

Exploring Pre-service ESL Teachers' Interpretation of  
Second Language Motivation

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## ABSTRACT

Exploring pre-service ESL teachers' interpretation of second language motivation:

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Although many second language (L2) teachers identify motivating their students as an important challenge, few education programs focus on raising pre-service teachers' awareness of the role that motivation plays in L2 learning. There is little consideration of the beliefs and assumptions that most teachers hold about why learners demonstrate varying degrees of involvement in classroom activities and what factors could account for this variation. This exploratory study investigated how six pre-service teachers in an initial pedagogy course in a Canadian university perceived L2 motivation and how they interpreted L2 learners' participation/non-participation. The participants wrote five journal entries over the ten weeks of a practicum during which they facilitated ESL lessons for adult learners. The first journal entry acted as a narrative since it required the participants to reflect on their previous L2 learning experiences. The other writing prompts were designed to elicit their interpretation of L2 motivation. Additional data were collected through interviews and stimulated recall sessions during which the participants watched video-recordings of their ESL lessons and reflected on their students' participation/non-participation, as well as on classroom events and task types that might affect the learners' willingness to participate. Lastly, during a group meeting, the participants discussed topics and stimulus materials relevant to the notion of motivation. The findings that emerged from the data suggest that the multi-faceted and complex construct of L2 motivation was mainly ambiguous and under-recognized by the participants. This calls for raising critical awareness of such sensitive notions through teacher education programs.

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## INTRODUCTION



*“Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.”*

— Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970)

It is common to describe successful individuals as being motivated, and the term “motivation” is often used by language teachers to describe successful or unsuccessful language learners (Dörnyei, 2001). Generally associated with psychology, motivation often refers to factors that initiate, guide, and sustain an individual’s goal-oriented behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In the context of a language classroom, this goal-oriented behavior is linked to learners’ participation in classroom activities and expressing their interest in the topics (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Understanding what causes a language learner to invest in a particular activity or refuse to participate in another might be a difficult task that requires seeing motivation as situated within a complex social context.

My interest in the topic originates from my experiences as both a language learner and a teacher. As a non-native speaker of English, I have always been amazed by how my performance in my second language, and even my desire to speak, can vary based on how I perceive myself within any conversation. Over the years, as I have become more proficient in English, I have found myself having to negotiate my identity over and over as a user of this language. Also, as an English as a second language (ESL) teacher, I have grown sensitive to similar variations in my students’ performances and their often-fluctuating desire to participate. I have come to understand that language learning, as a complex social practice and not only the acquisition of a linguistic system of signs and symbols (Norton, 2000), involves our identities in various ways. Our realities are continuously defined and redefined through a dialectic relationship between

identity and language (Anderson, 1991), and we are constantly involved in an enduring creation and re-creation of ourselves.

Research in second language (L2) motivation has its origins in mainstream and educational psychology; however, it has undergone considerable changes over the past decades in order to address more complex social, psychological, and cultural factors that affect language learning (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012). Canadian socio-psychologists, Gardner and Lambert (1972), who are considered to be two of the most influential researchers in the field of L2 motivation, conducted a series of studies examining the effect of language learning attitudes and motivation, positing that an individual's attitude toward the target language community influences his or her L2 learning behavior. Despite its undeniable role in shaping L2 motivation research, the socio-psychological framework has been criticized for a number of reasons (Norton Pierce, 1995; Pavlenko, 2002; Syed & Burnett, 1999), including the simplistic view of language learners as homogenous groups of individuals aspiring to fit into the native-speaker culture. The socio-psychological model was later replaced by cognitive-situated perspectives, which focused on specific learning contexts such as classrooms, and involved concepts from the education field (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012). These views drew greater attention to psychological factors such as intrinsic motivation and learner self-determination.

Another important milestone in L2 motivation research was Norton Pierce's (1995) study of five immigrant women in Canada, which "pioneered new approaches, new questions, new agendas and new terminology" (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 282) in the study of motivation. Norton and scholars with similar critical views about L2 learning and teaching reconceptualized second language acquisition (SLA) within a framework that focuses on "language as the locus of social organization, power and individual consciousness" (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 283). In this view,

language is seen as symbolic capital in which learners need to be invested, and it involves constant construction and reconstruction of an individual's identity. By seeing L2 learners and users as agents with hybrid and dynamic identities, this view attributes an equally dynamic and socially-situated quality to the way they participate in each interaction and classroom activity. Ever since my first exposure to these critical social aspects of language learning in some of the graduate courses that I took in my MA program, I have been interested in exploring to what extent language teachers might be aware of such groundbreaking theories. This theoretical interest motivated the current thesis study.

The manuscript that follows presents the ways in which six pre-service ESL teachers in an initial TESL pedagogy course interpreted second language motivation. It aims to illustrate the range of beliefs and assumptions that novice teachers could have about such a complex notion and show how this is related to their own experiences as language learners, as well as to the ways they perceive and position the students in their classes. The contribution of the study is significant in that no previous research has specifically explored how pre-service ESL teachers perceive second language motivation and learner participation or non-participation. The findings of the study also point to a need to incorporate a more comprehensive introduction to L2 motivation in teacher education programs, in order to better familiarize pre-service teachers with the complexity and hybridity of this construct.

**MANUSCRIPT**

## Exploring pre-service English Second Language teachers' interpretation of second language motivation

Over the past few decades, a fairly large body of second language (L2) literature has been focused on motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 1990, 2000, 2001, 2009; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Norton Pierce, 1995), strongly suggesting that this construct plays a role in second language acquisition. In addition, motivating the students is often identified as one of the challenges that L2 teachers face. However, clarifying the concept of L2 motivation is not traditionally the focus of university teacher education programs (Dörnyei, 2001), and when the concept is introduced, the relevant notions are drawn mainly from psychology, where learners' commitment to learning the target language has been analyzed quantitatively (Norton & McKinney, 2011), rather than introduced as part of a socially-situated and complex construct that is affected by social factors such as power dynamics and identity.

L2 teachers typically do make assumptions about why learners demonstrate varying degrees of involvement in the classroom activities and hold certain beliefs about what factors could account for this variation. Nonetheless, many of these teachers might be unaware that the inherent complexity of the language learning process has generated a number of different theories and frameworks to investigate the motivational determinants of L2 acquisition, and they may also be unfamiliar with the fact that the multifaceted and somewhat elusive nature of motivation poses problems for defining, conceptualizing, and operationalizing this concept. Therefore, investigating the teachers' extant beliefs about this topic could be an effective way to identify the gap that needs to be filled by a more comprehensive introduction of contemporary theories of L2 motivation in teacher education programs.

Drawing on different lines of L2 research investigating the construct of motivation, including social psychology (e.g., Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & McIntyre, 1993; Schumman, 1987), the process-oriented approach (e.g., Dörnyei, 2000; Dörnyei & Otto, 1998), and poststructuralist views (e.g., Norton Pierce, 1995; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2000), this study explored how six pre-service teachers in an initial pedagogy course in a Canadian university perceived L2 motivation and how they interpreted L2 learners' participation or non-participation. The study aimed to bring some recognition to the assumptions and beliefs that pre-service teachers take into their classrooms about motivation, and it was hoped that our awareness of such a critical construct would highlight the importance of familiarizing pre-service teachers with the complex and fluid nature of L2 motivation.

### **L2 Motivation Research in SLA**

Research on L2 motivation has experienced fundamental shifts in perspective since Gardner and Lambert's seminal study in 1972. The construct has been investigated from different paradigms, namely social psychology, the process-oriented approach, and more recently, contemporary poststructuralism. After reviewing all three approaches to the study of motivation, and mainly by comparing the socio-psychological and poststructuralist perspectives, this thesis argues that the latter provides a more comprehensive and context-sensitive theorization of motivation that would make it relevant for pre-service teachers.

#### **Socio-psychological approaches to the study of motivation**

Before the 1950s, concepts such as attitude and motivation were rarely found in the SLA literature, and it was commonly accepted that learning a second language primarily involved an individual's cognitive and verbal abilities. Working within a quantitative, empirically based

framework, Gardner and Lambert (1972) introduced L2 motivation research that focused on how learners' perceptions of the target language and its culture and speakers can affect their desire to learn the language. In other words, they examined the individual's orientation as a kind of predisposition towards certain types of goals (Gardner, 1985) and toward the L2 and the L2 community. This view claimed that L2 learners whose attitudes were positive towards the target language and its speakers, that is, integratively motivated, would demonstrate greater effort in learning than learners with less positive attitudes, which in return, would result in greater L2 success. Furthermore, by Gardner's definition, L2 learners were considered to be motivated when they had a goal and an intense desire to learn the language. The practical aspect of motivation in Gardner's theory is instrumental motivation, which is associated with learning a second language for a practical purpose such as finding a better job.

Although the work of Gardner and colleagues (Gardner & McIntyre, 1993; Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997) has had an undeniable influence on the field of L2 motivation and has been the starting point for many researchers in this area, a number of limitations to this earlier social psychological model have been noted by SLA scholars. For example, Norton Pierce (1995), one of the main critics of Gardner's model, argued that its simplicity did not capture the complex nature of motivation. She claimed that by drawing an artificial distinction between the individual and the social world, this type of research did not explain why some "motivated" learners were unsuccessful. Dörnyei (2001) also noted that these early attempts to investigate the link between motivation and L2 learning focused on individualistic and reductionist frameworks that isolated specific affective variables. This is while these affective variables, according to Norton Pierce (1995), are "frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power,

changing over time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways in a single individual” (p. 12).

Building on Gardner's work, Schumann (1987) established the *acculturation model*, which posited that learners will acquire the target language to the extent that they are socially and psychologically integrated into the target language community. According to Schumann, learners' low motivation to integrate into the target language community could result in their psychological isolation, and if they belonged to a low-status, low-income group, they would be socially isolated from the members of the host country. Despite Schumann's attempt to theorize the influence of social factors on L2 learning success, Norton Pierce (1995) noted that his acculturation model did not capture the social complexities of the learning situation. Instead of being considered as individuals with a unique and complex identity, learners were labelled with their nationality (a “Costa Rican” / “Latino” in the case of Alberto, the single participant in Schumann's study), seen as striving to become “American”. On the other hand, the "Costa Rican" and "Latino" community that Alberto was allegedly fully associated with was presented as a rather simply defined, unified, and not-so-diverse group of people. Schumann implied in his conclusion that Alberto was an unmotivated learner, unwilling to learn since he felt secure and comfortable in his Hispanophone community. In other words, according to this model, the burden is on the learner to acculturate to the target language community, and he/she is only portrayed as converging or diverging from target language norms (Pavlenko, 2002). What this interpretation has failed to recognize is that immigrants such as Alberto often have very limited opportunities to use their second language outside the classroom, and if they do, it is frequently with government agencies or during doctor visits and other similar encounters which are normally categorized by unequal power relations between interlocutors (Norton Pierce, 1995;



Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2000). Such power dynamics can make these encounters extremely challenging, and it is often outside the individual's control to establish social relations and to successfully negotiate their positions with regard to a socially and psychologically distant host community (Paton & Wilkins, 2009). Therefore, willingness to communicate in the target language is not simply the personal trait of a learner; rather, it is largely context-dependent (Norton, 2000), and second language learners draw on contextually situated linguistic repertoires to construct and negotiate their identities (Pavlenko, 1998; 2000). Later on, Schumann decided to discontinue integrating social factors into his research since, according to Pittaway (2004), he realized that they could not be quantified for an empirical investigation.

