.D. student at [phone number] or by email at [email]. The researcher agrees to answer any inquiries you may have about the procedures. If you have any questions not addressed by the consent form, please do not hesitate to ask. You will receive a copy of this form, which you should keep for your records. If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the X University's Human Research Protection Program at [number], Fax [number], or e-mail [email] or regular mail at [address].

I agree to participate in this study. _____ _____

Signature & Printed Name Date

H

Human Subject
Informed Consent

English Department, [Address] [phone number]

Project Title:

Dear Participant:
You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through the **English Department** at X University by Samantha Printer that involves research. The researcher is required to receive your informed consent before you participate in this project.

Samantha Printer will explain to you in detail: (1) the purpose of the project; (2) what you will be asked to do and how long your participation will last; (3) how your personal information, if collected, will be kept confidential; (4) if you will receive any compensation; (5) the benefits; and (6) potential risks of participation.

Your participation in research is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, there are no penalties or loss of benefits or services that you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate and then withdraw or skip a question there are also no penalties or loss of benefits or services. Whether or not you choose to participate in this project will have no effect on your relationship with X now or in the future.

A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss it with Samantha Printer. Feel free to ask questions to help you understand the project. After any questions you may have are answered and you decide to participate in the research, please sign on the last page of this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. A copy of this form will be given to you to keep.

1. PROJECT PURPOSE:
The purpose of this project is to determine if prior musical training influences a person's ability to discern slight differences in the sounds that make up certain languages. This ability, called phonemic awareness, is potentially linked to language-learning aptitude.

2. EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES:
This study will consist of two parts. In the first part, subjects will be given a test of phonemic discrimination. The test itself will be a recording that subjects will listen to. The recording will contain samples of a foreign language, and subjects will be asked to decide if the samples sound the same or different.

In the second part, subjects will be asked to complete a brief survey to collect basic demographic information (age, gender, etc.), to collect information about their language-learning experiences (successful or otherwise), and to collect information about any prior

musical training they may have.

The entire process will take approximately 20 minutes.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY:
Subjects will be given a number-letter combination and will write that on both their test and their survey. There will be no list of names of the subjects. The tests and surveys, once collected, will only be viewed by the researcher and possibly members of the English faculty. Individual responses to test or survey questions will not be reported in any publications or presentations.

4. COMPENSATION:
Participants will not be compensated for this study.

5. BENEFITS:
The potential benefits to the field are an increased understanding of one of the potential elements of language-learning aptitude and additional support for a music-language link. The implications of this study could affect language-teaching practices, and they could also present an argument for including music education in schools.

6. RISKS:
I do not foresee any risks in this study.

7. CONSENT:
I have read the above information about
_____ _____ and have been given an opportunity to ask questions. I agree to participate in this project, and I have been given a copy of this consent document.

_____ Date _____
Signature of Participant

_____
Printed Name of Participant

_____ Date _____
Signature of Research Representative

_____
Printed Name of Research Representative

The dated approval stamp in the header of this consent form indicates that this project has been reviewed and approved by the X University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research. Contact the Human Research Protections Office at [number] if

you have any questions about: (1) the conduct of the project, or (2) your rights as a research participant, or (3) a research-related injury. Any other questions about the research project should be directed to:

Samantha Printer (Graduate Student)
X English Department
[phone number]

NAME OF FACULTY SPONSOR (IF STUDENT RESEARCHER)
Dr. X **[email]**

I

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

IRB Study # ____

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher or study staff to discuss this consent form with you; please ask him/her to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. We encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.
We are asking you to take part in a research study called: _____
_____

The person who is in charge of this research study is Heather Crawly-Trains**.** This person is called the Principal Investigator. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge. She is being guided in this research by Dr. X.

The research will be conducted at X College (XC).

