

**Standard/School English as a Second Dialect: Perspectives from four British
Columbia school districts**

by

Heather Campbell

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Abstract

Children of First Nations, Métis and Inuit heritage¹ who speak a dialect of English that differs from the standard language of instruction in school may encounter communication and academic challenges (Ball, 2007). “Standard English as a Second Dialect” programs (SESD) have been developed in part to respond to these challenges. Recent research by Battisti, Friesen and Krauth (2009) has shown that supplementary funding for SESD under the ESL policy framework has had positive effects on the reading scores of Aboriginal children, but the specific programs and services that are contributing to this improvement are unknown. This qualitative study investigated current practices regarding SESD assessment and implementation of SESD programs in four British Columbia school districts (both rural and urban).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with several speech-language pathologists (SLPs), resource teachers and other educators or administrators who were involved in their district’s SESD programs. These data were interpreted using a method called constant comparative analysis to identify key themes within a qualitative research paradigm.

Perspectives of the participants were that the current Ministry of Education policy and guidelines are unclear. Individual participants have interpreted the guidelines differently leading to very different SESD programs in the districts consulted for this study. Approaches to SESD service delivery mentioned by participants ranged from

¹ When referring to the First Peoples in British Columbia, I use the term First Nations, with no intention of excluding Inuit or Métis residents. I also use the term Aboriginal in order to be inclusive of all First Nations, Inuit and Métis residents in Canada.

teaching code-switching to highlighting relationships with students, parents and elders. Participant comments revealed that they have considerable knowledge regarding the essential aspects of ESD service delivery and how the link between language, culture and identity affects their ESD programming and goals. However, there also appears to be a strong need for more research on First Nations English dialects and their impact on education and education practices.

Preface

Ethics approval for this study was acquired from the University of British Columbia

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Identification and design of the research program, performance of all parts of the research, analysis of the research data, and preparation of this manuscript were primarily done by the author with input from co-supervisors Dr. May Bernhardt and Dr. Barbara Purves.

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1 Chapter: Introduction

This study investigated current practices regarding SEDS assessment and implementation of SEDS programs in several British Columbia school districts. My interest in Standard English as a Second Dialect (SESD) began during my first placement as a speech-language pathology student with a school district. My clinical educator was struggling with how to identify a First Nations dialect, how to determine who should qualify for an SEDS program, and what the SEDS program should look like. The presence or absence of dialectal features in the children we screened seemed not only to vary across schools, but also within schools and families.

My brief placement with the school district did not permit me to see the implementation of an SEDS program and left me with many unanswered questions. Further investigation showed that the current extent and nature of SEDS programs in BC is in fact unknown (Ball, 2007). The SEDS funding under the ESL policy framework has resulted in improved reading skills in Aboriginal children according to one study (Battisti, Friesen, & Krauth, 2009) but their study does not shed light on the nature of the programs. The ministry does not specify which services must be provided or even that the funding be dedicated exclusively for the services of the designated student (Battisti et al., 2009). A number of key questions remain about this topic, and have motivated this research.

The goals of this thesis are as follows: firstly, to investigate current practices regarding SEDS assessment and implementation of SEDS programs in British Columbia school districts; secondly, to present research from other countries regarding approaches to the education of non-standard dialect speakers; and finally, to discuss how this

information could be used to inform current SEDS pedagogy in B.C school districts. It is not my goal to prescribe the “right” model or approach to SEDS service delivery in British Columbia, but to give academics and service providers more information, directions to explore, and questions to ask.

This thesis begins with a review of the literature related to the sociolinguistics of language, the development and evolution of Aboriginal dialects in North America, and approaches to the education of non-standard dialect speakers in Canada and abroad. This is followed by the methodology chapter, which describes the qualitative methodology, participant school districts and individuals, data collection, and method of analysis. The results chapter begins with a review of the relevant documents regarding ministry policy and guidelines in order to give the reader context and background information, and to highlight information from the Ministry of Education necessary for understanding how participants arrived at their individual interpretations. Secondly, participants’ interpretations of specific ministry policy and guidelines and the factors that led to the very different ESD programs seen in the districts consulted for the study are presented. The concluding chapter presents a discussion of the results in light of previous research and original research questions, issues for further consideration, and possible directions for further research.

Key terms and labels used in the thesis, including a discussion of the terms used to refer to First Peoples, are defined at the outset of the literature review. These are followed by a brief overview of socio-linguistic literature, which provides a context in which to think about how to identify a dialect and how dialects develop. Secondly, a description of the development and evolution of First Nations dialects is illustrated through a review of two cases of Aboriginal dialect development: Chinook Jargon and

the Lumbee dialect. Thirdly, the history of Aboriginal people in Canada, in particular the First Nations people of B.C., is discussed in order to draw attention to historic events and policies that have contributed to the loss of ancestral languages and culture and the development of First Nations dialects. Finally, approaches to the education of dialect speakers in B.C., elsewhere in Canada, and in other countries are addressed.

It is important here to acknowledge my personal perspectives that may influence my research. As a speech-language pathology student with an academic background in linguistics I hold the perspective that no language is superior to another. I also have been trained to support the maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity and encourage the involvement of SLPs in the accurate assessment to distinguish between language difference and language disorder. My experiences in my practicum placement with a school district may have led me to expect certain responses to my questions. Finally, as a middle class Caucasian woman with British ancestry, I have particular perspectives and world views that influence how I interact with people from other cultures. (Refer to the reflections section on page 103 for further explanation.)

There is a growing amount of literature related to English dialects both in this country and abroad. A review of the literature regarding teaching English as a second dialect to Aboriginal students was done by Canadians Epstein and Xu (2003). A comprehensive review of the literature regarding First Nations Englishes was done by Ball, Bernhardt and Deby (2006). Larre (2009), from the University of Victoria, completed a master's thesis for which he wrote a Handbook for Teachers regarding English as a second dialect. More recently, Sharla Peltier (2010), a Canadian Aboriginal speech-language pathologist, published a paper regarding language and literacy learning for students with Aboriginal English dialects. Much has been written regarding the

education of Aboriginal children in B.C. and Canada who speak an Aboriginal dialect of English or an Aboriginal language; however, there has not been much research on the actual features of Aboriginal dialects in Canada. The next section further elaborates on the notion of dialect.

1.1 Key terms

“Language does play a dominant role in the formation of ideology, consciousness, and class relations” (Smitherman, 1991, p. 117). However, language is also often judgmental and laden with emotion and opinion (Fishman, 1972). Names and labels are particularly controversial and are often symbolic tokens of socio-political stances (Wolfram, Adger, & Christian, 1999). It is impossible to avoid controversy in labels. This is evident in the following discussions of terminology related to Aboriginal people and terminology related to language variation.

1.1.1 Aboriginal terminology

There are many terms that are used to describe the people who can trace their ancestry back to before the arrival of Europeans, including Indians, Aboriginals, Indigenous peoples, Amerindians, First Peoples and First Nations (Muckle, 2007). According to the Canadian constitution, the term Aboriginal refers to all Aboriginal people in Canada including First Nations, Inuit and Métis. However, this term does not reflect the diversity of language and culture amongst this varied group (McMillan & Yellowhorn, 2004). According to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (2002) the term First Peoples includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis (as cited in Ball et al., 2006). The term First Nations is not a legal term but is the preferred term today (McMillan & Yellowhorn, 2004). “First” implies that they were here before Europeans and “Nations” reflects their original sovereignty as well as multiple distinct groups (McMillan &

Yellowhorn, 2004; Muckle, 2007). The term First Nations also replaces the word “Indian”, which can be confused with people from India, and replaces the term “Native”, which could mean anyone born in, or native to, a particular country. “Indian” is a legal term used in the Indian Act to describe status and non-status First Nations people (Muckle, 2007). Amerindian is a term that is more specific than “Aboriginal” and “Indian” but is not widely used in Canada (Dickason, 2002).

In presenting this literature review I have made an effort to use the same terminology used by the author whose research I am reviewing. When referring to the First Peoples in British Columbia, I often use the term First Nations. However, I am aware that there are Inuit and Métis individuals living in British Columbia and it is not my intention to exclude them with the use of this term. When referring to all Aboriginal people across Canada, including Inuit and Métis, I use the term Aboriginal. When referring to Indigenous people in other countries such as Australia I also use the term Aboriginal.

1.1.2 Language terminology

In order to identify a dialect one must first know what a dialect is and how it is similar to and different from a language. A language is a system underlying communication that is both systematic and conventional as well as expandable and changeable (Fishman, 1972). Each language has dialects, all of which are systematic (Ball et al., 2006), but varying in different ways, i.e., in terms of their phonology (speech sound system), syntax (grammar), lexicon (vocabulary) and/or discourse (conversation, narrative) characteristics (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008). Wolfram et al. (1999) suggest that the term “dialect” is generally used to refer to “a variety of a language associated with a regionally or socially defined group of people” (p. 1). The terms “language” and

“dialect”, however, are not always as distinct as suggested above. They are ambiguous terms that do not represent a simple dichotomy (Wardhaugh, 2010) and are often judgmental and laden with emotion and opinion (Fishman, 1972). Sociolinguists use the term “variety” as a nonjudgmental way to designate a member of a verbal repertoire, such as a dialect. This also implies that there are other varieties (Fishman, 1972). Other terms used to avoid the negative connotations of “dialect” include language variation, language difference, and linguistic diversity (Wolfram et al., 1999).

There are many dialects of English throughout the world including, for example, South African English, New Zealand English and Singaporean English (Melchers & Shaw, 2003). The various countries where English is the dominant language have their own version of what is the ‘standard’ dialect, for example, Standard American in the United States and Standard British in the United Kingdom. What is key in any discussion of language and dialect is the fact that all standard and non-standard varieties of a language are equal and none is linguistically superior to another (Melchers & Shaw, 2003). First Nations dialects and the dialect of English spoken in most Canadian educational and government institutions are simply different varieties of English from the linguistic point of view. However, a standard dialect is generally associated with prestige and power and is officially sanctioned by government institutions while non-standard dialects are often stigmatized and have connotations of inferiority (Wardhaugh, 2010). Standardization is a societal behavior (Fishman, 1972), an idealized norm chosen by the powerful elite for the establishment of nationhood (Wardhaugh, 2010).

The terms Standard English as a Second Dialect (SESD) and English as a Second Dialect (ESD) are both used to describe the programs in many B.C. school districts that aim to improve students’ standard English skills. SESD is the term preferred by several

researchers because it implies that dialect speakers already speak a variety of English. It is referred to as English as a Second Dialect (ESD) in the Ministry of Education documents and by all of the participants in this study. The S in SESD can also refer to “school English” rather than “standard English”, thus avoiding the inferior connotations of “non-standard” compared to the perceived superior “standard”. In this thesis the abbreviation ESD will be used to refer to ESD/ SESD in keeping with Ministry of Education wording. Because ESD is a branch of the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, ESL and ESD are sometimes referred to collectively as ESL/D.

1.2 Sociolinguistics

Many socio-linguists and other researchers underscore the relationship between language, culture, race and identity (Carrasco & Riegelhaupt, 2006; Epstein & Xu, 2003; Malcolm, 2001). However, the importance of considering dialects of English, and their link to culture and identity, is often overlooked or misunderstood in mainstream education. For example, the concept of “cultural deficit” or “verbal deprivation” was applied to speakers of “Black English” known as Ebonics or African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in the 70’s and earlier (Labov, 1972; Labov & Harris, 1986). The concept of verbal deprivation assumes a lack of verbal stimulation in the home leading to an impoverished means of verbal expression (Labov, 1972). Non-standard dialects, including First Nations dialects have also historically been viewed as inferior (Ball, Bernhardt, & Deby, 2006; Labov, 1972; Wolfram, 1993). When applied to education, this view of impoverished, inferior language can have catastrophic consequences for Aboriginal students. It is widely accepted that a teacher’s attitude toward a child is an important factor in his success, or lack thereof, in school (Labov, 1972). Labov also found that education systems can change children’s social behavior

by changing their vocabulary and pronunciation, with the negative result of causing them to be viewed as different from the rest of their ethnic group (Labov & Harris, 1986).

Fishman (2007) suggests that language is the main link to group identity. He posits that most of what we think of as culture is expressed in the language, for example in prayers, songs and customary greetings. Language also provides kinship and a sense of community (Fishman, 2007). In the words of a respected Aboriginal educator, “Language is what gives us our identity and expresses our unique world view. Language is the ultimate symbol of belonging; it is through language that culture is shared and transmitted” (Kirkness, 2002, p. 18). In his paper entitled “What do you lose when you lose your language?”, Fishman answers “you are losing all those things that essentially are the way of life, the way of thought, the way of valuing, and the human reality that you are talking about” (Fishman, 2007, p. 71).

1.3 Development, evolution and maintenance of dialects

In English-speaking areas of Canada, many Aboriginal people also speak a variety of English. These First Nations English varieties or dialects likely developed from contact between English and Aboriginal people (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008). Today, however, many First Nations communities are attempting to revitalize their heritage languages. Their current English dialects can play a part in this language revitalization because they may contain traces of the heritage language (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008).

In fact, many features of First Nations Englishes, including their phonology and grammar, can be traced back to ancestral languages (Ball et al., 2006; Rowicka, 2005). Children reproduce their parents’ language patterns and in this way transference can persist even if children do not speak the ancestral language (Ball et al., 2006). First Nations Englishes may reflect other linguistic factors in addition to ancestral language

transfer. Other historical factors that have influenced the development of First Nations Englishes include the practice of eradicating ancestral languages through residential schools, the formation of tribally mixed reservations in which English became the lingua franca, and the influence of trade languages such as Chinook jargon (Rowicka, 2005).

Rowicka (2005), a linguist who studied ancestral language transfer in the English spoken on the Quinault Indian Nation Reservation in Washington State, suggested that growing interaction between Native American communities in the form of potlatches, powwows and other traditional activities may be leading to the spread of non-standard English features. The development of Aboriginal dialects is also influenced by regional and social dialects and target language adaptation strategies (Rowicka, 2005), and are shaped by cultural patterns of communication (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008). The following examples serve to illuminate the process of Aboriginal dialect formation through a discussion of jargons, pidgins and creoles.

Before specific jargons, pidgins and creoles are described, the terminology is defined below. The terminology related to language is difficult to define and “fails to take into account the endless variety of reality” (Holm, 2000, p. 4). The following definitions are simplified to accommodate to the scope of this paper. The genesis of pidgins and creoles is still not agreed upon (Thompson, 2003). Pidgins generally develop in new contact situations in which there is no generally shared language (Thompson, 2003) but a means of communication is needed, for example for trade (Holm, 2000). A pidgin is a simplified, makeshift language where no one learns anyone else’s native language, either because of lack of opportunity or, in addition, for social reasons such as lack of trust or social distance (Holm, 2000). A jargon is also a simplified language but has no fixed norms or stable pronunciation and grammar as seen

in a pidgin (Holm, 2000). A creole develops from a pidgin or jargon once the pidgin is learned as a first language. It is spoken as a native language by an entire speech community and reflects a process of expansion rather than reduction and simplification (Holm, 2000). Both pidgins and creoles acquire most of their vocabulary from the suprastrate language, the language of those in power, for example, a colonial language (Holm, 2000). The dominant language can also acquire vocabulary from the substrate language; for example, several Chinook words such as *potlatch* are used in English (Wardhaugh, 2010). A dialect can result from a process of decreolization in which the creole drops non-European (substrate) forms and replaces them with European forms (the suprastrate language) (Holm, 2000). This results in a dialect continuum from farthest from the suprastrate to closest.