Overall, despite the fact that studies conducted within the socio-psychological paradigm have provided some support for the claims they have made, several SLA scholars have raised theoretical objections to these approaches, referring to a number of biases and reductionist assumptions (e.g., Norton Peirce, 1995; Syed & Burnett, 1999). Some main objections, as Pavlenko (2002) outlines them, are listed here:

- In the socio-psychological paradigm, the world is seen through a monolingual and monocultural lens. Consequently, L2 learners are generally seen as aspiring to acculturate or integrate into a particular group. This may be due to the fact that most studies within this framework have been conducted in English-dominant contexts such as the US, Canada, and the UK. However, this does not reflect the complexity of the modern globalized and multilingual world, in which individuals may be members of various linguistic and cultural communities. Therefore, socio-psychological findings might not be applicable to many foreign language (FL) contexts.

- These approaches attribute a unidirectional and stable nature to the construct of motivation, whereas motivation and social contexts are continuously shaped and reshaped by each other, and an initial success may lead to a greater investment in learning the target language, while a series of failures may lessen motivation and an individual's desire to learn.
- In terms of methodology, the validity of the common measure of socio-psychological studies of motivation (i.e. questionnaires) has been questioned by many critics. It is not clear what the use of multiple questionnaires attempts to measure with respect to qualitative concepts such as motivation and attitudes.
- And finally, as Pavlenko notes, the key criticism of the socio-psychological framework is “the idealised and decontextualized nature attributed to language learning, which is presented as an individual endeavour, prompted by motivation and positive attitudes, and hindered by negative attitudes and perceptions” (p. 281). As such, issues of power, domination and the direct role of context in providing positive or negative learning conditions have been greatly underrepresented.

To summarize, despite the term ‘social’ psychology, the focus in socio-psychological approaches is on the individual (as social being), rather than on the social or cultural collective (as in sociology). As Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) point out, Gardner and Lambert’s (1972) original socio-psychological model of L2 motivation is essentially a theory of the individual, rather than a social or cultural construct, and social and cultural factors are reflected only through the individual’s attitudes and measured through self-report instruments. Moreover, as Pavlenko (2002) notes, “socio-psychological approaches to SLA do not allow us to theorize social contexts

of L2 learning and use, mainly because they neglect the historical and structural processes which set the parameters of social boundaries” (p. 281). If one assumes motivation to be a character trait of an individual L2 learner, those who fail to learn the target language are guilty of not being sufficiently committed to the learning process (Norton & Gao, 2008). In contrast, as Rueda and Moll (1994) assert, motivation is not located solely within the individual but is “socially distributed and created within cultural systems of activities involving the mediation of others” (p. 131). In the next sections, the concept of motivation and learner participation will be explored from more context- and socially-situated perspectives.

### **Process-oriented Model of Motivation**

A rise in the number of cognitive approaches and the importance of individual differences (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012) in SLA led to a more situated analysis of motivation. Established mainly by L2 motivation researchers such as Dörnyei, one of the most influential scholars to conceptualize the construct of motivation, the process-oriented model entails a greater focus on the education field and takes into account the role of learning context, instruction and tasks. This approach considers the temporal aspect of motivation and looks across a broader time span in which behaviour is more contextualized and recognized as having antecedents and consequences (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012). Dörnyei (2001) identified three different phases for L2 motivation; “preactional” or “choice” motivation, which refers to the stage in which motivation is generated; “actional” or “executive” motivation where motivation is maintained; and “postactional” or “retrospection” motivation, which focuses on the learners’ retrospective evaluation and reflection of what happened in the previous phases. The shift toward these cognitive theories of motivation in education and language learning has also brought attention to concepts such goal setting and self-perceptions of competence (Ushioda, 2008). In

this view, the most effective type of motivation is *intrinsic motivation*, which refers to “doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable”, as opposed to *extrinsic motivation*, which refers to “doing something because it leads to a separable outcome” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55).

Dörnyei and his colleagues constantly update their theories of motivation, and their most recent is based explicitly on psychological theories of the self. Drawing on personality psychology and from a more educational and pedagogical perspective to frame L2 motivation, Dörnyei (2005) has proposed an L2 Motivational Self System that consists of three components: the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self and the L2 learning experience. The ideal L2 self is the “L2 –specific facet of one’s ideal self” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). The ought-to L2 self is concerned with “the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes” (Dörnyei, 2009, p.29). The L2 learning experience is based on a learner’s actual engagement and experience with the learning process. Learners who identify with a vision of multiple possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), may acquire the motivational basis for learning the L2. This is different from the earlier socio-psychological views that attributed learning to the identification with (or integrativeness towards) a particular group of target language speakers (Ushioda, 2006). The concept of “self” is considered a purely psychological construct in these views, whereas, as it is reviewed in the next section, identity is better understood when embedded within a social context.

### **Poststructuralist approaches to the study of motivation**

Poststructuralist inquiry in SLA began with Pennycook's (1990) call for a critical approach to applied linguistics (Pavlenko, 2002). Pennycook stressed the “need to rethink language acquisition in its social, cultural, and political contexts, taking into account gender,

race, and other relations of power as well as the notion of the subject as multiple and formed within different discourses” (p. 26). His call was answered by SLA writers such as Norton (2000, 2001, 2010) and Toohey (2000, 2001), who started the trend for studies that focused on the multiple identities of language learners and the institutional constraints affecting language acquisition and instruction. These studies demonstrated that while engaging with different literacy acts, language learners are constantly negotiating their previous understandings, present realities, and future hopes and aspirations; as a result, they often encounter multiple challenges in acquiring the necessary skills to function successfully and develop and adhere to social identities that consistently motivate them in their language-learning context (Norton, 2000).

Understanding the notions of identity and positioning from a poststructuralist perspective is central to understanding how motivation works according to this research paradigm.

Poststructuralist social scientists define social identity as the way individuals negotiate and view their relationship to the world and how it is co-constructed (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Thus, language is considered as an integral part of the various socio-cultural dynamics of human interaction, and the individual is examined in relation to the social world and affective dimensions of identity. Scholars working from this perspective do not generally agree with the notion of “self” as a psychological entity and substitute it with a notion of “subjectivity” as negotiated and constructed through language.

According to literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1981, 1984; as cited in Norton & Toohey, 2011), language consists of situated utterances that are produced when speakers engage in dialogues with others in order to create meaning, rather than a series of idealized and independent forms and structures. In other words, instead of memorizing a set of grammar rules or vocabulary items of a certain language, speakers use language as a tool to participate in

certain speech communities (Bakhtin, 1981; in Norton & Toohey, 2011); therefore, differing social positions could impact an individual's right or desire to speak. Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, Tulviste, & Hagstrom, 1993) is another framework that regards language learning imbedded within a dialogic relationship between an individual and the social world. Sociocultural theory posits that higher order thinking and mental functioning are mediated processes and language is considered as the primary means of this mediation (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's (1977, 1991; as cited in Norton & Toohey, 2011) theories of language, poststructuralist scholars have drawn explicit attention to the relationship between power and discourse, pointing out that interlocutors usually do not share equal “rights” to speak. Depending on the context, opportunities for language use and learning and access to language as a resource are usually distributed unequally and with a preference for the dominant class (Heller, 2008). There are instances in discourse where certain speakers may be positioned at social risk during the interaction and suffer certain disadvantages (Fairclough, 2001). For example, Miller's (2000) study of ESL students' socialisation in an Australian high school demonstrated that opportunities for interaction were mediated by race: the white, fair-haired, and Australian-looking Bosnian ESL students integrated quickly and were able to easily establish friendships with the English speaking students, while Chinese-speaking students remained isolated from the mainstream. These students felt discriminated against and marginalized because, in their perception, neither their peers nor their teachers acknowledged their legitimacy as L2 speakers of English in the same way that they did for their European immigrant peers.

Many studies of language learning have investigated the paradox of positioning and how context- and interlocutor-dependent it could be. For example, in a study of a vocational

English language teacher and her Latina students, Mernard-Warwick (2007) observed that, contrary to the claim (and aim) of a vocational course as an empowering tool, customary pedagogical materials and activities often restrict the students' rights to access and develop advantageous and powerful identities. Auerbach and Burgess (1985) made similar observations in an earlier study of the "hidden curriculum" of a community ESL class, where hierarchical relations were reinforced through the text, and linguistic practices were often found to prepare migrant students for subservient social roles.

With a shift from seeing learners as individual producers of language to regarding them as parts of a "social and historical collectiveness" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 419), these contemporary theories of identity and motivation have highlighted the diverse positions from which L2 learners are able to participate in social life. Both language and a learner's desire to speak from this perspective emerge in the dynamic play of social interactions. In other words, what seems to have enhanced the position of poststructuralist notions among SLA theories is the fact that they represent learners as variously positioned members of social collectives that use language as a dynamic tool and not as individually internalized stable systems (Norton & Toohey, 2011). In addition, communities are seen to consist of such members who variously participate in community practices, and this active participation is considered as 'learning'. This view, as Norton and Toohey (2011) and Pavlenko (2000) state, encourages a move towards carefully examining learning conditions and further assessment of pedagogical tools and practices for their appropriation in any given "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Among the studies that have looked at L2 motivation and success from a poststructuralist perspective, Norton Pierce's (1995) historical study is the one that best illustrated the reconceptualization of L2 motivation as a socially situated construct. Drawing upon the data

collected from one of her earlier studies on the natural (outside the classroom environment) language learning experiences of immigrant women in Canada, Norton Pierce challenged previous conceptualizations of L2 motivation in an attempt to highlight the relationship between identity, power, L2 learners, and the changing social world that surrounds them. Her research revealed inconsistencies in the predictive ability of previous motivation studies of SLA and emphasized the need for more careful ethnographic observation in language research. The participants in Norton Pierce's (1995) study were five immigrant women whom she had first met while she was teaching an ESL course to newcomers in a college in Canada. To conceptualize the different reflections of these women on their language learning experiences and the way they attempted to negotiate their evolving identities, the author drew on the concepts of "subjectivity" and "investment" by referring to Weedon's definition of subjectivity in discourse: "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world" (Weedon, 1987; as cited in Norton Pierce, 1995, p. 15). An anecdote taken from the diary of one of the participants, under the pseudonym Eva, further clarifies Weedon's conceptualization of subjectivity. Eva wrote about her embarrassment and the feeling of being humiliated by one of her colleagues named Gail during a conversation in which she mentioned to her colleague that she did not know the name of an animated TV character (Bart Simpson). By exemplifying this discourse exchange as an instance of power imbalance between L2 learners and native speakers, Norton explains how "Eva remained subject *to* this discourse" (p. 16). In other words, as a result of her marginalized standing, she did not have the opportunity to refuse this position or develop a counter-discourse. Although she was granted a chance to receive input and practice with a native speaker, her subject position may not have allowed her to benefit from it. Norton Pierce further adds that this position (subjectivity) is



susceptible to change, providing support for the view that L2 motivation and learners' desire to participate and speak has a non-static nature. In a later article, Norton (2001) further explained that these learners' non-participation “was not an opportunity for learning from a position of peripherality but an act of resistance from a position of marginality” (p. 165).