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to:

- Ascertain the affects (if any) of an individual's concept of an L2 Ideal Self on his/her pragmatic production, and whether the English language learner's (ELL's) proficiency in English has an effect in this relationship. "Pragmatics" is defined as a speaker's ability to say the socially appropriate thing at the right time within the context of a conversation in the English language. "Attitude" includes whether the ELL imagines himself/herself speaking English nearly perfectly in the future. "Proficiency" includes how well the ELL can listen, read, write, and use grammar in the English language. Additionally, the participant should realize that they may be benefiting future ELLs since the result of this study may have implications for the instruction of ELLs.

Study Procedures

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to:

- Fill the English Language Learner Questionnaire (ELL Q), which has fifty five items on the L2 Ideal Self. This will help the researcher to ascertain the participant's attitude, whether s/he has a vision of himself/herself as an ideal L2 (English) speaker. Completing the survey will entail reflecting on one's own experiences, plus associated thoughts and feelings while learning English. The questionnaire has items to which the participant can agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, disagree strongly, or remain neutral. The questionnaire will be

administered only once.

- Respond to the scenarios in the Pragmatic Speaking Test (PST). For the purposes of this study, pragmatics will measured by a short speaking test, the Pragmatics Speaking Test (PST). Each participant will be given eight scenarios. After the scenario is described, the participant will be asked to respond as though s/he were actually taking part in the conversation. These will be audio-recorded. However, the recordings will be erased as soon as they are transcribed. The PST will be administered only once.

- Self-report your grades from the previous semester. The grades for each participant will be used as the documentation of his/her proficiency in English.

- A select group of participants will be interviewed. Since the P.I. has only functional fluency in the Korean language and does not speak Vietnamese or any dialect of Chinese, only participants who are high intermediate or advanced, as ascertained by placement in XC-EAP levels 4, 5, or 6, will be interviewed. You are welcome to decline the interview, even if you agree to participate in the other parts of the study. All the data will be confidential. This means that participants' names will not be used. The interview will take between forty five minutes and one hour, at a time agreed upon by the P.I. and the participant. All participants' data will remain confidential.

- The research will be conducted at X College. In regards to the time commitment, the questionnaire will take approximately forty-five minutes; it will not exceed one hour. The PST will take about thirty minutes. Not all participants will be interviewed. The interview will take place on a separate occasion from the administration of the ELL-Q and PST. However, the interview will take between 45 minutes and one hour. It will be scheduled at a convenient time for the participant.

- The PST will be audio-recorded. However, the recordings will be destroyed directly after the transcription. These audio recordings will be on a password protected computer that is stored in a locked room when not in use. If the participant prefers, the researcher can take short hand notes on his/her comments in the PST in lieu of making an audio-recording This, however, is not the preferred method.

Total Number of Participants

A total of 30 individuals will participate in the study at all sites.

Alternatives

You do not have to participate in this research study.

Benefits

The participant may find it interesting to reflect upon his/her own thoughts and feelings toward learning English.

Risks or Discomfort

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

Compensation

You will receive three XC souvenir pencils or one XC notebook *for completing each of the following: The ELL Questionnaire, the PST and the interview. A one dollar payment for each is optional if the participant prefers that. The compensation will be given immediately after you complete the task.*

Cost

There will be no additional costs to you as a result of being in this study.

Privacy and Confidentiality

We will keep your study records private and confidential. Certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator, study coordinator, and all other research staff**,** including I2.
- Certain government, university and college people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety.
- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates this research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP).
- The X Institutional Review Board (IRB) and its related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, staff in the X Office of Research and Innovation, X Division of Research Integrity and Compliance, and other X offices who oversee this research.
- The XC Institutional Review Board (IRB) and related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name or any data that can directly or indirectly identify you. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. The decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your student status (course grade).

New information about the study

During the course of this study, we may find more information that could be important to you. This includes information that, once learned, might cause you to change your mind about being in the study. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, or experience an adverse event or unanticipated problem, call Heather Crawly-Trains at [phone]. You may also contact X, who is overseeing this study, via email at [email].