1.3.1 Chinook Jargon

One example of a Pidgin, and the complexity of dialect formation, is Chinook Jargon, a pidgin based on the Chinook and Nootka languages (Holm, 2000). The origin of Chinook Jargon is contested in the literature with some researchers asserting that a pidginized slave Chinook existed before the arrival of Europeans and others believing that it arose after European contact (Samarin, 2009; Thompson, 1983; Thompson, 2003).

Lang (2008), a researcher of creole languages, literatures and cultures, wrote “Making Wawa: The genesis of Chinook Jargon” detailing the life of Chinook Jargon from the end of the 18th century to the present. Samarin (2009), a linguist from the University of Toronto, published a review of Lang’s book. Lang (2008) starts his story of the genesis of Chinook Jargon with the arrival of Europeans at Nootka Sound. The language of exchange between the Europeans and indigenous peoples was Nootka Jargon, a simplified language for trade (Lang, 2008). As Nootka Jargon was taken down

the coast to the mouth of the Columbia River it became blended with Lower Chinook, an indigenous language, into a makeshift pidgin (Samarin, 2009). After European contact, the pidgin acquired French and English words as well as words from Nootka and neighboring Salishan languages (Thompson, 2003). As years of fur trade depleted resources at the mouth of the Columbia River, the Hudson's Bay Company moved inland to Fort Vancouver, where a different dialect of Chinookan was spoken (Lang, 2008). Fort Vancouver became settled with Scottish, French-speaking Canadians and Métis voyageurs and was described as a "hothouse" (p. 154) for language contact (Lang, 2008). Within this linguistic melting pot there were also Hawaiian laborers, slaves, and indigenous peoples visiting the fort for trade (Hale, 1846 as cited in Lang, 2008). In this multilingual environment, the Chinook Jargon "jelled" (Lang, 2008, p. 140). Intermarriage also contributed to the solidification of Chinook Jargon as women were "almost totally unacquainted with the language of their husbands" (p. 390) and found their own indigenous languages could no longer be used effectively (Samarin, 2009). Chinook Jargon further evolved as speakers of mutually unintelligible indigenous languages were forced to live together on reserves (Lang, 2008). Chinook Jargon was the lingua franca spreading from the Columbia River north along the coast through British Columbia to southern Alaska from the mid to late 1800s. This was gradually replaced by English in the first half of the 20th century (Thompson, 1983). During this time, the ancestral languages in the area continued to be spoken and likely contributed individually to both the phonology and syntax of Chinook Jargon (Thompson, 1983).

1.3.2 Another situation: The case of Lumbee

The Lumbee dialect of English is another example of the complexity involved in the process of dialect, pidgin or creole development. Although the Lumbee dialect is an American Indian dialect, the factors contributing to its formation are similar to factors contributing to the development of First Nations dialects in Canada. In this case, many ethnic and linguistic groups have contributed to the sociolinguistic landscape over time and contributed to the present day Lumbee dialect (Schilling-Estes, 2002). In order to understand how the Lumbee have managed to preserve the distinctiveness of their dialect despite increasing inter-dialect contact, it is necessary to understand the history and socio-cultural background of the Lumbee Native Indians (Schilling-Estes, 2002).

The 40,000 Lumbee Native Indians of today live in historically isolated communities of Robeson County, North Carolina (Schilling-Estes, 2002). There are also smaller populations of European Americans and African Americans; however, the three ethnic groups remain socially isolated from each other (Schilling-Estes, 2002).

The Lumbee Indians likely lost their ancestral language and acquired English as early as the 1730s as a result of contact with English-speaking settlers (Wolfram & Dannenberg, 1999). English settlement continued into the 1750s followed by immigration of Scots and Scots-Irish in the 1700s. African slaves were brought over in the mid 1700s, resulting in many varieties of English and creoles which most likely also contributed to the development of the Lumbee dialect (Wolfram & Dannenberg, 1999).

It is probable that the Lumbee dialect also has roots in the Aboriginal languages in the area including Iroquian, Siouan, and Algonquian (Wolfram & Dannenberg, 1999). The Lumbee dialect, which has linguistic features demonstrating early English acquisition and cultural isolation, also shows evidence of community-based innovation

(Schilling-Estes, 2002; Wolfram & Dannenberg, 1999). The Lumbee have endured discrimination, segregation, oppression, and isolation. They have lost their ancestral languages, and due to this, have never received formal tribal status (Wolfram & Dannenberg, 1999). Through this adversity, they have developed a sense of solidarity and identity, which has helped them maintain their linguistic distinctiveness (Schilling-Estes, 2002). They have continued their efforts at maintaining their distinctive Lumbee identity by reviving cultural events and ceremonies (Wolfram & Dannenberg, 1999).

Although the above example illustrates the development of Aboriginal varieties of English in the United States, many of the same factors have likely contributed to the development of Aboriginal dialects in Canada. The Aboriginal people in Canada have experienced similar ancestral language loss due to colonialism and forced assimilation.

In British Columbia, First Nations dialects share many features with each other; however, dialect features can vary from region to region and band to band. Given that British Columbia has the greatest diversity in Aboriginal languages in Canada (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008), this is not surprising. B.C. is home to 32 of the 50+ ancestral Aboriginal languages in Canada with seven distinct language families: Salish, Athapaskan, Wakashan, Tsimshian, Algonquian, Haida, and Ktunaxa (FNLG UBC).

1.4 The historical context

As noted above in several sections, the practices of colonialism, residential schools, and cultural disenfranchisement have impacted ancestral language loss and emergence of First Nations English dialects. These practices have included banning the use of indigenous languages in residential schools and the banning of potlatches, which were an important method of social communication among Aboriginal people (Gerlach, 2007; McMillan & Yellowhorn, 2004). Not only did these practices interrupt the transfer

of indigenous language and knowledge from one generation to the next, but children were made to believe that their language and culture were inferior and primitive (Ball, 2007). The impact of European contact went beyond colonial practices. Settlers brought with them diseases such as smallpox and tuberculosis, causing epidemics amongst the Aboriginal people who had no natural immunity and no vaccine. The population of First Nations people in B.C. was estimated to have gone from 250,000 in the mid 1700s to 28,000 in 1929 (Muckle, 2007). This devastating population decline led to the loss of cultural knowledge and language (Muckle, 2007). The fur trade in the 1800s brought contact with European languages and new patterns of social and economic relations among Aboriginal peoples (McMillan & Yellowhorn, 2004). Hunting for food was replaced with hunting for fur, causing a shift in diet from traditional Aboriginal foods to European foods. The gold rush in B.C. brought more European language contact, changes in Aboriginal language contact and loss of traditional territory (Muckle, 2007).

The practice of cultural assimilation, first legalized in the federal Indian Act of 1876, continued in the revised Indian act of 1951 with an attempt to integrate services for Aboriginal people with those of the mainstream Canadian society (Gerlach, 2007). The Indian Act placed Aboriginal people in a legal category separate from other Canadians. It governed all aspects of Aboriginal life including the acquisition of status, use of reserve land and management of money and education. In response to pressure from missionaries and government agents, potlatches and many religious dances were banned (Dickason, 2002). Aboriginal women had even fewer rights than men. If an Aboriginal woman married a non-Aboriginal man, she lost her Indian status (Muckle, 2007). Women were granted the right to retain their Indian status upon marrying non-Indians with changes to the Indian Act only in 1985 (Dickason, 2002).

The residential school system, funded by the Canadian government and run by the churches, was another method of cultural assimilation deemed to be in the best interests of Aboriginal people (Muckle, 2007). Children were taken from their homes, forbidden to speak their Native languages and taught that their way of life, and that of their parents was “evil” (Muckle, 2007, p. 71). Children endured abuse and poor living conditions (Gerlach, 2007) which led to outbreaks of disease that claimed the lives of many (Dickason, 2002). Many children spent very little time in the classroom, but were engaged in “practical training” (p. 315) such as agriculture and trades for the boys and domestic arts for the girls (Dickason, 2002). When children came home from residential schools they often could no longer communicate with their parents (Muckle, 2007). A related practice of removing children from their homes, called the “sixties scoop”, occurred in the 1950s and 1960s when Aboriginal children were removed from their homes and placed in foster care or adopted into white families. The rationale was that these children would otherwise be neglected and disadvantaged. The practice of placing Aboriginal children with white families tapered off in the early 1970s. The last federally run residential school, on the Gordon reserve in Saskatchewan, closed in 1996 (Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2009). The legacy of the residential schools has left generations of families struggling with loss of parenting skills and feelings of guilt, shame, and inferiority (Gerlach, 2007).

1.5 The Canadian educational context

Aboriginal people have suffered the most severe economic, social and educational problems of any cultural group in Canada (Regnier, 1995). Regnier (1995) refers to a “crisis of meaning” (p. 318) for indigenous youth and suggests that historical schooling policies distanced people from their Aboriginal identity and the natural cyclic

process involving gatherings and ceremonies. One school in Saskatoon (and there are probably many others) has been working to address this crisis in loss of culture, language and identity. The school uses the Sacred Circle, also called a medicine wheel, as a spiritual foundation in the education of its youth (Regnier, 1995). It uses a healing approach to help Aboriginal students who suffer from alcoholism, alienation, racism and more. The school integrated its academic program with Aboriginal spirituality, supporting academic skill and self-esteem. The healing education “attempts to transcend neo-colonial teaching which assumes inherited educational goals, curricula and frameworks without addressing the immediate reality of students” (Regnier, 1995, p. 318).

1.5.1 Identification of a dialect

Dialect issues in education are not new. Unfortunately there has been almost no research on First Nations dialects in Canada (Ball et al., 2006; Ball & Bernhardt, 2008) and equally little research on appropriate methods of identifying dialect speakers in Canadian schools.

Identification of a dialect is only possible if the features of the First Nations dialect are known in terms of phonology, syntax, semantics and discourse. Although First Nations dialects can vary immensely, Leap (1993) identified several features shared among Native American Englishes. These include restrictions on consonants at the ends of words, unmarked past tense, deletion of verbs such as *to be*, and multiple negation. There are many other features of a First Nations English that may be manifested in discourse concerning the use of silence, narrative structure, questioning, answering, attention, and listening behaviors (Ball et al., 2006). Vocabulary usage in First Nations dialects may also be different than in standard English (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008) with

vocabulary usage and knowledge often reflective of a child's life experiences. A First Nations child growing up on an isolated reserve will likely have a different vocabulary from that of a middle class Caucasian child growing up in an urban centre.

The challenge of identifying a dialect in the educational or clinical context is complicated by the lack of culturally appropriate standardized tools to distinguish between a language difference or difficulty. The use of standardized tools based on the standard English dialect runs the risk of First Nations dialect speakers being misdiagnosed as having language impairments or the under-identification of those children who actually do have language impairments (Ball et al., 2006). Ball and Lewis (2005) found that First Nations parents, elders and speech-language pathologists have expressed frustration about culturally inappropriate assessments. Parents reported not wanting their children to be labeled deficient when the problem lies with the cultural bias of the assessment tools and norms. Ball and Bernhardt (2008) suggest some approaches to assessment and intervention with culturally and linguistically diverse children. One of these methods is Dynamic Assessment, which uses a test-teach-retest method. Dynamic Assessment focuses on the child's own learning strategies and ability to learn, rather than the child's knowledge (Kramer, Mallett, Schneider, & Hayward, 2009). It can help to distinguish between children who have not acquired skills due to different experiences and cultural practices and children who have true learning difficulties (Kramer et al., 2009). A second method of assessment highlighted by Ball and Bernhardt (2008) is language sample analysis. In addition to identifying and quantifying dialect features, language sample analysis can help create a database of local First Nations community norms to be used as reference criteria by the community when evaluating a child's language (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008).

A further consideration in the assessment of Aboriginal children is the ethnicity of the assessor. It is often a non-Aboriginal speech-language pathologist or other professional administering the assessment (Gould, 2008a). Gould (2008a), working in the Australian context, suggested that a child's language may be inaccurately described due to linguistic and cultural mismatches between the child and the non-Aboriginal assessor, the assessor's lack of understanding regarding Aboriginal dialects and communication styles, and/or the differences in how language is used due to differing world views between cultures. Gould (2008b) suggested several modifications for assessment of Aboriginal children's language, including use of play-based or purposeful tasks, following Aboriginal ways of communicating, eliciting home language and valuing the language, culture and the child (Gould, 2008b). She also suggested that speech-language pathologists and other professionals need to understand the relationship between culture and language when conducting speech and language assessments with Aboriginal children (Gould, 2008a). Although she is describing the Australian context, these recommendations appear equally applicable to the Canadian context.

1.5.2 Education of non-standard dialect speakers

When discussing ESD/SESD in general, and not referring to a specific author or participant, I use the term ESD since it is widely used in the literature, by participants and in Ministry of Education documents.

Whether or not children have had appropriate assessments, they may be placed in educational programs for speakers of non-standard dialects of English in British Columbia, i.e., English as a Second dialect (ESD) or Standard English as a Second Dialect (SESD) programs.

The complex links between language, culture and identity become very apparent in the present day educational context. Aboriginal children who speak a dialect of English that differs from the standard language of instruction in school may encounter academic and communication challenges (Ball, 2007). Teachers may view these children as being less intelligent and/or less motivated and may criticize their dialect (Battisti et al., 2009). Wolfram et al. (1999) suggest that this may cause students to lower their own academic expectations. Epstein and Xu (2003) propose that misconceptions and negative attitudes toward the role of different English dialects in schools can impact the quality of education of ESD students. Fillmore (2000) has argued that many educators do not have an understanding of their students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds and have not had adequate training in language variation and are therefore not well equipped to help ESD students succeed in school.

In his interview study entitled "First Nations perspectives on transforming the status of culture and language in schooling", Agbo (2004) found that Euro-Canadian teachers felt that the universities should play a role in educating teachers about First Nations culture and preparing them to work with First Nations students and communities. He also found that his First Nations participants were divided on their opinion of whether or not First Nations language and culture should be taught in school. Some respondents believed that school should focus on teaching what is assumed to be standard English while others felt that the way to maintain First Nations language and culture was to teach them in school (Agbo, 2004).

The ability to comprehend, speak, read and write in standard English is currently necessary to succeed academically in school. Faries (1991) maintains that if a student has difficulty using and understanding standard English, he or she is going to have

difficulty in all academic subjects. Epstein and Xu (2003) suggest that although students need to have access to the politically mandated language form, educators need to remember that the loss of a linguistic variety will cause loss of its connected values, history, culture and speaker's identity. Educators have the difficult task of teaching the standard dialect as well as preventing the loss of students' non-standard varieties.

In a 1999 Memorandum of Understanding, the British Columbia Ministry of Education acknowledged that B.C. schools have failed to ensure that Aboriginal students receive a quality education, allowing them to succeed in the provincial economy while maintaining ties to their culture (Ministry of Education, n.d., Enhancement Agreements, Background, para. 2)). This led to the development of Enhancement agreements, working documents between the school districts and local Aboriginal communities to enhance educational achievement of Aboriginal students by stressing the “integral nature of Aboriginal traditional culture and language to Aboriginal student development and success” (Ministry of Education, n.d., Enhancement Agreements, para. 2).

According to Ministry of Education statistics, grades 4 and 7 Aboriginal students scored lower than their non-Aboriginal counterparts on 2008/2009 FSA exams in numeracy, reading comprehension and writing (Ministry of Education, n.d.). Battisti et al. (2009) found that grade 7 Aboriginal students in British Columbia public schools scored close to 0.6 standard deviations below the mean on Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) exams in reading and numeracy. Aboriginal students in SESD programs scored 1.3 standard deviations below the mean in reading. In B.C., Aboriginal students had a 49% high school completion rate (the number of students in grade 8 that graduate with a Dogwood certificate within 6 years) compared with the 79% overall completion rate (Ministry of Education news release, 2009). Although these statistics do not appear

positive, Battisti et al. (2009) identified improvements in Aboriginal reading scores across school districts between 1999 and 2004 as a result of supplementary funding for SEDS programs (see below).