Central to Norton’s argument is a critique of the concept of motivation in previous psycholinguistic SLA research. Based on findings from her various studies in this area, Norton states that “SLA theorists have not clearly addressed how relations of power affect interactions between language learners and target language speakers” (Norton Pierce, 1995, p. 9). According to Norton, motivation should not be regarded as a stable trait. Therefore, she calls for the need to reconceptualize the notion of the individual by investigating the circumstances under which a learner can become motivated /demotivated, introverted/extroverted, or inhibited/uninhibited. Hence, she introduces the term "investment", arguing that the women of her study had invested in English as the linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991; as cited in Norton & Toohey, 2011) in Canada, which was also viewed as an investment in the learner’s own identities. Norton (2000) clarifies the relationship between investment and cultural capital: “If learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital. Learners expect or hope to have a good return from that investment - a return that will give them access to hitherto unattainable resources” (p. 10). By symbolic investment, Norton refers to the desire and need learners have for friends, education and similar non-material resources, while material investment refers to the desire for capital goods, real estate and money (Norton, 2001). According to this conceptualization, by creating a safe environment and providing various

opportunities to speak, investment as opposed to “motivation” gives learners the power to “claim their right to speak” (Norton Pierce, 1995, p. 25).

As Norton and Gao (2008) point out, distinctions between motivation and investment postulate different kinds of research questions. While scholars of motivation might ask, for example, “What is the learner’s motivation to learn English?” scholars of investment would ask, “What is the learner’s investment in the language practices of the classroom or community?” (p. 110). In other words, viewing engagement in the process of language learning as investment can motivate the teacher and the researcher to ask themselves about the potential investment (or commitment) of their learners in the language learning practices of their particular classroom, and possibly have them question the nature of some of these practices. For example, a highly “motivated” language learner might not be particularly invested in the linguistic practices of a certain classroom or community that he/she personally finds racist, elitist, or anti-immigrant, and thus avoid participation (Norton & Toohey, 2001). Therefore, he/she might be positioned as a weak or “unmotivated” learner by the teacher or peers.

From a different vantage point and in a more recent qualitative study, Cervatiuc (2009) investigated the process of linguistic and cultural identity formation experienced by adult immigrants to Canada who were professionally successful and highly proficient in the target language (i.e., English). By examining the ways in which the newcomers of her study negotiated their marginal standings in the receiving country, the author redefined the characteristics of “good language learners”. In order to investigate the reasons underlying these individuals' success, her study sought to answer the following three research questions: Who did these learners choose to be?; How did they gain access to Anglophones' social networks?; and Where

did they choose to symbolically belong? The findings revealed three major strategies applied by the informants in order to improve their English proficiency and access meaningful and desirable employment:

- (1) Self-motivating inner dialogue as a counter-discourse to marginalization;
- (2) Attempting to access social networks of native speakers;
- (3) Symbolic belonging to an *imagined community* (Anderson, 1991) of successful, multilingual immigrants (Cerviatiuc, 2009, p. 224).

The term 'imagined community' (or 'imagined communities') refers to the imagined affiliation with members of a community, such as people of a country; even though members of even the smallest nations might never meet, hear from, or come in contact with each other in real life, they often imagine themselves allied with one another (Anderson, 1991). In terms of language learners, multiple memberships in the imagined community of the target language speakers require imagining multiple identities. Unlike the marginalized immigrants in Norton Pierce's (1995) study, by believing in their right of equality and their worthiness as multilingual and multicultural individuals, informants of this study went out of their way to find opportunities to speak with native-speaker interlocutors and gain access to their social networks.

According to the concept of agency, learners have active legitimate participation in language learning and use; they can make informed choices, resist (e.g., refuse to participate in a task, quit a class) or comply, despite having constrained choices that may have been imposed on them by their social circumstances. All successful participants in the previously discussed studies (Eva in Norton Pierce's study and all 20 participants in Cervatiuc's study) drew on their social, cultural, and intellectual resources in order to socialize and find language-learning opportunities. For example, Eva's knowledge of Italian and her knowledge of European countries contributed

to conversations with her co-workers. This made her “change her perception from being an illegitimate speaker of English to a multicultural citizen that has the power to impose reception” (Norton Pierce, 1995, p. 23). The successful learners of Cervatiuc’s (2009) study chose to be bicultural and multilingual individuals and reflected on their identities as being hybrid and hyphenated (e.g., being Canadian-Polish).

As reviewed in this thesis thus far, unlike previous (and mainly psychological) SLA theories, from a poststructuralist view of L2 learning, learners' personalities, learning styles and motivation are not fixed and decontextualized characteristics. Instead, individual learners are seen to be struggling to adopt and claim identities that rightfully position them in their social context. Moreover, as Norton and other poststructuralist researchers have continuously observed, the unequal status and relations of power between native and non-native speakers are often understood and recognized by learners.

To summarize, in taking language to be a form of social practice, poststructuralist approaches have reconceptualized L2 motivation by viewing language not only as symbolic capital but also as a site of identity construction (Pavlenko, 2002). These approaches employ alternative methodologies, such as narratives and journals for examining L2 motivation, learning, and use (Pavlenko, 2002), whereas previous socio-psychological studies favoured surveys, questionnaires and quasi-experimental designs. These more theoretically advanced ways of looking at the social contexts of L2 learning and use can better capture the realities of the post-modern globalized world and offer a unique exploratory lens that does not aim to generalize or quantify complex notions such as motivation and identity.

## **Motivation, and Critical Teacher Education**

From a pedagogical perspective, informed knowledge about the notions discussed above can help lessen some reductionist and simplistic characterizations of the 'self' and the 'other' that can lead to stereotypical representations (Kumaravadivelu, 2008). Although there is a growing body of literature within the field of applied linguistics that addresses these critical theoretical viewpoints around language teaching itself (Hawkins, 2004; Norton, 2000; Pennycook, 2001), accounts of critical language teacher education practices are not easy to find (Hawkins & Norton, 2009).

Among the small number of studies that have attempted to raise critical consciousness about the ways in which power relations function in society is an ethnographic investigation with pre-service teachers in Canada by Goldstein (2004). The student teachers in this study were asked to perform a play written by the researcher herself, and within that play, the participants were asked to identify the issues represented and focus on the power of linguistic privilege. Such awareness-raising activities could be beneficial in drawing pre-service teachers' attention to biases that might exist in the beliefs and presumptions that any teacher might bring into the classroom. In a different setting, Hawkins (2004) investigated interactions in a graduate teacher education class in the US through listserv (an Email list management system) and how it functioned as a dialogic link among the members to construct meaning and understanding. From a situated social perspective, any teacher education course can be conceptualized as an emerging "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger 1991). Therefore, by providing the student teachers with "access to identities and voices from which to speak" (Hawkins, 2004, p. 106), the listserv created a community of practice that allowed the participants to work collaboratively with peers to create social and professional relationships.

Another way of approaching these types of critical teacher education practices is through directly introducing contemporary theories of language acquisition and competency, as done by Pavlenko (2003). After engaging the non-native student teachers of her study in critical self-reflection through linguistic autobiographies, she utilized Cook's (1992) notions of multicompetence to enable the participants to consider themselves as competent and legitimate users of English rather than "failed native speakers". From a similar vantage point, a few other teacher education studies (e.g., Lin, 2004; Stein, 2004) have attempted to promote self-reflection, in order to make pre-service teachers aware of the inherent power dynamics of any form of social interaction and the power differences among cultural groups in order to prepare teachers to challenge them.

Even though the studies discussed above have engaged teachers in some type of critical work, no research to date has specifically addressed the integration of new conceptualizations of L2 motivation in teacher education programs or considered how it might inform pre-service teachers' pedagogical practices. A literature search of teacher education programs did not reveal any research in which L2 motivation is introduced or situated within a theoretical framework that assumes L2 learners to be negotiators in the relations of power. Rather, second language motivation is typically introduced to pre-service teachers as an individual difference construct (i.e., psychological in nature) through a general SLA course, and from a more practical perspective, techniques for motivating students are included in whatever pedagogy courses are offered.

Drawing on the notions reviewed above, this study aimed to fill the gap in the literature by exploring pre-service ESL teachers' perceptions of L2 motivation. In particular, it aimed to investigate the extent to which student teachers regarded L2 motivation as a socially situated

construct. This involved investigating how the teachers interpreted their students' desire to participate in classroom activities and how they positioned their students. To the author's knowledge, this is the first time a study has attempted to explore how pre-service ESL teachers perceive L2 motivation.

### **Study**

The current study took an exploratory qualitative approach to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do pre-service teachers in the initial pedagogy course and practicum in a teacher education program interpret L2 motivation and participation in classroom activities?

RQ2: Are pre-service teachers' perceptions of L2 motivation in line with any views of this construct as being socially situated and dynamic?

### **Design and method**

In order to address these two questions, an exploratory qualitative design was chosen for the following reasons. First, qualitative research methods afford the possibility of investigating the experience and perception of individuals from their own worldview. Qualitative research assumes that there is no observable and objectively measurable reality (Heigham & Croker, 2009). This method of inquiry is based on an assumption that reality is a social construction involving the interpretation and attributed meaning that individuals give to their experiences. Second, as Allwright (2003) states, in exploratory research, understanding is the logical prerequisite to problem solving or any change and improvement. In addition, according to Miller (2001), exploratory practice "aligns itself theoretically with humanistic, non-technical, non-

reductionist, as well as developmental views of education”, and it is in line with a number of theoretical perspectives such as the following:

1. The socio-interactional perspective on what goes on in human interaction (Gumperz, 1982);
2. Recognition of the inherent complexity and idiosyncrasy of classroom life (Gieve & Miller, 2006);
3. Acknowledgement of the ‘situatedness’ of human learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Therefore, exploratory research can engage future teachers in thinking of pedagogic practice as work for understanding and as a way of being in the classroom and of valuing the quality of life experienced in it (Miller, 2001; Allwright, 2003, 2005).