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, general questions, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the X IRB at [phone].

Consent to Take Part in this Research Study

It is up to you to decide whether you want to take part in this study. If you want to take part, please sign the form, if the following statements are true.

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

_____ _____

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study Date

_____

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I hereby certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he/ she understands:

- What the study is about;
- What procedures will be used;
- What the potential benefits might be; and
- What the known risks might be.

I can confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in the appropriate language. Additionally, this subject reads well enough to understand this document or, if not, this person is able to hear and understand when the form is read to him or her. This subject does not have a medical/psychological problem that would compromise comprehension and therefore makes it hard to understand what is being explained and can, therefore, give legally effective informed consent. This subject is not under any type of anesthesia or analgesic that may cloud their judgment or make it hard to understand what is being explained and, therefore, can be considered competent to give informed consent.

_____ _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent / Research Authorization Date

_____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent / Research Authorization

J

X UNIVERSITY **Consent to Participate in Research**
I.R.B. _____ Application No._____
Project Name: _____

Primary Investigator	Secondary Investigator
Dr. X	Kara Fannar
Dept. of X	Dept. of X
[Address]	[Address]
Phone: [number]	[number]
Fax: [number]	[number]
[email]	[email]

Introduction and Explanation of the Study: You are invited to participate in this research study. This study evaluates students' attitudes toward the accents of different speakers. If you volunteer to participate, you will first fill out a language background questionnaire. Then, you will listen to 18 short audio clips, answer questions based on the audio file, and complete a dictation task. The entire project will take approximately 45 minutes.

Risks and Benefits: There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. Your language acquisition may benefit from this study in that you will be exposed to varieties of accented English. Your language listening may benefit from the extra listening practice.

Confidentiality: Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. All information collected will be confidential and will only be used for research purposes. The researchers will use an ID# from 1 to 200 (unrelated to any official X ID# you may have) to identify your data instead of using your name. Whenever data from this study are published, your name will not be used. All data collected will be kept in a locked cabinet in the Primary Investigator's locked office at X (see the address above) for at least three years after the project closes. Electronic data will be kept on the Primary Investigator's password protected computer; however, no participant names will be stored on the computer. All data will be collected by the two investigators listed on this application. Only the two researchers will see and use the data, but the Institutional Review Board (IRB) can also see the data.

Your participation: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to answer certain questions or discontinue your participation at any time without consequence. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision to participate will in **no** way affect your course grade.

Researcher's contact information: If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the primary investigator (Kara Fannar, Dept. of X, [address]; e-mail: [email]; phone: [number]).

IRB's contact information: If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the X University's Human Research Protection Program at [number], Fax [number], or e-mail [email] or regular mail at [address].

Subject's consent
Yes, I release my data for the purposes of this research.
No, I do not release my data for the purposes of this research.

K

X University
Consent to Participate in Research
IRB Application ID#

Project Name: _____

Principal Investigator:	Dr. X [dept] [address] Phone: [number] [email]	**Secondary Investigator:**	Lee Crow [dept] Phone: [number] [email]

Introduction and Explanation of the Study: You are invited to participate in the study investigating the relationship between the involvement loads of tasks, eye-fixation durations, and vocabulary acquisition. You have been selected as a participant as a result of your volunteering to participate after obtaining the information about the study. You will complete the proficiency test first and then perform a reading task. To measure attention, your eye movements will be recorded and analyzed.

Potential Benefits and Risks: Expected risks are minimal. There are no foreseeable risks or problems associated with any cultural contexts and backgrounds of foreign countries. All participants will be regularly matriculated students at X.

Privacy and Confidentiality: You will complete study tasks individually in a quiet room with no one present except for the secondary investigator (Lee Crow). The data will be stored on the primary and secondary investigator's password protected computer. All data will be stored with a project-generated ID and names of the participants will not be stored on the computer. The data will be destroyed 3 years following closure of the project.