Raising the academic standards of Aboriginal students has been the main goal in Aboriginal education. However, Agbo (2004) suggests that more attention needs to be paid to the community resources required to raise the standards. He suggests that if the role of the Aboriginal community and its elders is an essential aspect of evolving schooling to become more inclusive, Aboriginal people's opinions and attitudes concerning the education of their children need to be taken into account (Agbo, 2004).

Another approach to raising the academic standards of B.C.'s Aboriginal students has been to fund programs such as the English as a Second Language/Dialect (ESL/D) program. Supplementary funding for the ESL/D program has had positive effects on one aspect of Aboriginal student achievement as described in the following section.

1.6 ESL/D policy funding in British Columbia

The Provincial government has provided funds to support students who speak a non-standard dialect of English under the English as a Second Language (ESL) policy framework since the 1980s (Battisti et al., 2009). Students designated for this funding are primarily Aboriginal. This funding is in addition to the Aboriginal Education funding provided by the provincial government. Battisti et al. (2009) show that this supplementary funding has had positive effects on the reading scores of Aboriginal children. They arrive at this finding by looking at SEDS funding across B.C. school districts between 1999 and 2004, using the staggered uptake of this funding to identify its impact on reading test scores of grades 4 to 7 Aboriginal students.

The SESD funding under the ESL policy framework is provided to “students reported as requiring ESD services who speak a dialect of English that differs significantly from Standard English used in school and in broader Canadian society” (Ministry of Education, 2008, Policy, para.2). The Ministry does not define how the child’s language must differ significantly in order to qualify as a dialect and does not define what constitutes a SESD program. It also does not specify which services must be provided (Battisti et al., 2009). The individual school districts are free to use the funds as they see appropriate within the boundaries of certain criteria: they must conduct an annual assessment of standard English proficiency, involve an ESL specialist and adhere to specific documentation and reporting procedures (Battisti et al., 2009; Ministry of Education, 2009). Ministry of Education policy and guidelines will be further outlined in the results section because they pertain directly to the interview discussions.

1.7 Non-standard dialects in Australian and American education

Battisti et al. (2009) clearly show that supplementary funding for Aboriginal children who speak a non-standard dialect of English has had a significant impact on the reading skills of these children. The authors suggest that since the relationship between language, culture, race and identity is complex, identifying effective policies is difficult. Supplemental SESD funding may be facilitative, but the specific programs and services that are contributing to this improvement in reading scores of Aboriginal students have not been described in the research literature. Approaches to the education of non-standard dialect speakers in other countries provide a more extensive background on this topic.

1.7.1 Continental United States of America

African American Vernacular English (AAVE), also known as African American English (AAE) or Ebonics is spoken by a large percentage of African-Americans in the United States. Similar to the non-standard English speakers of the colonial countries (e.g., Australia and Canada), many African-American students have been erroneously diagnosed as linguistically and/or cognitively handicapped (Ball et al., 2006; Labov, 1982). To address the educational gaps between speakers of Standard American English and AAVE, several programs in the United States have used contrastive analysis and dialect readers to teach the standard dialect to speakers of AAVE since the late 1970s, however not without controversy (Rickford & Rickford, 1995).

In 1977, a group of parents of African-American students took a Michigan school district to federal court for the failure to take into account the cultural, social and economic factors that would prevent the students from making normal progress in school (Labov, 1982). Many of the children had been placed in classes for the mentally handicapped and learning disabled, suspended from classes and/or retained in lower grades. The case quickly became about linguistic differences and was dubbed the “Black English trial of Ann Arbor”. The judge ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and required that the school board help teachers be able to identify children speaking Black English and use that knowledge to teach students how to read standard English (Labov, 1982).

The outcome of the trial led to the successful implementation of the Bridge reading program, a program which emphasized dialect literacy with a gradual transition to Standard American English (Simpkins, 1977 as cited in Ball et al., 2006.). Materials for the program were written in three dialect versions: Black English, transition and standard English (Simpkins & Simpkins, 1981). The case was sensationalized in the

media, leaving people misinformed and suspicious of the role of AAVE in school (Ball et al., 2006). The program did not last long despite experimental evidence of its success in improving reading comprehension in AAVE speaking students (Rickford & Rickford, 1995). Due to objections from parents and teachers to the use of AAVE in the classroom, publishers ceased promoting and developing the program (Labov, 1994).

Since 1981 California has had a standard English proficiency program (SEP) first to educate teachers about the history and culture of AAVE, then to teach them the use of contrastive analysis to facilitate code-switching (Seymour, Abdulkarim, & Johnson, 1999). Although the voluntary program was reported to be successful (Seymour et al., 1999), no empirical evidence supporting the use of contrastive analysis was provided (Rickford, 2006). In response to the “educational malaise” (p.75) of Black students in its district in 1996, a task force for the Oakland California school board identified English language proficiency as a key factor in student success (Rickford, 2006). In 1997 the school board passed a resolution proposing the use of AAVE, known commonly as Ebonics, as a strategy for teaching Standard American English (Rickford, 2006). This “bridging”, or contrastive analysis, was to be done through existing SEP programs. Public reaction was mixed and again fraught with myth and misunderstanding. Many politicians, celebrities and even some African-American groups condemned the resolution (Seymour et al., 1999). Opposition from the latter group is not surprising, given the highly stigmatized nature of dialect; old stereotypes were brought up, causing embarrassment and shame (Seymour et al., 1999). Many believed that the Oakland school district planned to teach Ebonics in school rather than use Ebonics as a springboard to teach the standard dialect (Rickford, 2006). Others cited a lack of

research supporting the use of contrastive analysis in teaching standard American English as reason to oppose the resolution (Rickford, 2006).

Rickford pointed out that supporting evidence in the form of at least three empirically validated studies (Taylor, 1989; Harris-Wright, 1999; Los Angeles Unified School District, 1999 as cited in Rickford, 2006) does in fact exist. All three studies included an experimental group, which was taught using comparison between the vernacular and standard English, and a control group, which was taught with conventional methods. In all three cases the experimental groups showed greater gains than the control groups (Rickford, 2006). Rickford (2006) offered further support for the use of contrastive analysis as an approach to teaching the standard dialect: (1) it proceeds from a position of strength by assuming competency in a valid language; (2) self-identity and motivation can be enhanced when students learn that their dialect is a source of strength; and (3) ad hoc corrections of student grammar do not work.

Rickford also proposed “using the vernacular to teach the standard” (Rickford, 1999, p. 329) in the form of dialect readers, which were a component of the Bridge program developed after the Black English trial of Ann Arbor. Dialect readers are materials written in varieties of AAVE (Rickford & Rickford, 1995), or other dialects depending on the linguistic background of the target students. There has been literature written on dialect readers since the 1960s and there is positive experimental evidence for their use (Rickford & Rickford, 1995). Parents, teachers and African-American activists have been opposed to dialect readers because of the belief that that it would put black students at a disadvantage and that there should be no differences in the teaching of black children and white children (Wardhaugh, 2010). Rickford and Rickford (1995) proposed that researchers need to explore the attitudes of parents and teachers concerning the use

of AAVE and dialect readers in the classroom in order to more effectively implement dialect reader programs in the future. Instead of abandoning the dialect reader due to negative reactions, researchers need to find an alternative method of presenting it as a viable approach. Rickford and Rickford (1995) suggested first establishing good relations and trust on a small scale, for example one classroom at a time, before coming into a community and prescribing a solution.

1.7.2 Hawai'i, USA

The two official languages in Hawai'i are English and the indigenous language Hawai'ian, now spoken by only a few native speakers. A third language, Hawai'ian Creole English (HCE), called Pidgin by Hawai'ians, is an English-based creole (Ball et al., 2006; Eades, Jacobs, Hargrove, & Menacker, 2006). Pidgin developed on the sugar plantations in the 19th century as the language of communication between immigrants from China, Japan, the Philippines, Portugal and elsewhere (Eades et al., 2006). Pidgin became the first language of the plantation children and therefore became a Creole as defined by linguists (Eades et al., 2006). As the language of an ethnically diverse society, Pidgin serves to unite its speakers and plays an important role in their identity. However, as with many non-standard varieties, Pidgin has had a history of stigma and denigration by speakers and non-speakers (Eades et al., 2006). Pidgin slowly became accepted in Hawai'ian arts and literature as an effect of a literacy movement by local writers in the late 1970s (Eades et al., 2006).

Standard English Program schools (SEPs) were operated by the Hawai'i Department of Public Instruction from the 1920s to 1960s for American and European children. The children of plantation workers were told they spoke "broken English" (p.154) and were sent to schools where they were submerged in English (Eades et al.,

2006). They were segregated not according to race, but according to language usage, thus upholding the constitution (Eades et al., 2006).

In 1968 the Hawai'i English Program (HEP) was introduced and was in place until 1983. The HEP was a language arts program with a Pidgin component. It emphasized a respect toward the Pidgin language, encouraged discussions about dialect and language choice depending on context, and made use of contrastive analysis. Unfortunately, the Pidgin component of the Hawai'i English program was often overlooked by teachers (Eades et al., 2006).

In 1987, the Hawai'ian Board of Education attempted to ban Pidgin from the classroom and proposed a mandate that would allow only English to be used in oral classroom discussion. This proposal was met with vocal opposition from parents, teachers, academics and other sectors (Ball et al., 2006; Eades et al., 2006). The Board of Education responded by softening their position and "encouraged" the use of English only. Despite support for the use of Pidgin in the classroom, no plan was made for teaching Pidgin speaking students and there is still no system-wide plan in place (Eades et al., 2006).

The Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) established in private k-12 schools in the 1970s (Eades et al., 2006) was a reading comprehension program developed to improve the academic achievement of Hawai'ian and part Hawi'ian children and was based on the cultural needs and abilities of those children (Tharp, 1982). The KEEP program was influenced by Hawai'ian cultural characteristics including discourse patterns, and reflects cultural compatibility as a necessary feature of effective instruction (Tharp, 1982). KEEP is a systematic, structured program. There are six essential elements including direct comprehension instruction in small groups,

individualized instruction, maintenance of child motivation through praise and warmth, monitoring through criterion-referenced testing and a quality control system including weekly observation of the teacher (Tharp, 1982). No answers during discussions are wrong and children are not penalized for speaking Pidgin. Teachers are responsive in a way which Hawai'ian children are familiar with and respond to (Tharp, 1982). The modifications designed to make school discourse patterns more like home and community discourse patterns (Eades et al., 2006) have been successful in improving children's reading comprehension and participation in discussion (Ball et al., 2006). Tharp (1982) questioned whether the discourse accommodations made in the KEEP program would work with other minority groups or mainstream children who are accustomed to the conventions of turn taking.

1.7.3 Australia

In Australia, efforts have been focused on a two-way bidialectal approach, that is, contrastive analysis and the education of teachers regarding the legitimacy and features of non-standard Englishes (Ball et al., 2006). Australian Aboriginal Englishes are now recognized as valid, distinct dialects at the federal level ((Ball et al., 2006).

In 1974 bilingual education was introduced for target Aboriginal languages in communities of the Northern Territory based on research by Fishman suggesting that "diglossia," switching language variety based on the domain, would increase the chances of the vernacular being maintained (McConvell, 2008). Fishman's domains theory approach differs from code-switching, a freer more socially motivated use of language choice (McConvell, 2008). Code-switching has been defined as "an individual's use of two or more language varieties in the same speech event or exchange" (Woollard, 2006, p. 73) and involves switching language in order to perform a social function or express

different aspects of one's identity (McConvell, 2008). Code-switching can occur between a speaker's sentences or within a single sentence (Wardhaugh, 2010). In diglossic situations, the choice between codes (varieties) is often rigidly defined by the activity, whereas code-switching is less rigid and can even be subconscious (Wardhaugh, 2010). Fishman believed that "bilingualism without diglossia" (p. 241) would lead to loss of the minority language (Fishman 1991, 2001 as cited in McConvell, 2008). McConvell argued, however, that code-switching could actually support the maintenance of languages without strict diglossia. He cited the case of Tagalog and English in the Philippines as evidence that code-switching can exist without the loss of one of the languages (McConvell, 2008).

The guidelines for bilingual education in the Northern territory called for a strict separation between Aboriginal varieties and the standard variety, based on Fishman's domains theory. Sadly, the bilingual program closed in 1998 in part based on arguments that the domains of language were school and home rather than two domains in school for example, classroom and playground (McConvell, 2008). Other factors leading to its closure included arguments based on the higher cost of bilingual programs and differences over philosophy and implementation (McConvell, 2008). The long-term impact of this policy is not yet known, but does not bode well for preservation of the ancestral languages.

In 2007, the Australian minister of Aboriginal affairs advocated an "English-only" approach in Indigenous community primary schools. Research in the northern territory of Australia has shown that an "English only" approach to education can lead to a lack of participation in the classroom and limited opportunities for the children to display their linguistic knowledge (Moses & Wigglesworth, 2008). The authors

compared transcripts of class discussions led by the non-Aboriginal teacher in which the children said no more than one word to transcripts of casual conversations amongst the children in which they demonstrated a highly sophisticated use of language.

The debate over bilingual/bidialectal education continued in discussions about “two-way education” in which both Aboriginal and mainstream dialects and culture are incorporated into the classroom (Ball et al., 2006) Harris, for example, has argued that these are two incompatible systems and should be kept separate (as cited in McConvell, P., 2008). The two-way bidialectal approach, developed by Indigenous communities, (McConvell, 2008) is, however, supported by research showing that Aboriginal children are more successful in school if their language and culture is respected and legitimized (Malcolm, 2001) and if the importance of parental and community involvement is recognized (Faries, 1991).

In the past two decades, materials have been developed to educate teachers about the legitimacy of non-standard dialects and methods of teaching standard Australian English (Ball et al., 2006). Ian Malcolm and colleagues at Edith Cowen University use the catch phrase “the ABCs of bidialectal education” to refer to the three elements necessary for a comprehensive bidialectal education program. A is for “accept Aboriginal English,” B is for “bridge to Standard English” and C is for “cultivate Indigenous ways of approaching experience and knowledge” (Malcolm, 2001). Two methods used originally in the United States with demonstrated success in teaching speakers of AAVE, are contrastive analysis and dialect readers. Contrastive analysis is the systematic comparison of the standard variety to the non-standard variety, in this case Australian Aboriginal English. It compares the grammar and social use of each variety (Ball et al., 2006) and encourages students to select the variety appropriate for the

context or desired effect (Malcolm, 1997 as cited in Ball et al., 2006). For example, differences in grammar and social function. A second approach to teaching the standard dialect in Australia, also used in the United States with speakers of AAVE, is the use of dialect readers. Dialect readers are materials written in non-standard dialects (Rickford & Rickford, 1995) and are used to teach children to read in their dialect before transitioning them to the standard dialect (Ball et al., 2006). Although it is important to teach dialect speakers to be aware of the differences between their dialect and the standard variety, it is also important to allow these students to demonstrate their linguistic abilities using their own vernacular (Moses & Wigglesworth, 2008). Malcolm (2003) argues that non-Aboriginal teachers need to respect and utilize the home languages and knowledge of their Aboriginal students (as cited in Moses & Wigglesworth, 2008).