In contrast, motivation research has been dominated by studies using quantitative methods. Quantitative research assumes the existence of a positivist or objective reality. It is assumed that this reality can be observed and measured, void of any influence by the researcher, the methodology, or the environment surrounding the event. Considering the complex and fluid nature of L2 motivation and using a qualitative, exploratory approach, the study reported here aimed to understand how pre-service teachers perceive the construct of motivation, without intending to generalize these observations in any particular way.

## **Context**

### *The Course: General TESL Pedagogy*

The study took place during an introductory TESL pedagogy course at a Canadian university. This course is the first of four pedagogy courses that pre-service teachers (also referred to as student teachers here) take during their Bachelor of Education in the TESL program at this university. It follows two pre-requisite courses that introduce students to



phonology and grammar concepts related to ESL teaching. The general pedagogy course, which runs over a 13-week period, consists of a "theory" and a "practicum" component, which are conducted simultaneously and taught by two different instructors. The required course book is *Learning teaching: The essential guide to English language teaching* (Scrivener, 2011). For the theory component, the student teachers meet two hours per week, during which they are exposed to a set of principles and various techniques of teaching English as a second language. They also watch demonstration videos and do some peer teaching. The practicum component aims to provide the student teachers with an opportunity to apply the principles learned in the theory section. They first observe and later facilitate mini-lessons in an established ESL program in a local community center, described below. They are expected to implement the techniques they have studied to fit the needs and interests of their adult ESL learners. They are filmed twice during their lesson facilitations and engage in reflective activities through guided self- and peer-evaluations, which are discussed during semi-weekly seminars.

After completing their B.Ed. degree, most of these student teachers will teach in Quebec elementary and secondary schools, following the guidelines set by the Ministère de l'Éducation of Quebec; they are expected to be familiar with the professional competencies (PC) required for Ministry certification. The PC's that are covered in the introductory pedagogy course include:

*PC # 1: To act as a professional inheritor, critic and interpreter of knowledge or culture when teaching students;*

*PC # 2: To communicate clearly in the language of instruction, both orally and in writing, using correct grammar, in various contexts related to teaching;*

*PC # 3: To develop teaching/learning situations that are appropriate to the students concerned and the subject content with a view to developing the competencies targeted in the programs of study;*

*PC # 6: To plan, organize and supervise a class in such a way as to promote students' learning and social development;*

*PC # 12: To demonstrate ethical and responsible professional behaviour in the performance of his or her duties.*

Of particular relevance to this thesis study is PC # 6.

The author of the study reported here was the teaching assistant for this course from January 2012 until April 2013, and as one of the tasks for this position, she observed and evaluated some of these lesson facilitations alongside the instructor of the practicum section. In order to avoid any conflict of interest, the lesson facilitations of the six participants in the study (described below) were not evaluated by the author.

#### *The Teaching Context*

The lessons in the practicum section of the course take place at a community center in Montreal, Quebec. The center offers six-week English communication and conversation classes that are held twice a week. Volunteer teachers, including the student teachers in the TESL general pedagogy course, facilitate the classes. The learners come from a wide variety of backgrounds but mainly consist of newcomers to Canada.

#### *Exposure to Theories of L2 Motivation*

The student teachers' exposure to some of the theories of L2 motivation in the B.Ed. program is through a TESL language acquisition course. The course book required for this course is the third edition of Lightbown and Spada's (2006) *How Languages are Learned*. The concept of

motivation is introduced in a brief section entitled “Motivation and Attitudes” in a chapter about individual differences (pp. 63-65). The authors introduce Gardner and Lambert’s (1972) earlier theories of motivation, including the concepts of integrative and instrumental motivation and offer a brief criticism of how “it is difficult to distinguish between these two types of orientation” and also how “earlier research on motivation tended to conceptualize it as a stable character trait of the learner” (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; p. 64). They acknowledge that more recent conceptualizations take into account the changes that the learners might go through and therefore attribute a more dynamic nature to motivation. Dörnyei’s (2001) process-oriented model is also introduced and contextualized by using an example of a Polish speaker who is learning Spanish. Finally, in a subsection entitled “Motivation in the classroom” and by drawing on Crookes and Schmidt’s (1991) review work on how pedagogy and motivation interact in an L2 classroom, Lightbown and Spada (2006) offer pedagogical practices that might increase levels of motivation.

### **Participants**

The participants in this exploratory study were six Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Second Language (B.Ed. TESL) students enrolled in the TESL general pedagogy course at a Canadian University. The student teachers were not expected to have any prior teaching experience although one of the participants had taught ESL prior to entering the B.Ed. program. The participants were all proficient speakers of English; four were native speakers of English and two spoke other languages as their first language. All six participants were self-selected from a sample of 21 pre-service teachers enrolled in the TESL general pedagogy course. An electronic invitation (See Appendix A) was sent out two weeks prior to the beginning of data collection. The criteria for recruiting the participants depended on their teaching schedule and also their availability to participate in some of the activities described below. Table 1 shows the

participants' demographics and their previous or concurrent exposure to theories of L2 motivation through the TESL language acquisition course described above.

Table 1

*Participants' demographics*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>First Language(s)</b>	<b>Previous Teaching</b>	<b>Exposure to L2 Motivation Theories</b>
Amy	English, Hebrew	No	Yes
Angela	Romanian	Yes	Yes
John	English	No	Yes
Paul	English	No	Yes
Rosa	English, French	No	Yes
Sarah	Arabic	No	No

### **Data collection**

Data collection started in mid-February, 2013, about a month after the participants had begun the pedagogy course, and it continued until mid-April. In addition to field notes, the following three instruments were employed to collect the data and to address the research questions:

#### *1. Journal Entries*

The participants were asked to write five journal entries during the course of the study. For each journal entry, they were prompted to write one or two paragraphs reflecting on a specific topic that was designed to elicit their interpretation of L2 motivation. The journal entry questions and prompts were piloted with the student teachers from a previous TESL general pedagogy class, and some modifications were made for the current study. The first journal entry also acted as a narrative since it required the participants to reflect on their previous L2 learning experiences. Narrative is a type of discourse practice that describes events and offers opinions,

but it also modifies and constructs them. By telling a story, individuals can contribute to the shaping of the social beliefs and practices they describe, and this is done by identifying themselves to others and to themselves (Gergen, 1994). In this case, by recalling an earlier L2 learning experience, participants told a personal story that recounted previous life events, and at the same time provided insight into how they perceived L2 motivation. For the rest of the journal entries, the participants were asked to either reflect on the concept of motivation in general, or to observe a particular language learner in their classes and answer a set of specific questions that mainly aimed to elicit information about how they perceived learners' participation/non-participation (See Appendix B for journal entry questions and prompts). All journal entries were later examined for patterns of how the participants perceived and interpreted L2 motivation.

## *2. Stimulated Recall Sessions/Interviews*

As part of their course requirements, the student teachers of this study were videotaped twice while facilitating lessons during the semester. The video-recordings of the six participants were used for a stimulated recall and interview session that was organized individually with each of them a few weeks after their second recorded teaching. The author watched the video-recordings beforehand, in order to prepare for the recall sessions, and chose specific segments to watch with each participant. During the recall session, the video was paused at certain segments, and the participants were asked to reflect on what was going on during that segment in order to provide insights into their thought processes. The recall session ranged from 25-40 minutes in length and took place in a quiet research office located in the university. The sessions were audio recorded and later transcribed. Also, after each recall session, a summary sheet of what went on during the interview and the researcher's initial thoughts was filed for use during the analysis.

Unlike a survey, where participants may report certain thoughts to positively impress the researcher, this introspective technique was more likely to produce data that reflected what the participants *actually* did and thought. Nunan (1992) defines introspection as “the process of observing and reflecting on one's thoughts, feelings, motives, reasoning processes, and mental states with a view determining the ways in which these processes and states determine our behavior” (p. 115). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the verbal reports produced during these sessions are assumed to have provided insight into how the participants interpreted their students’ participation/non-participation, as well as various classroom encounters and task types that might have enhanced or hindered the students' willingness to participate.

### *3. Group Discussion*

Group discussion was another data collection procedure used in the study. A group meeting was held toward the end of the semester in mid-April. Attendance at this meeting was voluntary, and an online poll was created to determine the date. Four participants out of six attended the group discussion. During the session, which lasted about 60 minutes, the participants were provided with discussion questions and stimulus materials, including two scenarios to respond to and discuss (See Appendix C). At the beginning of the session the participants were asked to draw their best and worst teaching moments at the community center and use the drawings to explain their experiences for their peers; in other words, the drawings acted as pictorial vignettes (Veal, 2002) to enable them to tell their stories.

The participants were also given two scenarios related to the concept of motivation about two language learners and were asked to discuss and interpret the events in the scenario. Both scenarios were adapted from previous motivation research (Norton Pierce, 1995; Ushioda, 2009) and were considered appropriate for the participants in this study. The first scenario was about

Sean (pseudonym), a participant in Ushioda's study who was studying French at a university in Dublin. During his initial interviews, Sean had claimed that his relationship with his French girlfriend was among the main factors that had motivated him to learn the language. Later on, according to Ushioda, despite experiencing a rather bitter break-up, he continued learning French and even went on to earn a PhD in French studies. The participants were first asked to predict how Sean's learning progress might have been affected after the break-up. Then, they were asked to reflect on what had actually happened and explain why he had successfully continued his French studies. The second scenario was about Eva (pseudonym), a newcomer to Canada and a participant in Norton Pierce's (1995) diary study with immigrant women. The participants in the current study were asked to reflect on two interview excerpts in which Eva had explained why she resisted engaging in conversations with her coworkers. The two excerpts were as follows:

*"When I see that I have to do everything and nobody else cares about me because--then how can I talk to them? I hear they doesn't care about me and I don't feel to go and smile and talk to them."*

*"I think because when I didn't talk to them, and they didn't ask me, maybe they think I'm just like--because I had to do the worst type of work there. It's normal."*

While analyzing the scenarios provided insight into how the participants interpreted participation and non-participation, it also generated personal narratives where they recalled (or were encouraged to recall) similar situations and express how they felt and reacted in those situations. All through the discussion, the participants were encouraged to talk to one another, ask questions, exchange anecdotes and comment on each other's experiences and points of view. The researcher's role during the meeting was that of a moderator, facilitating the discussion, prompting the participants to speak, and encouraging everyone to participate. The meeting was

audio recorded and selected parts, where the discussion was related to motivation and participation, were later transcribed.