Your participation: Participation in this study is strictly voluntary; you have the right to say no. You are free to change your mind and withdraw at any time without consequence or penalty. The decision to participate, decline, or withdraw from participation will have no effect on your grades or future relations with X or any other institution.

Compensation for being in the Study: You will not be compensated.

Contact Information for Questions and Concerns: If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the principal investigator (X, [address], Phone [number] Email: [email]), or the secondary investigator (Lee Crow, Phone [number] Email: [email]). If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if

you wish, the X University's Human Research Protection Program at [number], Fax [number], or e-mail [email] or regular mail at [address].

By completing and returning the questionnaire you are acknowledging that you are 18 years of age or older and are consenting to participate in this study.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Name _____

***Printed Name*_____**

***Date*_____**

L

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study
IRB Study # _____

_____

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher or study staff to discuss this consent form with you, please ask him/her to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. We encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

Please tell the study doctor or study staff if you are taking part in another research study.

We are asking you to take part in a research study called:

The person who is in charge of this research study is Helena Charpt. This person is called the Principal Investigator. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge. She is being guided in this research byX.

The research will be conducted at X University, X, Turkey.

Purpose of the study
The purpose of this study is to:

- explore English language use in office hour interactions between university students and professors. The study also aims to investigate the organizational structure of office hour interactions, suggestion strategies in discourse, relational work between students and professors, and the primary function of office hour interactions. I anticipate having several important implications for EFL education and programs specifically at the university level in Turkey. The participants should be registered undergraduate students with Turkish L1 background at the foundational university where this study will take place. This study will include 2-3 foreign professors and 15 Turkish EFL students.

Study Procedures

- be audio-recorded while you are talking to their professors during office hours. These audio-recordings will be the main source to understand English language use by the participants. The number of office hour recordings will depend on your own choice of coming to talk to the professors. Therefore, time commitment on your part might vary from a minute to 15 minutes. Once you arrive at your professor's office, you will be informed of audio-recording again. During office hour interactions, the researcher will be

making observations and taking notes. After the office hour visit, you will be given a survey that consists of three parts. It will take around ten minutes to complete it. The purpose of this survey is to gain demographic information about you as well as insight into your language background and current office hour experience. Additionally, there will be once or twice classroom observations till the end of the semester.

- The study will take place at X University and the data collection will occur during Spring and Summer 2014 according to the academic calendar in Turkey. All the data collection procedures will be in either professors' offices or classrooms.
- You will be informed of audiotaping and given the option to agree to the recording. Only the researcher will have access to these tapes and all related transcripts will be stored in the principal investigator's password protected personal computer. Physical data such as answers to survey and transcriptions will also be kept in the principal investigator's personal drawer at home. Your names will not be used while reporting in any part of this study and you will be asked to create a pseudonym for yourselves. During the data analysis, all names will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used instead. However, the researchers will know the link between the pseudonyms and your identity because the data collection will be face-to-face. The data will be kept for a minimum 5 years after the close of the study with the X IRB. The electronic/recorded data will be deleted from the computer and the paper data will be recycled.

Total Number of Participants
About 2-3 foreign professors and their students in Spring and Summer 2014 will take part in this study at X University.

Alternatives
You do not have to participate in this research study.

Benefits
The researcher is unsure if you will receive any benefits by taking part in this research study.

Risks or Discomfort
This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

Compensation
You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Cost
There will be no additional costs to you as a result of being in this study.

Privacy and Confidentiality
We will keep your study records private and confidential. Certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:

- The Principal Investigator

- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety.
- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates this research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP).
- The X Institutional Review Board (IRB) and its related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, staff in the X Office of Research and Innovation, X Division of Research Integrity and Compliance, and other X offices who oversee this research.
-

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal
You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. Decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your student status

New information about the study
During the course of this study, we may find more information that could be important to you. This includes information that, once learned, might cause you to change your mind about being in the study. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints
If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, or experience an adverse event or unanticipated problem, call Helena Charpt at [phone]

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, general questions, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the X IRB at [phone]

Consent to Take Part in this Research Study
It is up to you to decide whether you want to take part in this study. Please understand that by proceeding with the procedures described in this consent document, you are agreeing to participate in research.