1.7.4 Implications of research elsewhere for SESD in British Columbia

Throughout the foregoing discussions of dialect programs was a theme of culturally responsive instruction. Examples included using dialect readers with AAVE speakers, a program in Hawai'i that emphasizes respect toward the non-standard language, and the Standard English Proficiency program (SEP) in California, which educated teachers about the history and culture of AAVE. Approaches that have worked elsewhere may or may not meet the needs of B.C. First Nations ESD students or the school districts that serve them. Whether British Columbia school districts decide to use dialect readers, contrastive analysis or bicultural education will depend on the communities' perspectives, the needs of the students in the districts, the districts' educational views and government policy and funding.

After a review of the literature on non-standard dialects in education in Canada, it was apparent that there is a lack of information available. This gap in the research motivated the current study. The literature on programs such as the Bridge program in the United States, KEEP in Hawai'i, and the bidialectal approach in Australia, inspired the following research questions for British Columbia:

- (1) What are the characteristics of SEDS programs in the four British Columbia school districts involved in this study?
- (2) To what extent are the SEDS programs and services similar and different among BC schools and school districts? (2b) How are these similarities and differences influenced or dictated by the particular needs of individual schools and school districts?

Approaches to non-standard dialects in the United States and Australian education systems has included respect for the students' language and cultures, acceptance and use of the vernacular in the classroom, contrastive analysis, code-switching, and the use of dialect readers. This literature, detailing specific methods of standard language instruction, motivated a third question for B.C.:

- (3) What methods are used in ESD intervention to improve a child's standard English language skills?

Finally, sociolinguistic studies relating language, culture and identity provided a context for understanding the historical events and policies leading to the loss of First Nations language and culture and led to the following research question:

- (4) How do individuals providing ESD programs negotiate the complex relationship between language, culture and identity?

2 Chapter: Methodology

While research has shown that increased funding for ESD programs has improved the reading scores of Aboriginal students (Battisti et al., 2009), there has been limited research on the implementation of English as a second dialect (ESD) intervention in Canada and very little research on First Nations dialects of English and the implications of speaking a First Nations dialect for literacy skills and academic success. The existing literature calls for further research to document Aboriginal English dialects and to determine best practices in education (Peltier, 2010). Through the identification of themes and patterns that emerge from the interview data, subsequent interpretation, and document review, the objective of this study was to contribute information to learn more about ESD service delivery and identify areas for further research.

This chapter will describe the methodological framework, participants, methods of data collection and analysis and issues related to the anonymity of participants in this interview study. This study involved the collection of data through semi-structured interviews with nine participants from four British Columbia school districts and a review of the documents related to ESD programming publicly available through the Ministry of Education's website.

The research questions were investigated using qualitative description analytic strategies. A qualitative design was chosen based on Creswell's (1994) criteria for selecting a research paradigm. In particular, he suggests that qualitative research is well-suited to research questions that are exploratory in nature.

A key feature of valid qualitative research is that it seeks to explore issues in a comprehensive way while ensuring that individual perspectives are always clearly

represented in a transparent, i.e., identifiable, way (while maintaining confidentiality). In order to make the identification of different perspectives transparent in the results, information from the Ministry of Education is presented initially in a document review, while data in the form of perspectives of individual participants is presented through the use of quotes and interpretation.

2.1 Methodological framework

Qualitative research has a number of key attributes. First, it allows for an evolution of questioning that can change during the course of research, reflecting changes in one's understanding of the issues (Creswell, 1998). A second and related aspect of qualitative research is the importance of context. Social or human problems are evaluated in natural settings (Creswell, 1998). Third, participant knowledge is considered to be inextricably tied to the context in which it is studied (Creswell, 1998). Thus, the knowledge uncovered in the interviews was expected to vary not only by interviewee and by the context of that individual within a community, school and school district, but also within the context of interviewees' personal values, biases and experience. This combination of an exploratory topic and social and human contexts made a study of English as a second dialect programs amenable to qualitative research.

The specific method of qualitative research for the current study that was considered to best fit the research questions is qualitative description. This method is shown to be on equal footing with other qualitative methods (Sandelowski, 2000; Thorne, 2008). It entails the presentation of the facts or events in everyday language and seeks to give an accurate account of events and meanings (Sandelowski, 2000) while discovering associations, relationships and patterns within the phenomenon or process being described (Thorne, 2008). Qualitative description, although necessarily filtered

through human perspective, is not highly interpretive. Qualitative description stays close to the data and seeks to provide an accurate account of the events so that other researchers and participants observing the same event would agree with the account given (Sandelowski, 2000). Descriptive validity, the extent to which participants agreed that my account of the events was accurate, was done through member checking. Member checking also serves to determine interpretive validity, i.e., the extent to which participants agreed with my presentation of the meanings participants attributed to those events. My representation of quotes was presented to the individuals interviewed in order to ensure that I accurately conveyed the point that they were trying to make and contextualized their words in the way they intended. My interpretation of the data as a whole was also presented in order to encourage any additional input, insights and comments. Eight of the nine participants responded to the request to review the results. None of those participants had additional suggestions or comments regarding the data presented in the results chapter. One participant did not respond.

While qualitative description draws on the methodological tools of classic qualitative approaches such as phenomenology, ethnography and grounded theory, it differs in that it is not based on “specific methodological frameworks emerging from distinctive disciplinary traditions” (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 337). Qualitative description accommodates the design flexibility required to address questions in applied health and other professions (Thorne, 2008). The flexibility of not being tied to a specific methodological framework makes qualitative description particularly well suited to exploratory research in applied fields.

The following descriptions of participating individuals and school districts are intentionally vague in order to protect participants’ anonymity. The descriptions of

participating individuals and their respective districts were sent to participants in order to ensure that each participant was comfortable with the level of description presented here.

2.2 Participants

Participants for this study involved two levels: first, the school districts and second, the speech-language pathologists and other educators involved in each district's ESD program(s). Participating school districts were provided with a copy of the Ethics approval certificate and consent from the superintendent of each school district was acquired before individual participants were recruited from that district. Neither participants nor school districts are identified in this thesis. When discussing the data, participants are referred to by their professions and occasionally by their ethnicity (Aboriginal ancestry or not) when the interpretation warrants specification. Participants are not described in terms of both profession and ethnicity because this elaborated description could lead to identification of the individual. Occasionally participants are described in terms of length of time in a profession or position, job title, etc. in order to present or clarify an interpretation; however an effort has been made to protect the anonymity of participants throughout the thesis.

Participating individuals and school districts are described in sections 2.2.1 to 2.2.4 in order to give the reader background and context in which to reflect upon the varied characteristics of districts. The school districts are referred to anonymously in this chapter as districts A through D but will not be referred to individually in the rest of the thesis. The descriptions are kept intentionally vague in order to ensure that districts are not identified. All information regarding individual school districts was acquired through the district websites. The websites are not referenced in order to protect the anonymity of the districts.

The study included personnel from four BC school districts: four speech-language pathologists, two resource teachers, one ESD teacher, and two Aboriginal district principals representing several schools. Five of the nine individual participants have Aboriginal ancestry.

A combination of convenience sampling and purposive sampling was used in order to choose participants. Selection was based on convenience (proximity to the researcher and availability), institutional support, personal contacts and referrals. Purposive sampling, that is, the identification of main groupings or conditions to include in the study (Thorne, 2008), was used in order to report on a range of ESD approaches and challenges. Participants were chosen to represent a range in level of expertise and experience and to represent a diverse sample of rural and urban school districts.

This thesis is meant to be a starting point for reflection on key issues regarding ESD service delivery as described by individuals involved in the programs. The goal was to begin to uncover different perspectives from which the reader can reflect on his or her own experiences and viewpoints. As many perspectives as possible were accommodated within the time constraints of my degree program. The results described in this thesis reflect the perspectives of a small group of individuals as I have interpreted them and are not meant to be representative of all ESD service providers. The story I tell based on their comments could have been a very different story if different participants had been sampled.

The school districts participating in this study reflect diverse populations of First Nations and varied student demographics. The differences in Aboriginal student demographics may be due to geographical factors including accessibility, urban vs. rural issues and characteristics of individual nations such as the number of heritage language

speakers. There are also vast differences among the First Nations served by the school districts due to historical, linguistic and geographic factors.

Each individual involved in this study was instrumental to learning about ESD intervention as a whole and to highlighting the similarities, differences and even contradictions between the programs offered at each school and the opinions and knowledge of the service providers.

2.2.1 School district A

School district A encompasses a large geographical area including three major population centers, on a continuum from urban to rural, each with its own unique set of needs. The district includes approximately 15 schools. District A was the only one of the four participating districts with an increase in number of self-identified Aboriginal students in the last few years. The district has over 500 students of Aboriginal ancestry and over 300 ESL students. There are over 200 Aboriginal students in ESL programs. Since most Aboriginal students designated as ESL are in ESD programs, this number likely represents the number of Aboriginal students in ESD programs but does not reflect any non-Aboriginal students in ESD. The Aboriginal students are almost evenly split between residency on-reserve and off-reserve.

District A serves between five and ten Aboriginal communities and has a current Aboriginal Education Enhancement agreement. An enhancement agreement (EA) is a “working agreement between a school district, all local Aboriginal communities and the ministry of education designed to enhance the educational achievement of all Aboriginal students” (Ministry of Education, n.d., Enhancement Agreements, para.1). English as a second dialect programs are identified on the EA as an “action” to improve the performance of Aboriginal students identified as having behavioral or learning needs.

Three individuals from this district were involved in this study, representing two of the three population centers. Of the three participants, two were speech-language pathologists and one was a resource teacher. One of the speech-language pathologists and the resource teacher worked together in an elementary school ESD program. The SLP oversaw the program and administered and interpreted the assessments while the resource teacher provided the intervention. The ESD program in these two schools had been established for three years. The speech-language pathologist also provided ESD intervention at a high school. The second speech-language pathologist provided ESD intervention in a neighboring town at an elementary school and a secondary school and was in a first year of ESD service provision.

2.2.2 School district B

School district B is a rural district. It is made up of fewer than ten elementary schools, and several middle and high schools. The district is located on the traditional territory of two First Nations and has a current Enhancement Agreement. This district has more than 400 Aboriginal students registered for the 2010/2011 school year, fewer than in previous years. The number of Aboriginal students has decreased every year from 2006. There are approximately 50 ESL students and ten Aboriginal ESL (likely ESD) students.

There was one participant from this district involved in the study; a speech-language pathologist. This person was responsible for all aspects of the ESD program in the district including assessment, service delivery, reporting and documentation and has been involved in the district's ESD program since its inception less than 10 years ago.

2.2.3 School district C

District C is a rural school district at notable distance from the Lower Mainland. It has under 20 elementary and secondary schools. There are five local Aboriginal groups served by the district. The local Aboriginal groups include four First Nations and a Métis association. This district has a large number of Aboriginal students and all students enrolled in ESL and ESD programs are Aboriginal.

Participants from this district included a speech-language pathologist, an ESD teacher, an Aboriginal district principal and an Aboriginal early literacy resource teacher. The speech-language pathologist was not directly involved in the ESD programming but was asked to consult on important aspects of the program when it was initially set up. The Aboriginal district principal oversaw the ESD department while the ESD teacher administered the assessments, provided the ESD intervention and was responsible for reporting and documentation. The ESD teacher was a first-year teacher and new to ESD. The Aboriginal early literacy resource teacher is not directly involved in the ESD program; however, the Aboriginal early literacy program is funded through the ESL/D policy funding.

2.2.4 School district D

District D was an urban district with a large number of Aboriginal students representing over 500 bands and nations. There are close to 400 Aboriginal ESL students (likely ESD). The district is situated on the traditional lands of two First Nations and there is a current enhancement agreement between the local Aboriginal communities and the school district.

The participant from this district was an Aboriginal district principal. Although not directly involved in the ESD program, this person is responsible for the educational experience of all Aboriginal students.

2.3 Data collection

There are two sources of data for this study: first, a document review of publicly available Ministry of Education documents and resources and second, semi-structured interviews with participants from the four school districts described above.

The search for relevant documents was guided by the information on the ESL home page of the British Columbia Ministry of Education's extensive website: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/esl/>. Four of the five documents reviewed for this study were listed on the ESL home page (n.d., Ministry of Education). The fifth document, Form 1701, was found on the Ministry's Policy home page (Ministry of Education, 2008), to which I was referred by a participant. The only document listed on the ESL home page not reviewed was entitled "Students from refugee backgrounds: A guide for teachers and schools." This document was excluded because it was not relevant to the current line of inquiry.

The interviews were semi-structured and consisted of six general questions and possible follow-up questions. Participants were instructed that the guide was flexible and that they could comment on whatever came to mind or choose not to answer a question. An interview guide (see Appendix A) was given to the school districts for approval in advance of the interview but was not shown to participants. The interview questions probed the participant's background and involvement in ESD, the variability of ESD programs, the identification of a dialect, methods and materials used, and challenges and successes experienced. The interviews were primarily conducted in the participants'

workplaces: in school board offices, school therapy rooms, and in one case a participant's home. In each case, the location of the interview was one with which the participant was familiar and comfortable. Through the interviews I was seeking factual information, opinions and attitudes (Kvale, 1996) to inform the data analysis. All interviews were digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Participants were sent a copy of the results identifying the sections where they had been quoted. This served as member checking to ensure that participants confirmed the interpretations drawn based on the accounts they provided. In accordance with Thorne's (2008) description of member checking, participants were encouraged to read the results in their entirety and offer feedback in the form of comments, ideas, insights or questions and asked to reflect on what may or may not ring true to their experience.

2.4 Data analysis

The methodology of qualitative description used in this study was constant comparative analysis, which involves comparing every piece of data such as an interview, a theme or a statement, with all other pieces of data, in order to identify relationships amongst data (Thorne, 2008). In qualitative research the collection and analysis of data occurs simultaneously. Treatment of existing data can be modified with the introduction of new data and insights (Sandelowski, 2000). Analysis of the data was not an isolated stage, but took place during the interviews through clarification of meaning and interpretation (Kvale, 1996), and after through constant comparative analysis. This method of analysis allowed for the analysis of themes and patterns within and across interviews.

Themes and patterns have been defined differently by authors in qualitative research. The definitions I have used are those suggested by Luborsky (1994): a theme

is a generalized statement made by the interviewee about their beliefs, attitudes, values or sentiments. Themes can be defined as personal and individual or cultural and shared and are meaningful to the participant. A theme gives elements and experiences an overarching meaning from the perspective of a participant. A pattern, on the other hand, is defined as a representation of findings built on the researcher's observations and analysis of regularity, and is meaningful to the researcher. A third term, topic, is used to describe the answers to a question posed by the interviewer and does not necessarily reflect a theme. Themes can be identified by frequency of occurrence or repetition, or as being marked as having great meaning to a participant.

The first step in the analysis was verbatim orthographic transcription of the interviews. This was followed by line by line coding to identify categories of meaning from the data. Categories were initially descriptive and became defined in the iterative coding process. Through this active coding process, data with similar properties became grouped and could then be considered against groupings with different properties (Thorne, 2008). Themes and patterns emerged i.e., became apparent, through the process of constant comparative analysis. In order to keep the progression of analysis transparent, memoing was used to keep track of what coding decisions were made along the way and why changes in coding may have occurred. Field notes were also kept to help identify thematic similarities and to flag certain statements as potentially meaningful (Thorne, 2008).

2.5 Validation

Comprehensiveness can be accomplished through *triangulation* of data collection and analysis, i.e., integrating findings from multiple sources of data (Creswell, 1998). In this study triangulation involved approaching ESD from several perspectives. Firstly, the

document review provided background information about Ministry of Education policy and guidelines. Secondly, the transcript data from the interviews provided information regarding the perspectives of the individuals involved in the program. Thirdly, member checking provided confirmation of the initial results. Each source of information contributed to the thoroughness and accuracy of my description and interpretation.