### **Approach to data analysis**

The approach to analyzing the data was qualitative content analysis. Holsti (1969) offers a broad definition of content analysis as, "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (p. 14). Bryman (2004) defines qualitative content analysis as "probably the most prevalent approach to the qualitative analysis of documents", which "comprises a searching-out of underlying themes in the materials being analyzed" (p.392).

Since this study aimed to theorize from the concept of motivation and learner participation itself rather than from categories across cases, the data collected were analyzed holistically (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998) as follows: the journal entries and interview transcripts were read multiple times, the author's global impressions were noted, and initial convergent and divergent categories were identified. In this holistic approach, the data were analyzed in two different steps (described below) in order to identify text that appeared to be relevant to the research questions.


To answer the first research question regarding pre-service teachers' interpretation of L2 motivation, the researcher searched for descriptive textual elements such as adjectives that were used to describe the learners (e.g., shy, introverted, open, motivated). The segments of the text that included such elements were bracketed and extracted from the rest of the data. The analysis was done in two different steps. First, relevant data for each participant were put together to identify any descriptive language that was found. Then, data generated through similar prompts or questions for all six participants were organized together to see whether there were any



similarities in the way the participants described motivation and participation. The following tables demonstrate both steps in which the generated data were analyzed.

Table 2


*Approach to data analysis: by participant*



<b>Participant 1</b>	<b>Participant 2</b>	<b>Participant 3</b>	<b>Participant 4</b>	<b>Participant 5</b>	<b>Participant 6</b>
Journal Entry Data	Journal Entry Data	Journal Entry Data	Journal Entry Data	Journal Entry Data	Journal Entry Data
Interview Data	Interview Data	Interview Data	Interview Data	Interview Data	Interview Data
Group Discussion Data	Group Discussion Data	Group Discussion Data	Group Discussion Data	Group Discussion Data	Group Discussion Data

Table 3

*Approach to data analysis: by instrument*



<b>Participant 1</b>	<b>Participant 2</b>	<b>Participant 3</b>	<b>Participant 4</b>	<b>Participant 5</b>	<b>Participant 6</b>
Journal Entry Data	Journal Entry Data	Journal Entry Data	Journal Entry Data	Journal Entry Data	Journal Entry Data
Interview Data	Interview Data	Interview Data	Interview Data	Interview Data	Interview Data
Group Discussion Data	Group Discussion Data	Group Discussion Data	Group Discussion Data		

To answer the second research question: “Are pre-service teachers’ perceptions of L2 motivation in line with any views of this construct as being socially situated and dynamic?”, data were analyzed to see what patterns emerged and whether there were any traces of conceptualizing motivation as outlined in the literature. For example, any instances in which the participants had reported a change in the way the learners participated were noted, the transcripts related to that section were bracketed, any relevant words or phrases in that section were identified and copied and pasted into a table. In the following excerpt from the interview data,

one of the student teachers, Paul, is describing how a learner who usually did not participate responded differently during one of the lessons:

*“She actually sounded quite fluent. All of a sudden she was talking about herself. I didn’t realize she could talk so fluently because during the activities and class discussions it was like pulling teeth with her sometimes.”*

To analyze this excerpt, relevant parts of the response, such as *“actually sounded quite fluent”*, *“all of sudden”*, *“I didn’t realize”*, *“because”*, and *“it was like pulling teeth with her”* were first bracketed and then analyzed. For instance, Paul’s use of the word *“sounded”* instead of stating that the student *“was”* fluent, confirms how unexpected he found this *“sudden”* change in the student’s performance. The word *“because”* reflects a cause and effect relationship between how the student normally performed during the activities and how Paul saw her motivation based on her unengaged presence as *“it was like pulling teeth with her.”*

In the last stage of the analysis, field notes, the summary sheets completed after each recall/interview session and the group meeting, and any notes that included the researcher’s earlier assumptions about the data were reviewed again, and necessary additions were made to the analysis of the data generated through journal entries, interview sessions and group discussion.

The results and discussion are presented in three sections. The first reports on the narratives and participants’ personal stories generated during all stages of data collection. Then, in order to present the findings from different angles, and to answer the first research question, the second section of the results offers a summary of the data generated for each participant and through each instrument. Finally, the third section summarizes data relevant to the second research question. The results are mainly presented through excerpts that have been transcribed

without changing any grammar, punctuation, or wording. The excerpts are generally short, and sometimes specific words and phrases such as adjectives and descriptive language that are referred to in the analysis have been marked within the text.

### **Results and discussion**

In the following sections, the themes that emerged within and across data collected through all three instruments will be discussed through exemplars or text excerpts that have been chosen inductively to represent the content of the larger data set. These excerpts provide insight into how the participants viewed and verbalized the concept of motivation and participation at the time of data collection.

#### **Personal stories of motivation and participation**

Participants narrated stories of motivation and participation in response to their first journal entry prompt and also during the group discussion session. The first journal entry prompt asked the participants to reflect on a specific experience learning a second or foreign language, what encouraged them to learn it, what they hoped to gain from the study of that language, and when they felt most comfortable and willing to participate in the class or hesitant and unwilling.

Most of the participants saw their motivation to learn a second language as either integrative or instrumental (Gardner, 1985) and affected by both internal and external factors. For instance, Amy described her reason to learn Spanish as “*to learn the language that half my family knew and was able to communicate with*”, which demonstrates an integrative orientation of motivation. She explained that even though her grandmother had attempted to teach her the language, she “*never really got the chance to learn*” until she went to high school and decided that she “*wanted to change that outcome*”. This illustrates an intrinsic view of motivation or, in other words, “motivation from within” (Ushioda, 2008). Assigning a more pragmatic and

practical role to motivation (Gardner, 1985), later in her narrative Amy describes learning Spanish as an instrument and key to access opportunities in other parts of the world:

*“If I learn the language well enough it will play a big role in my future because knowing Spanish is like speaking French in Quebec, it’s a very good language to learn to get by in other countries.”*

Two of the participants, John and Paul, stated that marrying their francophone wives, moving to a French-speaking city, and being able to communicate with their in-law families were their main reasons to learn French, but John later explained how after a year, his mainly integrative motivation started to shift toward an instrumental orientation:

*“I realized that English alone was not going to suffice if I wanted what I would consider a quality job.”*

John’s statement about wanting a job that he “would consider a quality job” could also be interpreted as a display of agency from a sociolinguistic perspective (Duff, 2012) and connected with Norton’s (2000) construct of *investment*. John’s deliberate choice of learning French seems to be based on a cost-benefit assessment in light of his desire to obtain a job that he would consider appropriate. In other words, learning French is seen as a resource that would put him in a more powerful identity position (Norton, 2000, 2010).

A shift in orientation was also mentioned by Rosa when she explained how her passion to learn languages changed the way she participated in a mandatory German course. She explained that her *“fascination with languages in general”* motivated her to learn more about the language and its culture as she thought *“learning many languages makes a person more enriched and cultured”*. Rosa reinforced her conceptualization of motivation as a mainly intrinsic construct (Ryan & Deci, 2000) during the group discussion:

*“In terms of language learning, just from my own experience, it's better if your motivation is personal and intrinsic. [...] If you don't have an interest in the language itself, you'll get bored and you'll say: "I know how to say hello, how are you?" and that's it.”*

For Rosa, learning a language is seen as an end in itself which produces pleasant rewards such as enjoying the learning process and developing knowledge, or as she stated in her journal, *“absorbing one of the many facets of human knowledge”*. According to Ushioda (2008), an intrinsically motivated learner demonstrates spontaneous learning behavior, which explains how Rosa continued to learn about the German language and culture despite being in a mandatory course for which she lacked initial interest.

In the case of two of the participants, Angela and Sarah, motivation to learn foreign languages, especially English, seemed to be externally regulated. For example, in her narrative, Angela reported how her mother's encouragement motivated her to learn languages other than Russian, which was the dominant second language to learn in Romania at the time:

*“I had to transfer to another school because my mom didn't want me to learn Russian. She has always said that I had a “talent” for learning foreign languages and that sort of encouraged me to study them.”*

The fact that Angela seemed to have benefited from this rather traditional approach provides an example of motivation as a complex construct, as it challenges the common assumption that externally imposed motivation may not be as effective as internalized and self-determined motivation (Ushioda, 2008). During the group discussion session, and drawing on her experience in communist Romania, Angela stated that motivation to learn a second language gave her a

purpose that could be personal and sometimes external. She considered the end of communism in Romania and the liberty to travel to other countries as her main reason to learn English:

*“The frontiers were opened and we had the liberty to travel all over Europe thing which was forbidden during communism. Learning English became important because it was soon viewed as the main communicative language and I realized that if I wanted to travel and see new countries, I had to learn English.”*

In this excerpt, similar to John’s story and linked with the concept of *investment*, learning English is seen as a symbolic resource that liberated Angela from her isolation from the rest of the world in communist Romania and fulfilled her desire to travel the world. Also, in a similar narrative, while explaining how she had had the opportunity to learn both French and English in Lebanon, Sarah saw being able to speak multiple foreign languages as a key that "opens much more opportunities in one's future."