M

X University Consent to Participate in Research
IRB_____; Application #_____
Project Name: _____

Secondary Investigator	Primary Investigator
Mr. Mitch Poundier	Dr. X
Dept X	Dept. X
[address]	[address]
[address]	[address][phone]
Phone [phone]	[phone]
Fax: [number]	Fax: number]
[email]	[email]

Introduction and Explanation of the Study: You are invited to participate in this research study. This study evaluates students' knowledge of English humor. If you volunteer to participate, you will first fill out a language background questionnaire and take a short test on the computer. Next you will be shown several situations with incomplete dialogs. You will be asked to select a funny response that completes the dialog. This project is self-paced. It is expected to take around 60 minutes. Once you have completed the study, you will also be asked to volunteer for an additional informal interview. You will be asked several questions and audio-recorded. This interview will take around 10 minutes and will be happen directly after part one.

Risks and Benefits: There are no known risks connected with participation in this study. Your language abilities may benefit from this study in that you may gain a clearer understanding of your knowledge of English humor. Your language reading may benefit from the extra reading practice. You might also laugh which is always a good thing!

Confidentiality: Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. This means that all information collected will be kept secret and will only be used for research purposes. The researchers will never use your name or any information that identifies you. Instead you will be given an ID number (unrelated to any official X ID# you may have) to identify your data. Whenever data from this study is published, your name will not be used. All data collected will be kept in a locked cabinet in the Primary Investigator's locked office at X (see the address above) for at least three years after the project closes. Electronic data will be kept on the Secondary Investigator's password protected computer; however, no participant names will be stored on the computer. All data will be collected by the two investigators listed on this application. Only the two researchers will see and use the data, but the Institutional Review Board (IRB) can also see the data.

Your participation: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary which means that you choose to participate. You may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to answer certain questions or discontinue your participation at any time without consequence. Your refusal

to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision to participate will in no way affect your course grade

Researcher's contact information
If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the investigators (Mitch Poundier, Deptment X, [address]; e-mail: [email]; phone: [phone] or Dr. X, Department X, [address]; e-mail: [email]; phone: [phone] .

IRB's contact information
If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the X University's Human Research Protection Program at [phone], Fax [phone], or e-mail [email] or[address].

Subject's consent
I voluntarily agree to participate in this study

Your name (PLEASE PRINT): _____

Date: _____

Your signature: _____

☐ Check this box if you agree to volunteer to be interviewed and have your audio recorded. If you do not wish for your audio to be recorded you cannot participate in part two of the study.

N

Consent Form Script

X University
Institutional Review Board

INFORMED CONSENT

You are being asked to participate in a research study being conducted in our class. The purpose of this is to obtain information on how advanced ESL students spontaneously attend to English language forms. More specifically, I am interested in how different genders and cultures spontaneously attend to form. Obtaining such information will better help ESL teachers and researchers develop materials and techniques aimed at improving all ESL students' participation in ESL classroom activities and their knowledge of English language forms.

Participation in the study requires no additional work on your behalf. We will do our normal classroom activities. However, during group work, I will record your participation in the particular group work activity that we are doing.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, at any time while being recorded, you may decide to cease being recorded. There are no penalties for refusing to participate in this study. No class privileges will be denied you should you decline to participate or change your mind about participating.

Since your participation will be kept strictly confidential, feel free to participate as you normally do. Do you have any questions? If you have any questions about the laws and procedures of human subject research in the United States of America, you may contact me at [phone], my research advisor, Dr X at [phone], or the Institutional Review Board at [phone].

I have read the Informed Consent script. Completion of the survey instrument indicates consent of the subject to freely and willingly participate in the study.