The integration of the document review with the interview data is accomplished in the presentation of the results by first presenting the document review in order to give the reader the context and background information needed to understand participants' interpretations of policy. In order to make the perspectives of individual participants transparent and to differentiate them from ministry information, findings include direct quotes with identification of the source of the data.

2.6 Anonymity

Anonymity is often an issue in qualitative research with a small pool of participants. Participating schools, school districts and individuals were not named and districts were described in a general manner in order to avoid the possibility of identification. Participants were reminded of this and asked to review the description of their school district to ensure they were comfortable with the level of description. Additionally, participants were not described in relation to specific districts in the results and discussion chapters. However, there is always a risk that one may be identified despite efforts to mitigate this risk.

Quotes in the text are linked by number to a specific interview; however, the interview numbers are random. Participants were informed of their interview number and advised to review the corresponding quotes both for member checking and to ensure they were comfortable with their quotes being linked in this manner.

3 Chapter: Results

To recapitulate, the research questions that stemmed from the literature review and my initial clinical placement with a school district were the following:

- (1) What are the characteristics of SEDS programs in the four British Columbia school districts involved in this study?
- (2) To what extent are the SEDS programs and services similar and different among BC schools and school districts? (2b) How are these similarities and differences influenced or dictated by the particular needs of individual schools and school districts?
- (3) What methods do the individuals directly involved in ESD intervention use to improve a child's standard English language skills?
- (4) How do individuals providing ESD programs negotiate the complex relationship between language, culture and identity?

In order to answer these questions, information was collected from multiple sources and perspectives including the individuals involved in delivering the services, the relevant Ministry of Education documents and the literature.

The results are divided into three sections based on the patterns that emerged from the data and my initial research questions. An effort has been made to identify the different perspectives of the Ministry of Education through a document review, and the perspectives of individual participants through the use of quotes and interpretation.

Most participants made reference to the ministry documents; therefore, the first section includes a review of the relevant documents regarding ministry policy and guidelines in order to give the reader context and background information, and to

highlight information from the Ministry of Education necessary for understanding how participants arrived at their individual interpretations.

The second section looks at participants' interpretations of specific ministry policy and guidelines and presents the factors that led to the very different ESD programs seen in the districts consulted for the study. Each subsection will present the relevant information from ministry documents, and will be followed by a description of the perspectives of the participants providing the services and the factors contributing to the differences across ESD programs.

The third section moves away from the interpretation of ministry documents and focuses mainly on the perspectives of the individual participants regarding their own service delivery. This section presents the participants' understandings and opinions of ESD programming including the diversity of programs, variations in service delivery, and program specifics such as code-switching, choice of materials, and the link between language, culture and identity.

In reporting these findings I have made an effort to use the same terminology used by the authors of the documents and by the individual participants and to use the terminology most representative of the Aboriginal populations served by participating school districts. Although it is common to refer to people of Aboriginal heritage in B.C. as First Nations, one participating district had a Métis population that would be excluded in the use of this term. Therefore, when discussing results found across districts I use the term Aboriginal in order to be as inclusive as possible.

3.1 Ministry policy, guidelines and resources

ESD programs are recognized by the Ministry of Education as part of English as a Second Language (ESL) support services (Ministry of Education, 2008). Because ESD is a branch of the ESL program, ESL and ESD are sometimes referred to collectively as ESL/D in ministry documents. When ESL alone is used, it is understood that this term also includes ESD.

Information on requirements for funding for ESL/D support services can be found in the English as a Second Language Policy and Guidelines document, the instructions for Form 1701 and the Regular Enrolment Audit Program described in the first section below. Additional resources with information for ESL/D service providers and classroom teachers are described in the second sub-section.

3.1.1 ESL/D program requirement and information documents

“English as a Second Language Policy and Guidelines”, known hereafter as “ESL Policy and Guidelines”, is an extensive document developed to provide “a basis for consistency, quality and equity while allowing for flexibility in the delivery of ESL services” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 3). While the document does use the term ESL to refer to both ESL and ESD services, it explicitly states that “Services for students who speak a variation of English significantly different than that used in school are referred to as English as a Second Dialect (ESD) services” (p. 4) and that “some students, although born in Canada, require assistance because they use another language and/or dialect of English in their homes and need additional support to be successful with the school curriculum” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 4).

The ESL Policy and Guidelines document describes ESL principles and background, guidelines for assessment and identification, eligibility criteria, funding,

planning and services, and reporting. The document also defines an ESL specialist and outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education, the Boards of Education, the schools, and the teachers of English language learners. All information in the document applies to both ESL and ESD (Ministry of Education, 2009).

“Form 1701: Student Data Collection”, known hereafter as “Form 1701”, is used to collect student data including special needs category and number of courses enrolled in by students in the secondary grades. It also tracks enrolment in Aboriginal education programs and services, career programs, and language programs including English as a Second Language. ESD students, as a group separate from ESL, are not tracked on form 1701. For the purposes of form 1701 both ESD and ESL students are enrolled in the English as a Second Language program. The above information is collected in order to allocate funds to school boards, track student movement between schools and school districts, and monitor enrolment trends in programs. The instructions for form 1701 are based on the ESL Policy and Guidelines document (Ministry of Education, 2010c).

The “K-12 Regular Enrolment Audit Program” hereafter referred to as the “Regular Enrolment Audit Program” is a document outlining the objectives of the compliance audit, which include: (1) to provide assurance to the ministry and school boards that ministry policy is being followed, (2) to promote compliance with ministry funding directives, and (3) to ensure accurate allocation of educational funds (Ministry of Education, 2010b). The audit program targets many of the same categories as the form 1701 including Aboriginal education and ESL/D programs. The document uses the term ESL/D to refer collectively to ESL and ESD. It outlines the criteria for ESL/D supplemental funding, describes what the auditors are looking for, and outlines the audit procedures (Ministry of Education, 2010a).

In order to receive funding for ESD support services through the ESL policy, school boards must meet six criteria outlined in both Form 1701 and the English as a Second Language Policy and Guidelines document. Even though Form 1701 is based on the policy and guidelines document there are slight differences between the sets of six criteria listed in each document; they are listed in a different order and use different wording, which could lead to different interpretations. According to the instructions for Form 1701, school boards must also meet the following additional conditions specific to ESD services:

ESD support services must address the development of Standard English language proficiency, including oral language proficiency. Students reported as requiring ESD services speak a dialect of English that differs significantly from Standard English used in school and in broader Canadian society (i.e., significant variations in oral language vocabulary and sentence structure from those used in Standard English). ESD services do not include: speech-language therapy for language developmental disorders; services that solely address accents in speech carried over from another language; or services that solely address deficits in reading and writing Standard English. (Ministry of Education, 2010c, p. 9)

These additional ESD specific conditions are not mentioned in the ESL Policy and Guidelines document.

3.1.2 Other Ministry of Education ESL/D resources

In addition to the above-mentioned documents, there are three ESL resources for service providers and classroom teachers available on the Ministry of Education website: “English as a Second Language Learners: A Guide for ESL Specialists” (hereafter known as “Guide for ESL Specialists”), “English as a Second Language Learners: A

Guide for Classroom Teachers” (hereafter known as “Guide for Classroom Teachers”) and “English as a Second Language Standards” (hereafter know as “ESL Standards”).

Each document includes the following definition of an ESL student:

English as a Second Language students are those whose primary language(s) or language(s) of the home, is other than English and who may therefore require additional services in order to develop their individual potential within British Columbia’s school system. Some students speak variations of English that differ significantly from the English used in the broader Canadian society and in school; they may require ESL support. (Ministry of Education, 1999a, p. 6; Ministry of Education, 1999b, p. 9; Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 7)

The definition also includes a footnote stating that “in some literature this is referred to as English as a Second Dialect (ESD)”. Both the Guide for ESL Specialists and the Guide for Classroom Teachers include fictional profiles of individual ESL students (including First Nations students) throughout the document in order to convey a sense of diversity within the ESL population.

The Guide for ESL Specialists is a document written for ESL specialist teachers to highlight current aspects of research in order to inform effective practices. One section of the document entitled “First Nations Students and ESL” acknowledges the unique language needs of some of BC’s First Nations students (Ministry of Education, 1999b, p. 10). This section of the document states that some First Nations students may need specific English language support at school and describes the need to provide culturally relevant resources to support their language learning. The document describes the different type of ESL students including immigrants, refugees, and students who “speak a dialect of English sufficiently different from the English taught at school that it

hinders their learning in school” (Ministry of Education, 1999b, p. 10). It also notes that the latter group may contain First Nations students.

The document describes an ESL student’s entry into the school system: the orientation, the first few days, and initial assessment. This information is geared toward students from immigrant families who are unfamiliar with the Canadian school system and may not apply to an English dialect-speaking student born in Canada. It also describes ESL programming including the goals of ESL service delivery and principles of second language learning. It addresses cultural differences and describes models of service delivery, which will be described in greater detail in the “Interpretation of guidelines” section. The Guide for ESL Specialists also describes how to work collaboratively with classroom teachers with suggestions including increasing comfort levels by initiating lunchroom conversations, sharing expertise, materials and experiences, and conducting a demonstration lesson. It defines the role of the ESL specialist as threefold: language teacher, resource person, and family liaison contact. As a language teacher the ESL specialist is expected to teach ESL learners using strategies to improve listening, speaking, reading and writing and introduce them to basic concepts in various subject areas. As a resource person the ESL specialist may assess the needs of ESL students, suggest appropriate placement, programming and service delivery, suggest adaptations to the classroom or curriculum, assume the role of case manager, and act as an advocate for ESL students. The role of family liaison contact may require the ESL specialist to facilitate communication with parents and their involvement in school activities, and help interpret cultural and educational practices (Ministry of Education, 1999b).

The Guide for Classroom Teachers (Ministry of Education, 1999a) is a comprehensive document that draws on recent ESL research and the knowledge of experienced ESL educators in BC. It includes a description of the various types of ESL learner, similar to the description in the Guide for ESL Specialists mentioned above. The document also includes information about cultural differences in student behavior and highlights the benefits of providing services that respect the student's language and culture of origin. The sections describing ESL programming and identification are very general. For example, the ESL programming section states that ESL services can help students "strengthen their ability to communicate fluently in English at school and in the wider community" (Ministry of Education, 1999a, p. 11), develop other academic skills, experience self-worth and pride in their heritage, and develop an understanding of the differences between their home culture and the value system of the school.

The identification section acknowledges that it can be difficult to identify students who speak English as a second dialect and addresses the need to take into account a student's listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in an assessment of English language proficiency. It refers the reader to the Assessment Handbooks Series published by the Ministry of Education and suggests that the initial assessment include informal techniques such as oral interviews and writing samples rather than standardized tests, which are usually normed on English-speaking populations.

Descriptions of classroom planning, instructional tips and strategies are comprehensive and could apply to both the ESL and the ESD student. The document describes ways the teacher can use language to present information to students to ensure comprehension. These include providing wait time for student responses, using vocabulary the student may be familiar with, teaching the language of the subject,

simplifying sentence structure, and clearly marking transitions between classroom activities. It also provides tips on how to use visual and contextual supports for linguistic development. Examples include writing key words on the board, providing written notes or instructions and using the students' native languages to check for comprehension. The Guide for Classroom Teachers also includes a section on how to find and use resources such as ESL specific materials and describes the role of the ESL specialist as a language teacher, resource person and family liaison contact as described above (Ministry of Education 1999a).

The third resource available on the Ministry of Education website is written for both classroom teachers and specialists. The ESL Standards document (Ministry of Education, 2001) describes the characteristics often exhibited by second language learners during the process of acquiring English. The document provides a common language for describing a student's proficiency in English reading, writing and oral expression. It includes matrices for primary, intermediate and secondary grades, describing the various levels of proficiency in English, which reflect characteristics exhibited by students acquiring English as a second Language. However, these may not effectively describe a student who speaks a different dialect of English. The document acknowledges the benefit of honoring cultural identities and respecting the knowledge and experiences that students bring to school. A section entitled "ESL and ESD" contains a description of ESD students similar to descriptions in the other documents:

Some ESL students come from homes where English is not the home language while others come from an environment where the English used at home is significantly different from the English that is commonly used in schools.

English as a Second Dialect (ESD) students include some First Nations students

and students whose caregivers grew up in other countries where the English spoken differs from the English spoken in Canadian schools. (Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 15)

This section notes that “ESD is not a matter of recognizing an ‘accent’” (Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 15). The section further describes ESD services as “oriented toward developing school language. English language proficiency should be considered in broad terms to take account of differences between language used for social interaction and language used for academic purposes in all content areas” (Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 15).

3.2 Interpretation of guidelines

There is considerable information publicly available on the Ministry of Education website regarding English as a Second Language policy, guidelines and resources. Despite this abundance of information, notable diversity was found in the way districts interpreted the ministry ESL policy, leading to very different ESD programs across the few districts involved in this study.

This diversity is explored by looking at participants’ interpretations of specific ministry policy and guidelines detailed in the documents described in the previous section. The relevant information from ministry documents will be presented first, followed by a description of the perspectives of the participants providing the services and the factors leading to the different interpretations.

3.2.1 Who is qualified to deliver ESD services?

One aspect of ministry policy interpreted differently amongst participating school districts was the question of who is qualified to deliver ESD services. There were two sources contributing to the different interpretations. One was the question of whether an

ESL/D specialist is required to be involved in the planning and delivery of services or whether the specialist must actually be the one to plan and deliver the services. The second source is the definition of an ESL/D specialist and whether or not an SLP can be considered an ESL/D specialist.

One eligibility criterion (Number 5) listed in the ESL Policy and Guidelines document states that there must be “An ESL specialist ... *involved* [emphasis added] in planning and delivering services” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 7). This leaves open the possibility for another professional to deliver the services. The corresponding eligibility criterion listed in Form 1701 (Number 3) states that there must be “evidence that a specialist teacher is *involved* [emphasis added] in the development of the instructional plan and participates in a regular review of that plan during the school year” (Ministry of Education, 2010c, p. 8). However, a further criterion (Number 5) states that there must be “a schedule or list documenting the ESL/FLS services *provided by an ESL/FLS specialist teacher, teacher or teacher’s assistant* [emphasis added]” (Ministry of Education, 2010c, p. 8). This criterion can be interpreted as excluding professionals other than teachers or teachers’ assistants from delivering ESL/D services. A third document dealing with the question of professional qualification is the Regular Enrolment Audit Program. According to this document the auditors are looking for “evidence of ESL/D specialist teacher involvement” (Ministry of Education, 2010a, p. 15). This criterion appears to allow other professionals, such as a speech-language pathologist, to be involved in the program in any capacity *as long as there is also an ESL/D specialist teacher* involved in planning and delivering the services.

The second source for alternative interpretations is the definition of an ESL/D specialist. The Policy and Guidelines document states that “ESL specialists must meet

the requirements for certification by the British Columbia College of Teachers” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 13). The document also states that “teachers employed as specialists with responsibility for supporting, planning, and delivery of programs and services for English language learners should have appropriate qualifications” (p. 13). Suggested qualifications, knowledge and skills listed include experience in the regular classroom as well as with students in ESL, fluency in English, training in ESL methodology, and post–secondary preparation in applied linguistics, first and second language acquisition, assessment/testing theory and practice, cross-cultural understandings, multicultural studies, and adapting instructions to meet diverse language needs.