In response to a question asking when they felt most comfortable in class or willing to participate in the activities or what made them hesitant or not willing to participate, most of the participants reported that their investment in the class activities and their willingness to participate depended on the situations that they encountered in the class. For example, for Sarah, Paul, and John, the role of peers seemed to be an important factor as they described how the fact that the other students did not take the class seriously or would speak their L1 instead of the target language discouraged them from volunteering to speak out during class. In Paul’s and John's cases, it appeared that, as the only Anglophone speakers in their classes, they felt marginalized when other L1's were spoken by students in group activities. Paul reported that to him, those students did not seem *“as interested in making an effort”* and were *“of a lower level who struggled with the language”*, and this made him hesitant to participate. John also explained

how during group work his “*confidence subsided again because the other students who spoke the same language would begin to use it again.*”

The type of classroom activity was also mentioned as an important factor that affected participation. For example, in Amy's narrative, even though she described herself as “*always willing to participate in the activities*”, she reported that the nature of the classroom activities affected her “*investment*” and that she resisted participating in classroom activities that she found unrelated to her purpose for learning the language:

*“I started to realize that my teacher was focusing more on grammar than on fluency and I was able to read and understand some of what I was learning but couldn't talk. As a student in that class I was very attentive and really wanted to learn something but as the class progressed I started to become disengaged and started to talk with friends instead of paying attention.”*

Her initial investment was affected by the decisions made by her teacher in the classroom and the type of tasks that were being offered as she found grammar activities irrelevant to her goal of becoming fluent in the target language. In a rather different experience, Angela reported that she felt more comfortable and at ease with her use of English during grammar activities and anything that required grammar knowledge since she saw grammar as her “*strongest side.*” On the other hand, she explained how she “*hated the oral part of the English class*” as she was “*terrorized by coming in front of everyone [...] and afraid of making a mistake or getting a bad mark.*”

Rosa's comment is also related to the type of the classroom activities. She reported how as a typically “quiet” student, she felt more comfortable during group activities in which she preferred to receive feedback from her peers in a less threatening environment:

*“I participated in group activities as I was with a group of close friends, and we were all quite proficient so the activities were fairly easy for us, and if one of us didn’t understand I was sure to get corrections that were accurate and non-judgemental.”*

In this example, Rosa’s use of the words “we” and “with a group of friends” could be interpreted as a division that she created by placing her friends and herself as “proficient speakers” of the language and therefore worthy of talking to (Norton, 2000, 2010) on one side, and the rest of the class on the other. As a result of this type of positioning, she only actively engaged in activities that involved speaking with legitimate interlocutors, who in turn would provide her with the benefit of “*accurate and non-judgmental*” feedback.

In their narratives, the participants offered insight into how they interpreted their own motivation to learn a second language through recounting various instances of their previous experiences, such as the desire to change a situation they were not satisfied with (Amy’s story of learning Spanish) or learning a second language as an investment or as a key to access various opportunities, including admission to the community of the speakers of the target language. Moreover, their stories of when they were more or less willing to participate in classroom activities revealed how they each had distinct learning environments in which they felt more comfortable.

### **RQ1: Pre-service teachers’ interpretation of L2 motivation and participation**

The rest of the journal entries and the questions that were addressed during the interview sessions and the group meeting aimed to explore how the participants interpreted their students’ motivation and their participation in classroom activities. Accordingly, adjectives and other descriptive language used by the participants that contained relevant information to answer the



first research question were bracketed. Figure 1 is a screenshot of a table containing sample descriptive language bracketed in earlier stages of the analysis.

Figure 1

### Sample descriptive language

Participant / Instrument	Amy	Angela	John	Paul	Rosa	Sarah
Journal entries	<p>"Ready to participate"</p> <p>"Always eager"</p> <p>"Some students are really shy"</p> <p>"Great student - always asks questions"</p> <p>"Actively engaging with her peers"</p> <p>"Always very quiet"</p>	<p>"She seemed curious, willing to know me and to communicate with me"</p> <p>"She has the same experience that many of us had when we first came to Canada"</p> <p>"Her attitude also suggests she has a specific goal for being there."</p> <p>"She communicates a lot (mostly non-verbal), she's energetic, happy with herself and her answers or the way she carries the activity (always smiling)."</p> <p>"She looks for the teacher's approval and guidance and she accepts corrective feedback."</p>	<p>"She seems confident in herself when volunteering responses"</p> <p>"Perhaps she wilfully would rather stay in a lower level so that she can be the strongest"</p> <p>"She's extroverted and very talkative"</p> <p>"She is very vocal"</p>	<p>"He seems like an eager student, who takes the class seriously"</p> <p>"He works in the food industry, and I think his good work ethic is reflected in the classroom."</p> <p>"He seemed motivated; he initiated communication with his partner"</p> <p>"He would benefit from conversational exercises that are geared towards things that are both functional for him and relevant to his interests."</p>	<p>"Quite proficient"</p> <p>"Accurate and non-judgmental"</p> <p>"Very motivated and already quite proficient"</p> <p>"Not afraid to ask questions"</p> <p>"Not very loud or imposing"</p> <p>"Focused"</p> <p>"Always seems very motivated and interested in the classroom"</p> <p>"He seemed to be keen on learning and very motivated, which would probably explain his eagerness to work."</p> <p>"His eagerness is fuelled by his proficiency."</p>	<p>"Seems very eager"</p> <p>"An introvert"</p> <p>"Actively participating"</p>
Interview session	<p>"She's an outgoing person."</p> <p>"She's more shy, reserved [...] but maybe outside class she would be more outgoing."</p> <p>"She was a very student shy from the beginning"</p>	<p>"He was very open. He was from Haiti, learning English to have a better job."</p> <p>"I think it was their personality and their willingness to learn."</p>	<p>"The students were receptive."</p> <p>"He had always been a willing participant."</p> <p>"Depending on the culture, some people are a little more involved and some are a little more reserved."</p>	<p>"He was someone a bit more reserved."</p> <p>"He didn't seem lost; he was just not the most outgoing of students."</p> <p>"The students didn't come out of their shells until the very end."</p>	<p>"She was really quiet, polite and attentive. I don't want to be racist, but that's like an Asian student thing."</p> <p>"She was there dutifully taking notes."</p>	<p>"She is more shy than the others and more quiet"</p> <p>"He said he's an extrovert but he looks more like an introvert."</p> <p>"He was always the same."</p>

One of the most relevant pieces of data to address RQ1 was produced when the concept of motivation was explicitly discussed during the group meeting. In this instance, after analyzing one of the scenarios about a language learner named Sean (See Appendix C), the participants were asked to describe what motivation, and specifically L2 motivation, meant to them. Out of the four participants who were present during the meeting, three (Amy, Angela, and Rosa) described motivation as a type of psychological predisposition towards certain types of goals (Gardner, 1985). Amy defined motivation as:

*“Wanting to do something. Having the will and the want. You can set yourself your own goal and be motivated towards that goal. When learning a language, maybe having a conversation with someone, to speak it with your boyfriend girlfriend”*

While she assigned an integrative orientation to motivation by seeing the end goal as the ability to converse with the target language speakers, her use of the words “*will*” and “*want*” implies a high level of agency. The statement “*set yourself your own goal and be motivated towards that goal*” describes agency as an act that an individual performs (i.e., behaviour), rather than something that he/she possesses. This view might be in line with sociocultural perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch et al., 1993; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) in which agency is not seen as a character trait, and it contains both “intermental” and “intramental” activity (Wertsch et al., 1993). That is, thinking and learning occur first at a social level and between people engaged in a shared sociocultural activity and later on individually (Vygotsky, 1978). In a similar definition, and by drawing on her experience of living in communist Romania, Angela also described motivation as a purpose that could be both “*personal and sometimes external*”. In contrast, by describing motivation as personal and intrinsic, Rosa’s conceptualization assigned a more psychological and less situated and contextualized nature to the construct:

*“You want to learn not because you have to or because of your girlfriend. If you don’t have an interest in the language itself, you’ll get bored”*

For Rosa, an initial intrinsic interest in the language itself seems to be an important character trait needed to become a successful language learner.

In terms of the nature of motivation as it appeared in the participants' verbal accounts, a mostly static nature was attributed to the concept of L2 motivation, as all three definitions reported above demonstrated. However, Paul, another participant who attended the group

meeting, offered a rather different point of view. By drawing on his own experience of learning French, he explained how his initial integrative motivation to learn the language because of his Francophone wife and her parents was positively or negatively affected by various situations and other experiences, such as how he felt when he “*successfully ordered at a restaurant and dealt with somebody in French on the phone*” or the first time he had a “*real*” conversation with someone. In addition to seeing motivation as a non-static and evolving construct that “*changes*”, Paul explained how his motivation shifted from feeling that he had no option but to learn French (describing how he needed to speak French if he “*wanted to get on their (his in-laws’) good side*”) toward a feeling of competence when he was able to use the target language in real-life contexts. He also added how he found it “*demotivating*” when he felt less linguistically competent compared to other people in a conversation.

When asked to observe and comment on their students’ participation in one of the journal entries and also during the recall sessions, the participants used a variety of adjectives and descriptive language to illustrate how the students engaged in classroom activities and why they acted that way. Most of the participants chose positive examples of participation for their journal entries. For example, when Amy was asked to speculate about a student that she had just met in one of her classes, she chose one that she described as “*always smiling and always ready to participate*”. In another observation, she described the same student as actively engaged in the activity because “*she is interested in the topic of discussion and she really wants to learn.*” In this example, Amy seems to see motivation as an internally driven behavior of an invested individual (Ushioda, 2008). Rosa also described a student in her class as “*keen on learning and very motivated, which would probably explain his eagerness to work.*” Similar to other verbal accounts from Rosa, this excerpt also supports her view of motivation as a cognitive intrinsic

construct. Explaining about the same student, similar to Paul, she attributed the student's active participation to competence:

*“I think his eagerness is fuelled by his proficiency, which in turns is rewarded with progress and learning. He is a very strong speaker of English already, which allows him to perform well in the activities, and he understands new concepts almost right away. This proficiency is no doubt motivating, and so he works harder and learns more at a faster rate.”*

Seeing the student's proficiency as a motivating factor is in line with cognitive views of motivation which focus on “the patterns of thinking that shape motivated engagement in learning” (Ushioda, 2008; p. 21). In this example, the student's positive self-perception of his competence is considered as “fuel” for his learning and progress.

In an earlier journal entry (See Appendix B, Journal Entry 2) and after their first encounter with the students, the participants were asked to choose a specific student to describe and also predict what might positively or negatively affect their success. Sarah chose a student that she found “*a bit shy*” who seemed “*very eager to learn the new language although he is a quiet and shy person.*” She stated her reason for choosing that particular student was because he reminded her of herself “*being an introvert person that speaks only when needed but in the same time I like to learn new things and I tend to be very quick at learning them.*” She further explained that she wanted to see how being a quiet and shy person may affect learning a new language. She predicted that “*being comfortable with the teacher and other students and enjoying the activities and topics of study*” would lead to successful learning for the student while “*being bored, shy and unhappy with the rest of the students would have a negative effect.*” In this statement, and in contrast to Rosa, Sarah acknowledged the role of external and contextual

factors that might put the student in a position from which he might be more or less willing to participate. However, there is a slight contradiction in the way she did not regard shyness as hindering the learning process in her earlier journal entry but later described it as having a negative effect. After observing the same student during a few lessons, she confirmed that despite being a “*very quiet and shy student*”, he is a good and ambitious learner who is also “*a good listener and absorbs knowledge very well.*” In another instance during the recall session when she was asked to comment on why one of the students was not actively participating in the lesson, she explained that she was “*probably listening*”. In all these instances, Sarah seemed to clearly link the way her students participated with her own experiences and her sometimes contradictory beliefs of how certain character traits may or may not affect successful learning.