_____ _____

Signature Date

O

X University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM
For Students

Title of Study: _____
Principal Investigator: Lara Roy
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. X and Dr. X

Your class has been selected to participate in a research study involving online chat room from March 14th to April 22, 2005. The purpose of this study is to determine whether participating in small group chat room discussions is a good practice for oral communication. For five weeks, you will participate in a curriculum designed specifically for this study. Activities will be similar to what are typically offered in an ESL speaking class with the addition of participating in small group online chat room discussions and receiving tailored classroom instructions based on chat room transcripts. Also, eight students will be asked to agree to be interviewed before and after the study period.

You will be asked to agree to the following terms:

- to fill out a questionnaire on March 7, 2005 to provide information about your personal background, your experience of learning English, your attitudes towards learning English, and your experience of using the chat room
- to possibly participate in a one-on-one interview during the week of March 7, 2005 to discuss your preconceived ideas about integrating the chat room into an ESL listening and speaking class
- to possibly participate in a one-on-one interview during the week of April 25th, 2005 to discuss your perceptions and reflections about participating in small group chat room discussions as a practice for oral communication
- to participate in a chat room focus group interview either on April 28th or 29 th to discuss about your experience of using the chat room in an ESL class
- to grant the researcher access to the chat room transcripts
- to review the researcher's analysis and interpretation of the data for accuracy during the first week of June (can be done via email

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential in the following ways:

- Data from the interviews, questionnaire, and observations will be stored securely and will be made available only to the researcher unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise.
- When transcribing individual interviews, identifying codes will be assigned.
- Identifying codes will be assigned to chat room transcripts.
- When reportin g the findings of this study, pseudonyms will be used.

- The name of the institution will not be identified.
- The interviews will be audio taped, and the audiotapes will be destroyed after the completion of the study.

Although there will not be any major risks to you for participating in this study, you may feel anxious about using the chat room if you are not computer literate. Thus, I will ensure that you receive proper training prior to the study. You may also feel stress and anxiety from being interviewed, so I will not interview you unless you sign this consent form. During the interview, you are not required to state anything that might make you feel uncomfortable. Your responses to the interviews and the questionnaire will not affect your grades in any way, and will not be shared by your teacher.

You may produce more language during chat room discussions than during face-to-face classroom discussions due to the non-threatening nature of the chat room environment. This is a potential benefit, because ac cording to research, more practice in language production leads to faster acquisition. Additionally, receiving tailored classroom instructions can be another obvious benefit for you. Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Lara Roy, at [address], or [phone]. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this consent form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. X, Chair of the X IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, [address], [phone] or Mr. X, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, [address], [phone]

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Subject's signature _____Date _____

Investigator's signature_____

Date _____

P

INFORMED CONSENT
Study Title

University of X, Doctoral Program

Carol Gomez, Doctoral Candidate, ABD
X Adult Education

I plan to study your skill in learning English as a Second Language using the computer-based Rosetta Stone program. I would like to invite you to join in this study. Using your answers and answers from other students, I hope to look at how the computer-based Rosetta Stone program has helped you to learn English as a Second Language.

If you choose to join the study, I, the researcher, will interview you and other XAdult Education students. In these interviews I will ask you questions about the computer-based Rosetta Stone program and how this program has helped you to learn English as a Second Language. Interviews should range from to 30 to 60 minutes and can be completed during your regularly scheduled classroom time. Interviews will have code names so your real name will be kept confidential. Interviews will be recorded and the actual recordings will be transcribed (written). Once transcribed the audio recordings will be destroyed. The written data (information) will be kept locked up in storage. The written information will be destroyed after the study has been completed.

The promise of strict confidentiality is guaranteed in both the collection and reporting of results to the best of my ability. Results from this study will be presented in such a way that no individual or school district will be recognizable. I would ask that you do not discuss you answers with other members ofXAdult Education, or University of X students or teachers. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, since research documents are not protected from subpoena. By signing this document, you give us permission to publish our results from the study.