Two speech-language pathologist (SLP) participants commented on the question of who is qualified to deliver ESL/D services. One stated that “we have gone by the letter of the law, that because I’m not a qualified teacher, I’m not an ESL teacher, ESD teacher, I will not do any direct intervention with the students” (Interview 3, lines 68-69). A second participant who was concerned about the policy reported being asked by the district to interview for the ESD position. This participant reported responding “How can I? I am a speech-language pathologist. I thought you had to be an ESL teacher for this” (Interview 4, lines 83-85). The district took a broader interpretation of the policy, reportedly responding that they believed an SLP had the credentials to fill the ESD position because of being considered a language specialist. However, the SLP suggested that they “check with the government” (Interview 4, lines 86-87). This participant reported that at the request of the district the government conducted an audit and that the auditors “liked what they saw” (Interview 4, line 97).

In summary, both participants initially interpreted the policy as meaning that only a qualified ESL/D teacher could deliver ESD service; however, upon consultation with district and ministry representatives, one participant was convinced otherwise.

3.2.2 Service delivery models

The decision of who will deliver the intervention affects how the program itself can be structured. The four school districts involved in this study all structure their ESD programs differently. In some cases, ESD programs in individual schools within the same district are structured differently.

The Guide for ESL Specialists document outlines different models of service delivery currently in use in BC school districts (Ministry of Education, 1999b). The models described include self-contained classes, pull-out classes or in-class support with either a school-based or itinerant teacher. Pull-out is defined as a model where “individuals or groups are withdrawn from their regular classes to receive ESL support”, whereas in-class support is defined as a model where “students receive ESL help in their regular classrooms” (Ministry of Education, 1999b, p. 30-31). The guide suggests factors to consider when choosing a service delivery model and further suggests that the ESL specialist consult with individuals outside their district to identify other service delivery options.

The guide lists the advantages and disadvantages of pull-outs versus in-class support for ESL/D students at the elementary and secondary levels. For example, an advantage of in-class support is that the ESL teacher can offer assistance “at the teachable moment” (Ministry of Education, 1999b, p. 31). A disadvantage of the in-class support model mentioned is that it can be difficult to group students who are in different classrooms but may have similar ESL/D needs (Ministry of Education, 1999b). An

advantage of the pull-out model listed in the Guide for ESL Specialists is that “students can receive competent ESL instruction within appropriate groups” (Ministry of Education, 1999b, p. 30). A disadvantage of the pull-out model is that “learning may not occur at the time it is needed; it is delayed to suit the timetable” (Ministry of Education, 1999b, p. 30).

The guide also lists disadvantages of both the school-based ESL teacher model and the itinerant ESL teacher model: a school-based ESL teacher may not be available in every school in a district with an ESL population scattered throughout a large geographical area; however, in a similar district, itinerant teachers have so many schools to travel to that there may be little time for collaboration and communication with classroom teachers (Ministry of Education, 1999b).

School districts are not required to use one model exclusively: “School districts are responsible for choosing the model or combination of models that best provides the support students need” (Ministry of Education, 1999b, p. 28). The Guide for ESL Specialists lists several factors to consider when selecting a service delivery model. These include the number and location of ESL students, the number of trained ESL teachers, availability of materials and instructional space, and transportation options available to students (Ministry of Education, 1999b).

Of the four school districts involved in this study, one employed an SLP exclusively to assess, plan, and deliver ESD services using a pull-out model while another district employed resource teachers to deliver all aspects of ESD service. Itinerant ESD teachers and school-based First Nations support workers administered ESD services in a third district using a combination of pull-outs and in-class support. The fourth district, which encompasses several communities, used different models

within the district including pull-out and in-class support: one area of the district had an SLP delivering all aspects of service while another area of the district had an SLP overseeing the program and doing the assessment with a resource teacher delivering the intervention.

Many participants reflected on the advantages and disadvantages of the various service delivery models. Participant comments show how the model of service delivery really does reflect local circumstances. Five participants discussed the pros and cons of pull-out vs. in-class support with different and strong opinions across districts. Three participants commented on their dislike of pull-outs for students in grade seven and older. A resource teacher expressed the challenges of providing ESD service in the classroom: “How do you provide the service without pulling out? You’re constantly disrupting, it’s definitely challenging.... I try to provide something without pulling out but sometimes it doesn’t work out so well” (Interview 1, lines 144-147). Another participant suggested that when the ESD teachers try to provide in-class support they end up just “standing in the classroom not fulfilling a role” (Interview 6 line 86).

The challenges of the pull-out model were also acknowledged by two speech-language pathologists in the same district. Both commented that the students themselves do not like to be pulled out of class. In order to avoid pulling older students out of class, both participants had planned to provide ESD service in their respective high schools in a proposed class on Humanities. This model was successful in one school, but due to lack of enrolment, was not implemented in the other school. The speech-language pathologist in the latter school called the situation a “dilemma” (Interview 2, line 68) and commented that “They were all going to be in the humanities class and I was just going to direct things for the teacher to do but they didn’t have enough enrolment and they had

to cancel that class so it turned into a pull-out and the kids don't want to come"

(Interview 2, lines 60-62).

Another challenge encountered by participants was grouping ESD students according to need. Grouping students who have similar needs was found to be a challenge in both in-class models, as suggested in the Guide for ESL Specialists, and also pull-out models. Three participants suggested that their ESD students are not a homogeneous group, a sentiment expressed in the following comment: "We have students that have higher level skills and that have lower level skills and we lump them all together; they can get frustrated as well" (Interview 3, lines 241-243).

In one district, participants strongly supported the pull-out model while highlighting its challenges. The itinerant ESD teacher, who used a combination of pull-out and in-class support, was a strong advocate for the pull-out model. When asked about goals for the program the participant commented on the difficulties of in-class support and why pull-out may be a better model. "Make it a pull-out program because right now it's kind of you go in, you can support. I want it to be a pull-out program so that you can sit and have conversations with them because in the classroom there is something going on over here when their attention is directed over there or if the teacher is switching they're wanting to switch with their class as well, so it's difficult. I think it should be pull-out" (Interview 7, lines 17-20).

Seven of nine participants discussed the various factors impacting a district's or school's choice of ESL/D model. Several factors were similar to the ones listed in the Guide for ESL Specialists including the needs and goals of the schools, staff, and students, while others reflect more personal factors such as the perspectives of the classroom teachers. One factor brought up by participants was the individuality of the

school and its classroom teachers. An ESD teacher commented that “Every school is different.... Like if it is a pull-out or just in-class support. It depends on the teacher as well. The ones that don’t want you to pull-out – you’re not implementing a program for ESD....I don’t get to choose what I work on I just have to go with what the teacher has and sometimes it’s just math” (Interview 7 lines 38-41).

A second factor brought up by three participants was the local Aboriginal population served by the district. Although student demographics were mentioned as a factor to consider when choosing a service delivery method in the Guide for ESL Specialists, factors related to Aboriginal populations were not specifically mentioned. The Aboriginal principal in a district with exclusively Aboriginal children in its ESD program explained how the student demographic impacts the service delivery model chosen: “We have targeted some schools that have large ESD populations to receive direct services from the ESD teachers. Other schools have small percentages, like maybe five students or under, and we have a First Nations support worker carry out the ESD service delivery” (Interview 6, lines 30-32).

3.2.3 Oral language vs. literacy

A third area of ministry policy that was interpreted differently across districts was the question of mandate regarding oral language and literacy. Form 1701 includes the following eligibility criteria specific to ESD:

ESD support services must address the development of Standard English language proficiency, including oral language proficiency. Students reported as requiring ESD services speak a dialect of English that differs significantly from Standard English used in school and in broader Canadian society (i.e., significant variations in oral language vocabulary and sentence structure from those used in

Standard English). ESD services do not include services that solely address deficits in reading and writing Standard English. (Ministry of Education, 2010c, p. 9)

One participant believed that the mandate with respect to ESD was solely for oral language intervention while participants in another district focused almost exclusively on literacy. One participant stated "...I think there are some districts in the province who are giving ESD service and they don't realize that the mandate is now oral language only. If they are giving intervention on reading and writing and they get audited they will lose all the funding" (Interview 4, lines 362-364). Another school district, on the other hand, had a focus on literacy with all four participants from that district discussing literacy assessment and intervention in ESD. Participants in the remaining two school districts did not comment on their interpretation of the mandate but included both oral language and literacy in their ESD programs and mentioned the importance of reading and writing in the academic setting.

One factor contributing to a school district's focus on oral language or literacy may be the expertise/knowledge of the individuals providing ESD support and the focus of the district in general. One SLP commented that that the particular district's ESD program addresses literacy primarily and that the ESD teachers "focus more on reading and with some oral language development" (Interview 5, lines 22-23). The professional background of the ESD provider also appears to affect whether the focus of service is on oral language or literacy. In the above-mentioned district there is a strong literacy program run by an Aboriginal early literacy resource teacher, which receives funding through the ESL policy.

3.2.4 Target population

Although most students identified as ESD are Aboriginal, ESD is not an Aboriginal program. ESD services are defined in the ESL Policy and Guidelines document as “services for students who speak a variation of English significantly different than that used in school” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 4). The ESL Standards document further defines ESD students as including “some First Nations students and students whose caregivers grew up in other countries where the English spoken differs from the English used in Canadian schools” (Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 15).

While there is nothing in the policy and guidelines document that indicates an ESD program should be exclusively for Aboriginal children, it is the case that most students identified as ESD in the four districts are Aboriginal. Several participants suggested reasons why most ESD programs do not currently include non-Aboriginal children. One participant voiced concerns that there were already many First Nations students struggling in school and there was just not enough money to support those students in ESD as well as to open the program to non-Aboriginal students. This participant commented that “they [the district] could only afford staff time for two days of work and they felt that there were so many First Nations students that weren’t.... making it past grade 9” (Interview 4, lines 114-120). The same participant commented that “If the mandate goes further than First Nations I’m not sure that what I do right now is the way it should be” (Interview 4, lines 389-390).

Another reason why most ESD programs do not include non-Aboriginal students was brought up by participants in two school districts. They suggested that the ESD program was initially brought in as a way to meet the needs of the First Nations students. In one school district the question of including students other than those from Aboriginal

backgrounds was not even mentioned. In that school district there were no non-Aboriginal students in either the ESL or ESD programs at the time of the interviews. The possibility of having non-Aboriginal students in the program was also not mentioned by the participant from the urban school district. This may be due to the role of this participant as Aboriginal Principal for that district, which does not involve the direct provision of ESD services.

However, participant comments revealed that some ESD service providers may be at least considering the possibility of including non-Aboriginal children in ESD programs as demonstrated in this comment “I feel that in some ways if we focus only on the First Nations I don’t really feel that is truthful of what a dialect is” (Interview 1, lines 102-103). This participant went on to explain that although that district’s program focused on First Nations students because there is a large First Nations community, there may be non-Aboriginal students in the school who would be eligible for ESD services. One district was even starting to assess non-Aboriginal students for ESD as described by an SLP in this comment: “I’m assessing 33 or 34 kids and of the 19 I’ve assessed 13 of them are not First Nations. Some are French-Filipino, Russian background, Dutch background, Italian, so I’m trying to be open” (Interview 4, lines 391-393).

One point brought up by participants representing all four school districts is that not all Aboriginal students are ESD students. One of the SLPs commented “I don’t consider every First Nation student ESD and perhaps not all the ESD students are just First Nation students either. I often have all the First Nation students referred to me for testing and three or four a year test much too high with their language skills....It’s not a First Nations thing it’s a difference of language...” (Interview 3, lines 314-318). In three of the four school districts, participants commented that all the Aboriginal students were

being referred for ESD assessment and/or being identified as ESD. One participant questioned the effectiveness of referring every Aboriginal child for ESD assessment: “I was at one school where 90% of the population was First Nations and they wanted to refer every child, I have 18 schools and that was one of them, and I said I’m not going to be able to assess every student and I’m not sure that is the most effective way” (Interview 4, lines 12-15).

3.2.5 Assessment and documentation

According to the ESL Policy and Guidelines and Form 1701, an annual assessment of English language proficiency must be administered. The ESL Policy and Guidelines document states that the assessment must determine that:

...the student’s use of English is sufficiently different from Standard English that he or she is identified as requiring specialized services to adjust to the linguistic and cultural environment in order to achieve his or her individual potential and be successful in the British Columbia school system. (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 7)

Neither document specifies what assessment tools should be used; however, the ESL Policy and Guidelines document includes the following description:

Assessments of English Language should include, but are not limited to a test of English language proficiency; oral interview (with students, parents) reviews of student’s oral and unedited written language samples as appropriate; and assessments of students’ reading and listening comprehension. (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 6)

In addition, the document states that:

The assessment should be relevant to the student's age, taking into account the student's academic, cultural, and social/emotional needs. Assessment of English proficiency should consider cultural and linguistic diversity (for example, should avoid requiring cultural knowledge) and be non-discriminatory. The assessment should also consider both the language performance and classroom functioning of the learner. (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 6)

The Ministry of Education also recommends that use of standardized tests should not be the sole basis for making an initial assessment. The Guide for Classroom Teachers states that:

The process for conducting the initial assessment of language proficiency should involve the use of informal techniques and criterion-referenced instruments (e.g. oral interviews, writing samples) rather than standardized tests. Results obtained using commercially produced standardized tests may be misleading since these are seldom designed to specifically assess ESL students, and tend to be written for, and normed on, English-speaking populations. (Ministry of Education, 1999a, pp. 14-15)

According to the ESL Policy and Guidelines document (Ministry of Education, 2009) and Form 1701 (Ministry of Education, 2010c), there should a schedule or list documenting the ESL/D services provided for each ESL/D identified student. It is also stated that there must be "documentation of the student's progress in the acquisition of English proficiency in all Student Progress Reports" (Ministry of Education, 2010c, p. 8). The ESL Policy and Guidelines document further defines this as including information in a report to parents on the progress of ESL/D students in each of the five reporting periods

each year. According to the Regular Enrolment Audit Program, auditors are looking for evidence of the student's progress in the acquisition of English in the form of progress reports or ESL inserts that contain specific information relayed to the parents on what the student can do, which areas require further attention and ways of supporting student learning (Ministry of Education, 2010a).

Participants in three of the four districts commented on the amount of time needed for administering, marking and interpreting assessments as well as for the associated paperwork. A speech-language pathologist remarked:

I found that the testing was onerous and time consuming. I was under the gun to get it done by the end of the year because I started at the beginning of June and I had about 70 to do so it really did take me a great deal of time just to administer the tests, let alone mark them and interpret them. (Interview 3, lines 33-36)

The amount of assessment done for each child and the specific assessments used varied greatly from district to district. One participant noted being able to tell with an hour and a half of testing if a child referred for ESD assessment had difficulty. Areas assessed included following instructions, talking about vocabulary, understanding and using word or sentence grammar, and school readiness concepts. Standardized tests (or selected subtests) administered by participants included the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT: Dunn & Dunn, 2007), the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA: Bracken, 2002), the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF: Secord, Semel, & Wiig, 2003), the Language Processing Test (LPT: Hammer & Richard, 2005), and the Test of Language Development-Intermediate (TOLD-I: Hammill & Newcomer, 1988). One participant discussed the use of standardized tests to compare an ESD

student's scores with norms standardized on standard English speaking students and made the following suggestion:

If we're going to apply those developmental norms I think we should be saying this is how the student compares to students who speak standard English as their first dialect. These results need to be interpreted with caution because this could be a dialectal difference. (Interview 4, lines 678-682)

Informal and criterion-referenced assessments mentioned by participants included informal reading assessments, PM benchmarks (Nelson Education, 2003), Jerry Johns (Johns, 1988), and a writing matrix.