Among the participants, John seemed the most likely to assign to his students various personality traits that he saw as fueling or hindering their motivation. For example, he attributed one of his students’ active participation to her “*extroverted*” personality and to the fact that she was generally “*vocal*” and “*talkative*”. In contrast, Paul seemed more aware of the different patterns of participation depending on the surrounding context and the learning situation factors. For instance, during the recall session, he reported that one of the students was more engaged when talking to a partner but less talkative when it came to whole class discussions:

*“He seemed hesitant to speak when I motioned towards him to give an example. I think he acted the one way with his partner during the activity because he is socially motivated and good at creating a relaxed atmosphere. I think he acted in a more reserved way in front of the whole class because he is self-conscious about making mistakes in front of all his peers.”*

Observing this distinctive way of participation demonstrates how Paul was able to notice that learning and active participation could be a “situated experience” (Norton & Toohey, 2001) where individuals find various ways of exercising agency by choosing to engage in one type of activity and resisting another.

During the interview, Paul recalled a story about another student whom he found an “*interesting character*”. He explained that the student came to every class but “*seemed as though she did not want to be there.*” He noted that “*she barely paid attention to what was being said*” and never knew what the activity was about. He even recalled that at some point the student was clipping her fingernails in class and had headphones on. He found the situation difficult and said he “*wasn’t sure how to act with her.*” When asked whether he ever saw a difference in the way she participated, Paul replied:

*“She was there every week and she did well on the test, 84%, which I was totally surprised by because she didn’t seem to be following anything in the classes. Every now and again she’d surprise me with something, like she would make a statement.”*

In response to whether he ever tried to find out why the student acted that way, Paul replied:

*“No, I didn’t. Maybe I should have...”*

Later on, he was asked again to recall a specific event in which he might have observed a different pattern in the student’s participation. He recounted a lesson about employment during which the student had appeared actively engaged. He expressed his amazement about how fluent the student sounded:

*“All of a sudden she was talking about herself...I didn’t realize she could talk so fluently because during the activities and class discussions it was like pulling teeth with her sometimes.”*

Paul's description of this student exemplifies participation as a voluntary act of an individual and as a way of exercising one's agency (Norton & Toohey, 2001). Choosing to participate or to resist depends on how individuals find themselves situated within an interaction, and it entails negotiating ways of engagement with imagined communities of practices (Anderson, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Also linked with this is the theory of *possible selves* (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Dörnyei, 2009), which explains how individuals' decisions and behaviors are shaped by their ideas of what they desire to become or what they might be afraid of becoming. Therefore, Paul's student's desire to participate in the activity about employment and to talk about her previous experiences as a professional seemed like an identity position from which she felt comfortable to speak since she had immediate access to that particular imagined community of practice (the community of practice of accountants in her case). It was clearly her choice to vocalize her existing knowledge when it gave value to her identity "in the linguistic marketplace" (Norton, 2000) and stay quiet when she lacked investment or access in other particular imagined communities. As a teacher of the class, Paul's statement "*I wasn't sure how to act with her*" and the fact that he never tried to investigate why the student resisted participation provides evidence for how unaware teachers might be of the possible underlying reasons for a student's non-participation. It could also be representative of an oversimplification of the concept of motivation and participation and an example of how teachers might naturally expect their students to constantly show the same level of engagement in classroom activities regardless of how they are situated within the learning context.

Another instance that provided insight into the participants' perceptions of motivation and participation occurred during the group discussion when they were asked to comment on a scenario (Ushioda, 2009) about a learner called Sean who had initially started to learn French at

a university in Dublin because of his French girlfriend. The participants were asked to predict how Sean's learning would be affected after he breaks up with his girlfriend. Most predicted that Sean would stop learning French. For example, by stating that "*he's not going to have that extrinsic motivation anymore*", Angela demonstrated that she saw motivation as solely linked to the reason that Sean started learning French. In contrast, Rosa speculated that whether Sean would continue learning French or not would depend on "*his attitude towards language learning when he goes in*". She linked it to her own experience learning Finnish because of her boyfriend's heritage but described this extrinsic motivation as "*just extra boost*" for her intrinsic interest in language learning and language. She further predicted that Sean would continue learning French if he was interested before starting to learn the language. This conceptualization assigns a rather idealized and decontextualized nature to language learning, where success depends on the individual's effort and is prompted by a positive attitude toward the target language regardless of contextual factors (Pavlenko, 2002).

For the other scenario, the participants were asked to discuss the case of an immigrant woman called Eva (Norton Pierce, 1995) and why she resisted engaging in conversations with her Canadian co-workers. They were given two quotes from Eva and were asked to interpret them (See Appendix C). The participants' interpretation demonstrated their awareness of the inherent power imbalance between Eva as a marginalized immigrant woman and her co-workers (Norton Pierce, 1995). For example, Rosa inferred that Eva was "*probably intimidated by the fact that she's not fluent and a native speaker*" and that made her "*scared*" to talk to her native speaker co-workers. In response to why she thought Eva might have been scared, she explained that if she was in the same situation, she would have been afraid to be judged based on where she comes from and the quality of her language. She added that she would be afraid that they "*would*



*not accept her for trying*". Rosa's interpretation confirmed a marginalized individual like Eva's conception of herself as an "illegitimate" speaker of English.

At some point during the group discussion, Amy asked about the kind of job that Eva had to do. Angela responded:

*"I guess the...I don't know...of the immigrant; you'll be seen as being inferior to the others and you always start from the base. Even if you have a PhD or a degree from your country, you'll start from the beginning. The type of job you get is what Canadians don't want and because you have to..."*

Angela's response also confirmed how as an immigrant, Eva had a marginalized position which would naturally position her below her native speaker counterparts regardless of her educational background and her skills and abilities. In response to how she thought this might have affected Eva's opportunities to learn and speak the target language, Angela responded that it depended on her *"attitude"* and how comfortable she felt about having to start from the bottom.

When asked whether they had a similar case to Eva in their classes, Paul recalled his experience with the student in his class who came to every class but usually avoided participation. He explained that people act differently on their insecurities; *"some people when they're insecure they rebel and some just go shy and into their shells."* This indicates how Paul regarded this type of reaction as an act of agency; however, he did not mention the role that interlocutors and the environment might play in creating those *"insecurities"*. Amy also explained that the student in Paul's class was probably *"hiding"* because she lacked the necessary *"confidence"* to speak, which linked her lack of participation to her presumably shy personality and not to a choice that she might have made based on how she felt in the classroom.

For their last journal entry, the participants were asked to reflect on why some of their students had stopped going to class, particularly since dropouts were common in most classes in the community center where they taught. Their responses offered useful insight into how they interpreted non-participation. Amy noted she had realized that some students would never return to class since they probably “*felt they weren’t getting what they needed from the class.*” Taking the example of a “*quiet*” student who had stopped going to her class, she speculated that the class might have been too hard for her. Another participant, Rosa, also linked a student’s decision to drop out with the level of difficulty of the input since “*she didn’t feel challenged enough*” and “*advanced more quickly than the others*”. In both examples, lack of participation is seen as a result of being less involved in learning as a mental capacity rather than a socially situated experience. However, later in her journal entry and from a more context-situated perspective, Rosa added that the student might have been “*dissatisfied*” with the teaching. In a similar response, Paul also acknowledged the role of teaching as a contextual factor and how it might affect the students’ learning trajectories (Norton & Toohey, 2001) and their investment in classroom activities.

To sum up, the participants offered a variety of interpretations about the concepts of motivation and participation that involved understanding these notions from a more psychological rather than a social perspective. Moreover, in many of the cases (e.g., Sarah), the way they regarded their students’ motivation was influenced by their own experiences and how they saw themselves as L2 learners.

## **RQ2: Motivation and participation as socially situated and dynamic constructs**

The second research question sought to explore the extent to which the participants regarded second language motivation as fully situated within social contexts and as a non-static

construct. In order to address this question, both through journal entry prompts and stimulated recall/interview sessions, the participants were asked to reflect on whether the students in their classes showed any participation patterns and if yes, why. Most of them reported that they had observed fairly consistent levels of participation in their classes, and they tended to use adjectives such as "*introverted*", "*extroverted*", "*shy*" or "*quiet*" to describe certain students. Using such adjectives could be seen as attributing a stable and unidirectional nature to a complex construct such as motivation (Pavlenko, 2002), and it fails to regard motivation as closely linked to contemporary social concepts of identity, power, and agency (Duff, 2012). There were also a few instances where character traits such as "shyness" and being "quiet" were ascribed to students from certain ethnic background.

As explained earlier, one participant, Paul, seemed to have noticed some inconsistencies in the way certain students participated in his classroom activities. In addition, even when he assigned adjectives to different individuals, he seemed to have paid more attention to the details of their behaviour. Overall, compared to other participants, he demonstrated greater awareness about contextual variables that could affect student participation. For example, he noted how the topic he had chosen for one of his classes engaged all the students or the fact that he did not set up an activity properly hindered participation. He gave an example of a usually "*introverted*" student who suddenly "*came to life*" when the topic of that class was about inventions. Paul's attention to the various patterns of participation and his colleagues lack thereof is an example of the different views of motivation and participation that teachers bring into their classrooms and how this might affect the way they see their students and also their teaching practices.

## Conclusion

This small-scale exploratory study investigated 6 pre-service ESL teachers' perceptions of second language motivation by analyzing narratives and verbal accounts generated by the participants through journal entries, interview questions, and a group meeting session. The main findings of this study can be summarized as follows: 1) in many cases, the participants saw motivation as a psychological construct that could be either intrinsic or driven by external factors; 2) the way the participants interpreted L2 motivation and also how they regarded their students' participation/non-participation seemed at times influenced by their own experiences of learning a second language; 3) the participants tended to use descriptive language such as adjectives to portray their students and the way they participated in classroom activities; this indicated that they saw motivation as a pre-existing and rather stable construct; 4) based on the first two findings, in most cases it was not possible to conclude that the participants saw motivation as socially and context situated.

These findings suggest that despite the importance of issues such as participation and active engagement of learners in classroom activities, pedagogical dimensions and implications of L2 motivation have been rather underdeveloped. Therefore, exposure to a wider range of such relevant theoretical frameworks through teacher education programs is a form of critical language awareness, which can inform novice teachers' pedagogical decisions and prepare them for teaching in more diverse settings. On the other hand, failing to recognize and understand these critical concepts might "exacerbate non-participation and impact [learners'] learning trajectories in negative ways" (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007, p. 598). This awareness will eventually boost novice teachers' position of strength with regards to their practice and help them contribute to educational and social change (Norton, 2005).