Your personal decision whether or not to join this study will in no way affect your future relationship with X Adult Education, or the University of X. You may stop giving your answers in the study at any time without punishment. If you decide to stop the study, you may also take any information that has been provided to us. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact the researcher Carol Gomez,, Doctoral Candidate, ABD, at [phone] or [email] or the Human Subjects Committee at[phone].

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.

Date	**Participant's Signature**

Q

You are invited to participate in this study entitled _____. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

The purpose of this study is to explore ESL students' writing experiences in both previous and current contexts in order to gain a better understanding of the issue of ESL students' writing apprehension. Participation in this study will require approximately six hours of your time and is not considered a part of English 101. Participation or non-participation will not effect the evaluation of your performance in this class. I will observe you class and audio-tape some activities. In addition, I will collect some of your work in this class. You will be asked to participate in interviews and group discussions.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from participation at any time. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and will have no bearing on your academic standing or services you receive from the University. You can decide not to participate in this study at any time. If you decide to drop from this study, I will delete all reference to you from audio tapes and my notes. Your name will not be used in this study; instead, pseudonym will be used. There is no risk involved in participating in this study.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below.

Thank you very much for you cooperation.

Project advisor
Dr. X
Professor of English
[Address]
Phone: [phone]
E-mail: [email]

Project Director
Hyo-Ryo Kim
Ph.D. Candidate in X
[Address]
Phone: [phone]
E-mail: [email]

Informed Consent Form (continued)

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

I have read and understood the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that AI have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this Informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT)_____

Signature_____

Date_____

Phone number or location where you can be reached_____

Best days and times to reach you_____

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

_____

Date Investigator's Signature

R

INFORMED CONSENT FOR STUDENT

Dear_____,

My name is Eliza Smith, and I am a doctoral student in X in the College of Education at The University of X. I am conducting a research study for a doctoral dissertation and you are being invited to take part in this project. This letter explains the study for which I seek your consent to participate. You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

About the Study

The project has been developed to investigate English as a Second Language (ESL) students' understanding about and response to writing prompts. Specifically, I want to learn about how writing prompt selection (both teacher-directed and student-generated) affects ESL college students' perceptions of task, teacher, and text.

What you will Be Asked to Do

If you consent to participate in this study, the data I will collect will include observational fieldnotes to be taken during the class sessions in which you engage in writing tasks, a collection of the to written texts (1 initial draft and 1 revised, final draft), and three interviews that will be audio taped and transcribed. The interviews will take place at the University of X Intensive English Institute, will be held outside of class time, and will last no longer than 60 minutes each. Your participation is entirely voluntary and, if you agree to participate in the interviews, you may choose to withdraw or not to answer a question at any time.

Confidentiality

All data will be De-identified at the time of collection or in the case of interviews, at the time of transcription. De-identified transcripts and observational fieldnotes will be stored on my home computer in a password-protected file. Photocopies of your written texts will be de-identified and stored in my home office. De-identification will include the use of pseudonyms. Your names will not appear in any documents stored in my home computer and office and will not be used in the dissertation report or any other publications. All data will be stored in a locked cabinet of my home office until June 2012. At that time, the data will be shredded.

Risks and Benefits

Other than the inconvenience of time devoted to interviews, risks to you are minimal beyond those associated with your regular schooling. While there will likely be no direct personal benefits in participating in this study, you may have the occasion in the context of

interview sessions to reflect on you won learning. The primary benefits of this study will result from eventual publication in journals read by ESL researchers and practitioners. Published reports will likely assist to better understand how the design of composition writing topics (both teacher-directed and student-generated) affects ESL college students' perceptions of teacher, task, and text.

Contact Information

If you have any further questions about this study, please, contact me, Eliza Smith, at [phone], address [address] or at [email]. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. X, at [phone] or at [email]. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact X, Assistant to the University of X's Protection of Human Subjects Review Board, at [phone] or e-mail [email].