Participants also felt time pressures due to the paperwork demands required for documentation and reporting as expressed by another speech-language pathologist in the following remark:

Another frustration with the ESD program is that you have this little bit of time and you have all these paperwork demands. The paperwork demand is incredible.... You have to do an assessment plan and assessment report, you have to do an educational report. You can't combine these two reports, they have to be separate. Then you have to do a progress report for every report card. (Interview 4, lines 699-703)

An ESD teacher commented that each ESD student generates 15 minutes per week of service time. The Aboriginal District principal was concerned that the paperwork demands were taking away from this limited time for ESD service.

Participants in all four of the school districts brought up concerns for following proper assessment and documentation protocols in order to pass an audit and maintain ministry funding. One participant was concerned that no assessment was being done to

warrant the supplemental funding while others highlighted the need for thorough documentation of assessment and daily ESD activities in order to satisfy an audit. One participant described the consultation with other school districts in order to find out what kind of paperwork they were doing.

You have to sort of keep track of it because they can audit you.... and you could lose your funding and the kids lose out so we looked up other schools, asked for their paperwork, had them send it to us and then refined it to work for us.

(Interview 1, lines 71-75)

Many of the same factors that contribute to interpretations of other ministry policies also contribute to an individual district's method of assessment and documentation. One factor is the type of ESD provider. Speech-language pathologists may use specific speech therapy assessments while ESD teachers may use different ones that are more familiar or that the teachers are qualified to administer. One participant mentioned doing the ESD assessment for a school because they had no one else qualified to do the "level-B testing" (Interview 2, line 19) required to administer those assessments. (Classroom, learning assistance, and special education teachers must take a level-B testing course in order to administer standardized tests such as the PPVT). Alternatively, in a district with a focus on literacy, or a literacy specialist providing ESL/D services, tools that assess literacy skills would likely be used. Documentation also depends on the type of ESD provider. In a teacher-run program the teacher will add the ESL/D report onto the regular classroom report while a speech-language pathologist or ESD teacher may do ESL/D inserts to include with the classroom reports (Ministry of Education, 2009).

Student demographics may also play a part in which and how many assessments are used, how often progress is reported and the manner of reporting. As participants'

comments regarding time pressures suggest, a district with a large population of Aboriginal children may have higher numbers referred for assessment and requiring service. ESD providers with large caseloads may not have the time to do extensive testing. Additionally, as one of the participants suggested, the assessment process may look different in a district that has exclusively Aboriginal students in ESD as compared to a district that includes both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in ESD programs.

3.3 Participants' understandings and opinions

This section moves away from the interpretation of ministry documents and focuses on the perspectives of the individual participants with respect to their understandings and opinions of different aspects of ESD programming. These include the diversity of programs, variations in service delivery, differentiating between difference and delay, and program specifics such as code-switching, choice of materials, and the link between language, culture and identity.

As shown in the previous section, different interpretations and applications of ministry guidelines at the district, school and ESD provider levels can lead to very different ESD programs across the province. The following section explores this variation amongst ESD providers trying to deliver appropriate, effective intervention in accordance with ministry policy. An ESD program can also be impacted by the perspectives of classroom teachers, support of administration, time constraints, and individual approaches to ESD service delivery.

3.3.1 Consistency vs. diversity

The manner in which participants coped with the diversity amongst ESD programs within and across school districts varied. Some participants were uncomfortable with the lack of consistency while others acknowledged and accepted this

diversity but did not express it as a concern. Most participants who commented on the diversity of programs were more concerned about the lack of consistency within the district than across districts. For example, a speech-language pathologist described a discussion with colleagues within the district: “One of the things that we as the speech and language therapists talked about was getting some consistency in it. Especially thinking in terms of criteria, either eligibility criteria, what we’re using for assessment, pre and post testing, those kinds of things” (Interview 2, lines 55-56). A speech-language pathologist from another school district was also concerned about consistency within the district, not only in terms of eligibility criteria but also in terms of assessment. When explaining what was happening when there were multiple speech-language pathologists involved in ESD assessment this SLP remarked “I guess my whole thought was well if we don’t use the same selection criteria who knows. If we’re not testing with the same method we might not be getting the same results. If you’re using a 10 minute screener you’re not getting the same results as if you did an hour and a half of testing, or if you don’t test the same areas maybe you would miss something” (Interview 4, lines 276-279).

In one school district, all participants mentioned frequent turnover in ESD staff as a contributing factor to a lack of consistency in ESD programming. One participant referred to a “revolving door of ESD teachers” (Interview 8, line 75). Another participant described the constant turnover of ESD staff as a source of frustration. “Since I’ve been here for 4 years in the district or actually 5 now, there hasn’t been a consistent carryover of staff so then the program is carried out slightly different each year and then the expectations of how much service each school or each student will receive varies and that causes frustration at the school level and at our level” (Interview 6, lines 24-27).

While at least half the participants commented on or expressed curiosity about the differences between ESD programs across districts, none of them suggested a need for consistency across the province. This could be due to the nature of the interview question on this topic, which asked specifically “do ESD programs vary from school to school in your district?” It could also be due to participants’ understanding that an ESD program will vary from region to region according to the many factors already mentioned. Their programs are based on the needs of their schools and students and the staff available to provide the services.

3.3.2 What exactly is an ESD program?

Although the questions “what is an ESD program?” and “what is a dialect?” were not on the interview guide, these topics, not surprisingly, were addressed by participants. However, after the data from all nine interviews had been analyzed it was still unclear just what an ESD program entailed. When describing how they identify a dialect, or what their goals were for the program, some participants were explicit in their answers while others tended to describe ESD in terms of what it was not or what educators did not know about it. A few participants seemed to have difficulty describing what an ESD program entailed and the rationale behind their methods. This is understandable considering that when one looks to the literature for information specific to ESD in Canada, there is not much available.

One participant used the phrase “muddle our way through it” (Interview 1, line13) when discussing the provision of ESD service. “Muddle”, according to www.dictionary.com, means to behave, proceed, or think in a confused or aimless fashion or with an air of improvisation. While a theme of confusion and improvisation did emerge from the data, the interviews revealed nothing aimless about the ESD

services being provided by participants. In fact, participant comments indicated that they have put an immense amount of thought into ESD and pride in their work.

One participant commented on the difficulty of finding ESD information in the ministry documents. This participant commented that “when you try to find information you go everywhere and it’s that little blurb tacked onto the ESL requirements...”

(Interview 4, lines 361-362). When asked about the challenges encountered in ESD service delivery the same participant remarked:

There’s a lot of challenges. One of them is that there isn’t a clear definition of what is ESD, there isn’t a clear mandate of ‘this is what we want you to test with’, so thank goodness I had some experience and some ideas. If I was brand new, didn’t have the background, I think it would have been a real challenging time (interview 4, lines 624-627).

Another participant suggested that guidance in the form of a template provided by the Ministry of Education would help to inform ESD specific intervention strategies. This participant expressed that without a template to follow, ESD providers are left to figure out what ESD intervention should look like with this comment: “It would be nice if there was more collaboration, more thought put into it. Like here’s the template, it can be tweaked but here’s an idea. Go. I didn’t really feel like there was anything like that” (Interview 1, lines 195-197). The need to provide culturally relevant resources to support First Nations students’ language learning and the need to address cultural differences is acknowledged in the Guide for ESL Specialists, although there is no information that addresses the unique language learning needs of the non-standard English dialect speaker.

Participants in two of the four districts mentioned the length of time the district has been offering an ESD program as a factor contributing to the challenges and lack of consistency with current programs. One participant found it difficult to define the roles of individual people involved in ESD because the program was only 3 years old and “being so new, there is nothing set in stone” (Interview 1, lines 92-93). This contrasts starkly with a comment from a participant involved with the longest running program “I really think sometimes there’s this complacency, well this is how it’s been done for a long time so this is the way it is” (Interview 9, line 306). The participant in the former district is looking for direction in a program that is wide open while the participant in the latter district is “trying to push people for change” (Interview 9, line 297) in already established Aboriginal and ESL/D education programs. The latter expressed the challenges encountered with ESD service delivery in the following comment:

It’s not only educational leadership, it’s cultural leadership and it’s challenging society’s cultural acceptance and at the same time you’re trying to move everybody in the building in a direction that the majority of the people don’t want to go. You have community that is getting increasingly frustrated...they ask the same questions, they’re saying the same things and continually the same things happen and I’m kinda caught in the middle... (Interview 9, lines 372-377)

One participant felt a personal lack of knowledge of ESD, “I have a long way to go, I feel like I know nothing” (Interview 2, lines 224). Two participants, an SLP and an Aboriginal principal, were concerned with the education and training of the resource and ESL teachers who provide ESD services in their districts. The SLP reported that many ESL teachers have expressed the opinion that they do not know how to approach ESD and have contacted the SLP for advice on providing ESD services. Both the SLP and the

Aboriginal Principal questioned whether a resource teacher's training included adequate background in oral language development. The Aboriginal principal indicated a need for better training at the university level, more professional development opportunities and a sharing of research and resources.

Participants in three of the four districts discussed the need to explain to teachers what ESD is, what the program offers and the differences between ESD, ESL and special needs programs. A resource teacher commented "I think they see it as special needs. Special needs and you are going to deal with the behavior (Interview 1 lines 201-202)...honestly I don't think they know what it is. I don't think it has ever been presented" (Interview 1, line 217). One participant involved in the education of Aboriginal students, but not directly involved in the delivery of ESD services, commented on the need to understand what an ESD program offers. This participant stated "I'd like to see [the ESL department] support or help me clarify what is actually being done [in the ESD program] so I can answer to a potential family that phones and says my child has this [ESL code] and I want to understand what that is..." (Interview 9, lines 237-239)

3.3.2.1 Working with classroom teachers and other educators

Every participant talked about the rewards and challenges of working with classroom teachers and had many strategies for working productively with teachers to increase their understanding of ESD. These strategies included demonstrating language activities, providing resources, meeting with teachers, discussing goals with teachers, sharing information and advice and involving classroom teachers in the ESD program. The challenges of working with teachers and employing the above mentioned strategies

included a lack of time, itinerant status, and “educating the educators” (Interview 5, line 155).

The lack of time an ESD provider has to consult and collaborate with others was repeatedly highlighted by participants. One ESD provider who provided service in several schools commented that “it’s like you’re on the run all the time” (Interview 4, lines 628-629) and remarked that if you are not at the schools at lunch hour and recess “you never get to talk to the staff” (Interview 4, lines 636-637). Another participant commented on the benefits of dialogue between the ESD provider and teacher with the following comment:

I would like to have more time myself. And I don’t mean more time for the program, I mean myself having more time to do more work with the teachers....I would love to have ongoing conversations with parents and teachers and students just so that it can be more of a dialogue rather than me saying well this is what’s needed and this is what has to happen for these students. (Interview 3, lines 267-274)

Several participants expressed that not only do ESD service providers not have enough time, but neither do the classroom teachers. Two participants commented that classroom teachers do not have time to incorporate ESD work into classroom activities. An SLP participant commented that “I have a hard time saying to teachers ‘oh, could you do one more thing?’ They do a lot and most teachers are full up, you know, ‘don’t ask me to do more, I really can’t’” (Interview 2, lines 97-100).

One itinerant ESD teacher felt that the ESD program in that district was not well acknowledged by teachers and school staff. The Aboriginal principal in the same district suggested that “the reception of ESD has its ups and downs within the district so being

new teachers and with extremely high caseloads it has stressed our ESD teachers” (Interview 8, lines 19-20). The principal went on to explain that “the itinerant role of ESD teachers is sometimes a bit of an isolating role and they may not feel that camaraderie or sense of being included in the staff...and sometimes they are overlooked...” (Interview 8, lines 87-90).

Three participants commented on the need to inform other educators about possible cultural differences in communication between an Aboriginal student and a non-Aboriginal student. An Aboriginal participant commented on the need to give Aboriginal children time to formulate a response:

Sometimes there is going to be a delay in verbal response....sometimes I see as much as 10 seconds. They are waiting for 10 seconds of silence or it takes them that long to formulate a response, so if you don't wait you're going to think they never say anything. I would teach teachers to count to yourself, smile, look expectantly, and I would just try it and count to 10. (Interview 4, lines 39-45)

The same participant commented on the need for educators to understand that First Nations individuals may not look at you while you are speaking because it is a visual distraction while they are processing the verbal information. This participant pointed out that this lack of eye contact does not mean that the student does not care, is being insolent, or does not understand. Two other participants mentioned the need to educate teachers on how to recognize a dialect and the differences between a dialect difference and a language delay or disorder. An SLP participant commented:

I think any education you can provide to teachers, provide to people in the school system, about what that dialect difference looks like....educating one person at a

time but then you could have a workshop, a speaker would be great (Interview 5, lines 160-168).

The rewards of working with teachers and colleagues were described in terms of the benefits of team work and collaboration. While four participants mentioned the importance of support and commitment of others, the resource teacher was notably passionate about the benefits of being part of a team and remarked “It [the ESD program] is definitely a work in progress but I really believe that we are a team. I feel like we work as a team and it’s great to have the same sort of ideas more or less” (interview 1, lines 66-68). The SLP in the same district also commented on providing ESD services as a team. When asked how the program would look if it could be started from scratch, the participant commented “I would have brought a teacher as well as our TA. I would have formed a team earlier on” (Interview 3, lines 306-307).

Participants in all but one district expressed the need to collaborate with each other, collaborate with teachers, First Nations support workers, and teaching assistants, consult other school districts, and find research to support their methods. As well as commenting on being “stuck” (Interview 2, line 269) and not knowing where to go with ESD an SLP participant also remarked “yeah, and just brainstorm, who does what, what works, how did you get people to do that” (Interview 2, lines 107-108). Three participants commented on the need to collaborate with First nations support workers, student families and community elders regarding local dialect features and their views and opinions of ESD services. An Aboriginal literacy resource teacher commented:

There is a lot of consultation and collaboration and every year there is something...we expand on and that comes through just really listening to not only

the staff's needs, the classroom teachers I work with, but also the children and the parents. (Interview 8, lines 268-271)

While ESD service providers discussed the challenges of working with teachers, they also clearly respected the role of the classroom teacher in ESD intervention. One speech-language pathologist captured participants' feelings in a positive light.

I find that the teachers are very respectful of the students almost to the point of being protective of the students and I think that if we just continue to have dialogue and recognition of the need for explicit teaching with certain language skills that would really help. (Interview 3, lines 275-278)

3.3.3 Aspects of ESD services identified by participants

The previous section looked at participants' understandings and opinions with regard to the diversity of ESD programs, what an ESD program is, what it is not, and the challenges inherent in delivering the program. This section continues to describe participants' understandings and opinions but with regard to specific aspects of ESD service. Participant comments reflect considerable on-the-ground knowledge and understanding regarding dialect and how the link between language, culture and identity affects their ESD programming and goals.

Participant comments on specific approaches to ESD service provision ranged from explicit methods such as teaching code-switching to more holistic approaches such as highlighting relationships with students, parents and elders, including the use of culturally appropriate materials and assessment tools, and specific dialectal patterns and characteristics.

3.3.3.1 Code-switching

Code-switching is the shift between languages, dialects or “codes” depending on the situation, topic or desired effect (Wardhaugh, 2010). The term code-switching is used in the ESL Standards document but in that context it refers to a period that ESL students go through while acquiring English as a Second Language (Ministry of Education, 2001) rather than as a desired end goal or valuable language skill. The Guide for ESL Specialists and the Guide for Classroom Teachers contain information for teachers and specialists regarding the educational benefits of maintaining one’s first language (or dialect), how learning is enhanced by the use of two or more languages, and the importance of seeing the acquisition of English as an addition, not a replacement (Ministry of Education, 1999a; Ministry of Education, 1999b; Ministry of Education, 2001).