### **Limitations and future directions**

By centering this study on the experiences and beliefs of pre-service teachers, the author hopes to promote awareness of the complex construct of motivation. While the findings of this research offer useful insights into the pre-service teachers' beliefs about motivation, it is clear that this small-scale exploratory study cannot, nor does it intend to, offer generalizable findings. Rather, the findings represent the interpretation of six pre-service teachers in the specific context of the study. The author is also aware that several factors might have affected the participants' responses. One is the length of time (three weeks) between when they were filmed during their teaching for the practicum section of the course and the recall session when they were interviewed to comment on the students' participation. Although Gass and Mackey (2000) recommend that stimulated recall sessions be conducted soon after the teaching event, it was not possible to arrange the recall sessions earlier because of the participants' workload for the pedagogy course. What the participants reported at the stimulated recall might have reflected events and thoughts that occurred subsequent to the filmed teaching. For instance, in the practicum class, they had viewed and discussed their own and each other's lessons, they had received feedback from their instructor, and they had attended and read material for the theory section of the class and for other courses. Another factor is that the excerpts presented in the findings and the interpretations cannot entirely represent the multiple layers and dimensions of the text generated by the participants, and they only provide insight into how the participants viewed and verbalized the concept of motivation and participation at the time of data collection.

Despite these limitations, the findings from this study point to a need to incorporate a more comprehensive introduction to the notion of motivation in teacher education programs, one that includes an understanding of each student's role, not only as a language learner, but also an

individual with a complex identity. These findings can have implications for second language teachers, second language teacher educators, and teacher educators in general. Language teaching is most effective when teachers recognize it as collection of literacy acts that are “not only about reading and writing, but also about relationships between text and reader, student and teacher, classroom and community” (Norton, 2010, p. 10), and therefore it involves language learners’ identities.

In order to enhance students’ investment in the language practices of the classroom, teachers need to develop pedagogical practices that promote stronger identity positions (Norton, 2011). In other words, when educators become more familiar with the range of identity positions that are available to their students, instead of seeing them as individuals with stable character traits, they can offer more diverse classroom practices that consider the wide range of positioning from which the learners speak, write, read, or listen. This can then result in a more active engagement and participation by learners of all walks of life. Being familiar with their students’ multiple needs and interests can help teachers create a safe and non-threatening learning environment in the classroom that can help prepare language learners to claim their right to speak outside the classroom context (McKinney & Norton, 2008). Similarly, being aware of motivation as a non-static and socially-situated entity will better prepare pre-service teachers to constantly adapt and readapt their teaching to the variety of needs and interests that the students bring to the classroom. In other words, familiarizing teachers with the complexity of this construct and similar critical notions such as identity and agency will encourage a move from ‘teaching points’ to providing ‘learning opportunities’ (Allwright, 2005).

To conclude, with the findings of this study, the author hopes to draw more attention to the practical aspects of contemporary social theories that exist in the second language literature.

Similar to most critical practices, the study of motivation and identity, their multifaceted nature, and their various constructs should be considered as a liberating act that can “contribute to more equitable and agentive language teaching and learning practices and environments” (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 437). It is hoped that these findings will bring the necessary recognition to such critical concepts from both research and pedagogical perspectives and help bridge the gap between theory and practice.

## **CONCLUSION**



The findings of this study have offered practical insight into the preconceived assumptions and beliefs that pre-service L2 teachers bring into teaching practices. These assumptions could be influenced by their previous experiences learning a second or a foreign language or by what they are exposed to in their training programs. Integrating contemporary theories of education, such as introducing motivation and identity as socially situated entities, can challenge some of those traditional preconceived notions. In the case of the participants of this study, previous personal experiences appear to have played an important role in shaping how they interpreted the construct of L2 motivation.

The diverse nature of language classrooms in today's globalized world requires teachers to be constantly aware of the complex identities that L2 learners bring into the class and how these variable selves can change their investment and the way they choose to engage in classroom activities. Therefore, as Norton (in-press) noted, "language teaching is most effective when the teacher recognizes the multiple identities of the students in the class and develops pedagogical practices that enhance students' investment in the language practices of the classroom" (p. 9). In other words, teachers should create opportunities for proper "investment" in the literacy acts of their classrooms by

The participants of this study dealt with a diverse range of L2 learners in their classrooms and, based on the participants' verbal accounts, it appears that these learners demonstrated complex patterns of participation which were at times unrecognized by their novice teachers. As a first step, being aware of these often-conflicting patterns could have encouraged the teachers to investigate the reasons behind them. Second, exposure to findings of previous research and relevant theories that explain why and in what contexts a learner might be willing or unwilling to

participate might have helped them adapt teaching practices that encourage more active participation.

As Norton (2010) suggests, literacy practices are most effective when they provide learners with a sense of ownership of meaning-making which is “facilitated when learners are in a position of relative power in a given literacy act” (p. 10), as was the case with the student in Paul’s class who appeared unexpectedly engaged during an activity that provided her with an opportunity to share her previous professional experiences. As Morgan (1998) notes, even the most traditional language learning activities such as grammar lessons can be adapted in a way that embeds the practical purpose of tasks in a broader sociocultural context, for instance by teaching modality while drawing on a historical event. This way, the learners are encouraged to explore meaning while they are engaged in representing, creating and recreating various aspects of their identities.

It is undeniable that changing classroom practices and material resources to be more critical can be especially challenging for novice teachers. This demanding task can be facilitated by providing pre-service teachers with a critical tool-kit, such as a bank of reading texts with a critical stance, scenarios to discuss such as the ones used in this study, or simply creating instances where novice teachers are invited to reflect on how a traditional task with a practical focus can be adapted in a way that encourages participation for a wider range of learners. Overall, better understanding of these critical issues related to language learning can encourage teachers “to be more effective in linguistically diverse classrooms” (Norton, in press, p. 9), and as Morgan and Ramanathan (2005) mention, by “reflecting on the interpretive and experiential dynamics that mediate knowledge, transformative practitioners focus on creating possibilities rather than certainties (p. 155).

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## Appendix A

### Invitation Letter to Prospective Participants

Dear...,

I am writing to invite you to participate in my thesis research study. In this small study, I plan to explore how ESL teachers in their first practicum perceive second language (L2) motivation and what they believe motivates learners' participation. Accordingly, my research asks the following question:

*- How do pre-service teachers in the initial pedagogy course and practicum in a teacher education program interpret L2 motivation and participation in classroom activities?*

There are three parts to my study: 6 journal entries; two private interview sessions while you and I watch sections of your teaching video together and observe the students; an informal group discussion with me and the rest of the other participants at a mutually convenient time (I will provide a light meal during the group session). Since this is an exploratory study, these components are designed to explore how you, as a novice teacher, perceive motivation, how you interpret your experiences, and what your beliefs and concerns might be regarding this concept. The main goal of this study is to bring attention to the concept of learner motivation in teacher education, by allowing you to voice your opinions as a small group representing ESL teachers-in-training.

In terms of confidentiality, I will assure you that your privacy is protected throughout the study and it will NOT have any impact on the evaluation of your coursework or teaching.

Moreover, in order to maintain the integrity of your comments and to avoid any misinterpretations, I will ask you to offer your feedback on the accuracy and plausibility of my interpretations.

As I said above, because of the exploratory nature of this study I do not have any preconceived ideas (or preferences) about what the results might be. I simply hope that together we will be able to make a small contribution to the field of teacher education.

Finally, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this LONG message! I look forward to hearing from you soon. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

## Appendix B

### Journal Entries

#### **Journal Entry 1:**

Write the story of your experience learning a second or foreign language in a classroom. You can begin your story by telling me about how you first encountered that language and what encouraged you to learn it. Then you might continue by exploring the following questions that are relevant to your experience:

- What did you hope to gain from the study of that language? What role was (is) it going to play in your future? How has learning that language affected who you are?
- What were your first impressions of the class? What were your classes generally like? Describe yourself as a student in that class.
- When did you feel most comfortable in the class? When were you willing to participate in the activities? What made you hesitant or not willing to participate?
- And finally, tell us about a "positive" and a "not so positive" experience that you had in your second or foreign language class. What made those experiences more and less positive?

#### **Journal Entry 2:**

Choose one student that you remember from your class and answer the following questions about him/her. Remember that you are expected to speculate when responding; we are interested in your impressions, rather than factual information.

- Why did you choose that particular student? What were the first things that came to your mind about him/her?

- Where does he/she come from?
- What do you think brought him/her to Canada?
- What life experiences do you think he/she brings to the classroom?
- What might affect his/her success in the class in both a positive or negative way?
- And finally, based on your first impression, how would you describe him/her as a learner? (in a few words)

### **Journal Entry 3:**

Base this journal entry on this week's class. Be sure to take notes on anything that you find particularly interesting so that you can answer the questions below.

**NOTE:** If the learner you speculated about for Journal 2 is absent for that class, choose another learner. In that case, briefly describe him/her.

#### **Part 1:**

- What kind of activities are used? Briefly describe what the teacher (could be you or your teaching partner) and learners are doing.

#### **Part 2:**

Observe the learner you speculated about last week. Focus on his/her ways of attending to the classroom activities:

- How is he/she participating in the activities?
- How is he/she talking and acting? Why do you think he/she is acting that way?
- How do you explain his/her way of participating in the activities?

**Journal Entry 4:**

You have speculated about one of the students in your previous class and reported your observation in Journal Entry 3. Now, imagine this student is moving to a higher level or another class; introduce him/her to your colleague (i.e., the student's new teacher) in a letter or email message. What would you say about him/her to the new teacher?

**Journal Entry 5:**

In almost every class at Maison de l'Amitié, there are a number of students who stop coming to class after a while. Take one (or more) specific student(s) from any of your classes (either the class you assisted, or the one you taught) and tell me why you think he/she stopped coming to class.



## Appendix C

### Group Discussion Scenarios

#### Scenario 1:

##### **A. Read the following scenario and answer the question at the end.**

Sean is studying French at a university in Dublin. He claims that his French girlfriend and his relationship with her had mainly motivated him to study the language. After a year, Sean and his girlfriend experience a rather bitter breakup. How do you think this might have affected Sean's learning process?

##### **B. Here is what actually happened:**

You have found out that despite his break-up with his French girlfriend, Sean successfully finished his degree and subsequently went on to obtain a PhD in French studies. How would you explain this situation?

#### Scenario 2:

Eva is a second language speaker of English and a newcomer to Canada. When Eva first started working at her workplace, she did not think it was appropriate to approach her co-workers and engage them in conversation. Read the following excerpts from an interview with her and discuss them with your group:

*"When I see that I have to do everything and nobody else cares about me because-- then how can I talk to them? I hear they doesn't care about me and I don't feel to go and smile and talk to them."*

*"I think because when I didn't talk to them, and they didn't ask me, maybe they think I'm just like-- because I had to do the worst type of work there. It's normal."*