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the above information. Your signature also indicates that you consent to participate in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

_____ _____

Signature of consent Date

S

X University
X Department
Rashad Melinchor

Before agreeing to participate in this study, it is important that the following explanation of the proposed procedures be read and understood. It describes the purposes, risks, and benefits of the study. It also describes the right to withdraw from the study at any time. It is important to understand that no guarantee of assurance can be made as to to the results.

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to determine the overall effects of applying computers in writing classes.

Duration:
The study will last for one semester (Fall 2004). The research will spend the whole semester observing the class (no classes/weeks; and (hour) each) and writing notes.

Procedure:
Students registered in this class will do their routine jobs as required by their professor. They will be requested to fill in other forms as shown in the Appendixes (B, C, D, and E). The researcher and the dissertation committee (the instructor is a member of the committee) can access samples of the students' writing and the filled-in forms shown in the Appendixes.

Costs:
Participation in this study does not involve any expense for the participants.

Benefits:
No benefits are expected by the participants.

Security and Deposition of Data:
The dissertation committee can access the collected data. However, other than the instructor, the only person who will examine the samples is the researcher. After analysis of data, the samples will be handed back to the instructor. The results of the study will be stated in the dissertation upon its completion.

Right to Withdraw:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Student may withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences/penalty by letting the instructor the supervisor of the researcher, Dr X [[EMAIL] Tel [phone] (w); [phone] (H)], or the researcher, Rashad Melinchor [email], know (verbally, in writing, or via email).

Potential risks:
The grade of this course are decided by neither the researcher nor by any of the dissertation committee members. Neither participation in the study nor the researcher can influence the student's grade. So there are no foreseeable risks of the study.

Confidentiality:
Nothing in the study will refer to the identity of the participants. Just in case, students can choose any name they like (pseudonym) to appear in any report about the study. If you have additional questions about this research, you are welcome to contact Rashad Melinchor, the researcher, or Dr. X, the instructor and supervisor at the above email addresses.

If you agree to participate in this research, please sign below.

Thank you for you participation!

Signature:_____

T

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: _____

Investigator: Lee-Young Min, College of X, X University,
Philadelphia, [phone]

Advisor: Dr. X, College of X, X University
Philadelphia, [phone]

Purpose of Research

My research examines whether L2 (English as a second language) learners' perspectives on reading-writing relationships (ie, the range of the views on integrating reading and writing) can help to explain the literacy behaviors in the context of university reading for writing class. This research will explore the role of the L2 learners' perspectives on reading-writing relationships and their influence on literacy behaviors. Three types of data will be collected. The questionnaire I developed will access the range of the views on integrating reading and writing held by L2 learners. Data collected from classroom observation will be analyzed to examine what, if any, the similarities and differences in the approaches to reading-writing behaviors (ie, ways of connecting reading and writing behaviors or ways of engaging in reading-writing activities in the classroom) between the groups located at the different ranges of views on reading-writing relations are. Student interview will also be conducted and analyzed to examine the similarities and differences in the approaches to reading-writing behaviors.

General Experimental Procedures

I understand that I will participate in a research study which will be conducted in my English X class throughout this semester. I understand that throughout the semester period I will be observed in the classroom and will be interviewed outside the classroom by the researcher. I also consent that I will provide the data including my writing assignments, reading journals and narratives upon the researcher's request.

Confidentiality

I understand that the data I will provide will be recorded with pseudonyms and any data about me that will be collected by the researcher will be held in the strictest confidence. The data will be kept for the duration of the study and they will be destroyed after the completion of the study.

Disclaimer/Withdrawl

I understand that my participation in this study is on voluntary basis, and I may refuse to

participate at any time without consequence or prejudice.

Institutional Contacts

I understand that if I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can contact Mr X, the Coordinator for Research, Institutional Review Board, X University, [address], phone [phone].
Signing my name below indicates that I have read and understood the contents of this Consent Form and that I agree to take part in this study.

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

_____ _____

Investigator's Signature Date

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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