Code-switching was mentioned as a goal or an important part of ESD intervention by all four of the SLPs. They all spoke of the importance of maintaining the home dialect and learning to use school English at school and home English at home or in other First Nations contexts. One participant commented that sometimes the students, and their parents, may not know that they could be speaking a non-standard version of English at home and discussed the importance of being sensitive when talking about how there are different versions of English while highlighting the importance of telling First Nations students about language differences:

I tell the kids because I think it is really important to tell them. I really believe in demystification although I don’t use that term with them. I tell them that you’re here so that you can become more powerful. (Interview 4, lines 239-241)

Three of the four SLPs also commented on the need to explain the reasons for code-switching to the students. A speech-language pathologist commented on the importance of explaining what a dialect is with this comment: “We’re not trying to change the way they speak but perhaps we could start teaching them to code-switch and use a certain type of language in the academic setting to foster learning within the classroom” (Interview 3, lines 233-236).

Interestingly, none of the other participants mentioned code-switching or the importance of maintaining the home dialect. This omission does not mean that those participants do not consider maintenance of home dialect to be an aspect of ESD programming. The term code-switching is a linguistic term not commonly used in mainstream education and may be unfamiliar to participants without a linguistic background.

3.3.3.2 Materials

A second aspect of ESD services described by several participants was the use of culturally appropriate materials. While there is nothing in the ESL Policy and Guidelines document that stipulates the use of culturally appropriate materials, the need to provide culturally relevant resources to support First Nations students’ language learning is mentioned in the Guide for ESL Specialists (Ministry of Education, 1999b). It is also suggested that an ESL program should complement other Aboriginal Education programs that have a cultural focus. Three out of nine participants, all with Aboriginal heritage, commented on the lack of culturally appropriate materials available for use with Aboriginal students. These participants considered their materials to be outdated and inappropriate. For example, one participant commented on an image found when trying

to create appropriate Aboriginal materials using picture software. “The only...picture that is stocked shows a man without a shirt on and a feather here” (indicating head) (Interview 4, lines 575-576). The same participant also commented on the importance of having materials that reflect experiences in the child’s life.

The early literacy resource teacher mentioned an Aboriginal resource called the Eaglecrest series (Eaglecrest Books, n.d.) used in the district’s literacy intervention with Aboriginal students, commenting that the students are able to relate to the characters and the themes, activate prior knowledge, and connect the themes to their own experiences. Another participant noted the value of a speech and language program called “Moe the Mouse®” (Gardner and Chesterman, 2005), a program with Aboriginal content for use by classroom teachers, resource teachers and speech-language pathologists working with Aboriginal children. The two main barriers to using culturally appropriate materials in ESD intervention that were mentioned by participants were the lack of relevant materials available for purchase and the lack of funding to purchase those that are available.

3.3.3.3 Difference vs. delay

Many language professionals, educators, and parents of Aboriginal children have commented on the need for culturally appropriate assessment materials norm-referenced on Aboriginal communities (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008). The risk is that Aboriginal children who speak a non-standard variety of English may be misdiagnosed as language impaired. Conversely, an actual language delay or disorder could be attributed erroneously to a difference in dialect (Ball et al., 2006). Three of the four SLP participants spoke explicitly about the delay/deficit/disorder vs. difference issue and the need to take time to determine whether a student has a language delay or a dialect

difference. One commented that it can take a year or more to get a sense of whether a student's use of language reflects delay or a dialect difference but noted that if students are making progress in ESD intervention they probably do not have a delay or a disorder. Another participant illustrated the need to really look at the assessment evidence, using an example of a student who had been referred to her because he did not speak in sentences:

When I did the assessment I had him do some language tasks. What became apparent when you looked at it on paper, was not that he couldn't reason with language or use language in sophisticated ways, it was that he didn't match what I was asking him to do. I was asking him to do a very step by step explanation, very explicit, and his responses were much more holistic. He was acknowledging our shared knowledge in a different way. (Interview 5, lines 114-120)

This comment also reflects several participants' views on the need to recognize and build upon the strengths of Aboriginal children, and learn more about the varied features of First Nations English dialects.

3.3.3.4 Dialectal characteristics

In order to determine whether or not a student has a language delay or a difference in dialect, one must be familiar with the dialect, its patterns and characteristics. Unfortunately, there is little research available on First Nations dialects to consult, an issue brought up by two participants. Form 1701 stipulates that ESD services should not address accents in speech carried over from another language but does not identify the speech characteristics that should be addressed (Ministry of Education, 2010c).

Participants in this study represented a range of school districts from urban to rural and north to south. There are many different Aboriginal groups across the province and often several different language or cultural groups are represented within a school district. One district had Cree, Carrier and Métis students. A participant from that district commented that the range of dialects from different areas was influenced by degrees of isolation of the particular communities and the influence of different heritage languages. Another participant noted a difference between dialects of children who live on vs. off reserve.

Eight of the nine participants described dialectal characteristics and patterns of difference from standard English that they have noticed in their Aboriginal students over time. These dialectal characteristics included lack or different use of prepositions and articles, differences in syntax, pacing, tenses, vocabulary use, phonology and the social use of language. Patterns of difficulty noted by participants included following directions and sentence recall. An SLP made the following observation:

As far as a dialect that I see, I've been noting the speech characteristics of the students as they mature because I do see students from the time that they're 4 ½ or 5 years old until they're 15 and the speech characteristics tend to continue and I don't think it's anything I should touch unless it will affect their literacy, unless it affects their sound awareness for developing reading and writing skills.

(Interview 3, lines 56-60)

3.3.3.5 Language, culture and identity

Not only do ESD students encounter difficulty due to language differences, but they experience cultural differences as well and it is difficult to separate the two, given the intricate connection between language and culture. A difference in use of vocabulary such as the use of particular family words may seem like a language difference at first but possibly also reflects cultural perspectives. A participant with First Nations ancestry described the importance to First Nations people of talking about family connections and relations. The participant also noted that the vocabulary words used in a First Nations dialect may be the same as ones used in standard English but they may have different referents or different meanings. Other cultural differences mentioned by participants that may affect a student's ability to succeed in an environment where standard English is required include differences in eye contact and delays in verbal response times.

One aspect of First Nations dialects highlighted by Ball et al. (2006), also emphasized by four participants in the current study, is that First Nations dialects and other dialects are true and valid language variants. Three of the same participants emphasized the fact that speaking a non-standard dialect does not equate to a lack of intelligence. The following SLP's quote reflected those participants' comments. "I think the challenge in working with students is really explaining how a dialectal difference is just that. It's a difference. It doesn't reflect a delay, it doesn't reflect a difference in intelligence; it is a true language" (Interview 5, lines 142-144). Another participant commented on the need to recognize that the students "can be good thinkers" (Interview 3, line 320) and have areas of strength:

We try to create the most visual classrooms we can at this school because we're trying to give them a boost in the areas where they're very very strong. So we're trying to address the areas where they have strength, their visual skills.

(Interview 3, lines 86-89)

Five of the nine participants were of Aboriginal ancestry. Four of the five Aboriginal participants related some aspect of their ESD intervention to their Aboriginal ancestry. Two participants used personal examples of themselves and family members to describe First Nations dialects, the holistic nature of communication and the visual learning style of many First Nations people. Another participant commented on the benefit of having Aboriginal ESD teachers to provide a good match between Aboriginal students and teachers and to act as role models for the ESD students. The Aboriginal early literacy resource teacher commented that although the early literacy program does not make formal reference to ESD, "it's embedded, it's part of who I am, it's part of what I teach, it's part of my pedagogical practices and it's part of what I'm doing right now"

(Interview 8, lines 37-38).

A holistic approach to ESD service delivery is to focus on relationships with the ESD students, their families, and the greater community. When discussing how to start an ESD program from scratch one participant commented:

I think I would have to get to know the First Nations people. It has taken me a long time to get to know the different First Nations people we have, the different communities, and I think it would take me a while to gain trust... (Interview 3, lines 161-163)

The same participant also mentioned talking to parents and elders about what their school experiences were like and suggested that the information they gave might change the

participant's perspectives on ESD. Other participants commented on the need to listen to how parents and other First Nations community members speak in order to have a language model to use for comparison with the ESD student's speech.

It was evident in the interviews that there is a range of knowledge and understanding regarding ESD across participants. Some feel more prepared to work with ESD students than others and some have had more education related to language acquisition than others. It is evident that participants have taken into account the link between language, culture and identity when considering how to best provide ESD service to Aboriginal children even though it was not always expressed explicitly.

4 Chapter: Discussion

The initial motivation for undertaking this study was to find out about SEDS programs in B.C. from the perspectives of the people involved in the delivery of a number of them. A review of the literature described links between language, culture, and the history of Aboriginal people in Canada, the development and evolution of dialects, and standard dialect instruction for non-standard dialect speakers in Canada and elsewhere. It was evident from the literature review that considerable research has been done on methods of standard language instruction for speakers of non-standard varieties in other countries. However, there has not been much research specific to the standard dialect instruction for speakers of First Nations Englishes in B.C. or Canada, or to the features of First Nations English dialects.

This discussion chapter is broadly structured around the original research questions listed at the end of the introduction and again at the beginning of the results. This chapter does not focus on the specific issues addressed by participants but rather looks at the overall issues that came out of an analysis of the literature review, the Ministry of Education documents, and the interviews. The discussion chapter includes five sections: (1) A discussion of the tension between the flexibility inherent in the Ministry of Education documents and the desire for consistency expressed by many service providers, (2) a comparison of the methods and materials used in the four school districts participating in the current study to approaches detailed in the literature, (3) an examination of the link between language, culture, and identity in the context of the history of First Nations people, (4) a look at the need for collaboration and consultation between service providers and other educators and finally, (5) a discussion of limitations

of the study and directions for future research. At the end of each section, I suggest possible issues for further consideration.

4.1 Flexibility vs. consistency

This section is particularly relevant to the research question regarding diversity amongst ESD programs and the factors that contribute to this diversity. Despite available policy and guidelines documents regarding English as a Second Dialect services in B.C., the ESD programs across districts involved in this study varied greatly. This finding is not surprising when one considers the diversity amongst the school districts and the Aboriginal groups served by the districts. School districts in B.C. range from large, urban, multicultural districts to remote, sometimes isolated districts with predominantly Aboriginal students. The cultural and linguistic diversity of Aboriginal groups in B.C. also contributes to the diversity seen across ESD programs.

The ESD programs in the school districts involved in the current study varied in sometimes striking ways. Programs differed in terms of structure (who conducted the assessment and who delivered the intervention), method of service delivery, approaches to assessment and specific tools used, and opinions regarding the target population. The majority of participants commented on the factors that influenced their district's ESD programs including the local Aboriginal population(s), student demographics, the availability of qualified staff, the training of the service provider, and the perspectives of educators involved.

Several participants expressed a desire for more clarity in the ministry's policy and guidelines, and consistency across district ESD programs within their districts, while others pointed out that ESD programs vary according to the unique needs of the districts, schools and students. This tradeoff between flexibility and consistency is paralleled in

Ministry documents, exemplified in the ESL Policy and Guidelines document which states that these policies and guidelines provide a basis for consistency and quality while allowing for flexibility in the delivery of services (Ministry of Education, 2009).

However, at the level of the individual service provider, this tradeoff emerged in the research findings as a source of tension and uncertainty for several of the participants.

4.1.1 Issues for further consideration

This divergence between the flexibility inherent in the policy and guidelines documents and participants' perceptions of that flexibility as a lack of clarity is evident in participants' comments. This palpable tension expressed by participants is created when ESD service providers are trying to offer an effective program that meets the needs of their students without the security of a specific ESD program mandate or template to follow; this uncertainty is compounded by a lack of relevant information in the clinical and research literature, as discussed in the following sections.

4.2 Methods and materials

This section of the discussion will examine how approaches to non-standard dialects in education in other parts of the world may or may not be applied to ESD intervention in Canada. The different aspects of a promising approach known as an awareness program will be explored in detail. The features of this approach include education on language diversity, a contrastive component, and oral practice.

A striking feature in my results is that while participant comments revealed the use of specific methods of standard dialect instruction such as teaching code-switching, oral language practice, and the use of profession-specific teaching tools, these did not lead to a clear understanding of the rationale behind the use of these methods and materials or a sense of an overarching approach to ESD intervention. This could be due

to the nature of the interview questions, which may not have effectively requested this information or may also be due to the lack of literature available to participants on approaches to ESD programming in Canada to inform effective practices.

After the initial literature review regarding non-standard dialects in education and the subsequent analysis of the interview data, a divergence between ESD programming in B.C. and approaches to non-standard dialects in education elsewhere in the world became apparent. This led me to dig deeper into the literature in order to find out what approaches to ESD instruction have been successful elsewhere and how they might be applied to ESD programs in B.C. This further review of the literature is detailed below.

Educational concerns related to dialects are not new. Schools have struggled to address the needs of non-standard dialect speakers in the United States, Australia and Canada since the 1960s. Three types of program using non-standard dialects in education described by Siegel (2006) are instrumental, accommodation, and awareness. An instrumental program involves the use of the vernacular as the medium of instruction while students learn the standard dialect. Instrumental programs are similar to bilingual programs and are used when the vernacular is markedly different from the language used in school. An accommodation program is one in which student vernaculars are accepted in the classroom but not explicitly taught. Children use their vernaculars in the early school years for oral and written work and teachers sometimes use the communication styles and patterns of the students when teaching the standard. The third type of program described by Siegel (2006) is awareness. In an awareness program students' varieties are seen as a resource for learning rather than an impediment. An awareness program will usually include a sociolinguistic component to teach students about the different varieties

of language, and a contrastive component to examine the linguistic differences between a student's own dialect and other dialects such as the standard. Several components of an awareness program were mentioned by participants, leading me to believe that such an approach could be effective in B.C. ESD programs. These components of an awareness program, as well as the importance of oral language practice, are discussed in greater detail below.

4.2.1 Education on language diversity

In order for a language awareness program to be effective in changing students' opinions about non-standard dialects, the individuals teaching the students must have language awareness training as well. In the context of an ESD program in a B.C. school district that could mean a classroom teacher, resource teacher, ESD teacher, SLP, or First Nations support worker. Siegel (2006) suggests that educating teachers about language diversity and issues of language and power has been the first step in many successful programs accommodating the use of non-standard dialects in the classroom. He referred to the self-fulfilling prophecies generated by educators' attitudes toward non-standard dialects. Teachers who are informed about language diversity will have more positive perspectives and higher expectations for dialect speakers, leading the speakers to have higher expectations of themselves.

The literature suggests that not only do educators lack knowledge of language diversity, the average student does not learn about language diversity in school (Siegel, 2006). Wolfram (1993) suggested that there is a need for knowledge about language differences and that SLPs should become more involved in mainstream education about language differences. In 1992, he and his colleagues proposed that there was a critical need for a unit on language differences in language arts classes in order to dispel myths

and misinformation with regard to the nature of vernacular varieties of English. Wolfram and colleagues also suggested that such a class could introduce the study of dialects as a fascinating view of the nature of language rather than just lessons on parts of speech, and would give students the opportunity to learn to pay attention to the details of language variation in a non-threatening environment (Adger, Detwyler, Harry, & Wolfram, 1993).

Participants in the current study echoed the research described above and expressed the need to educate classroom teachers and other school staff regarding the nature of ESD and dialectal differences. One SLP participant suggested that SLPs are the best qualified to deliver an ESD program since their training includes education on language diversity, oral language development, and the administration and analysis of assessments. This participant's comments reflected the sentiments of Wolfram (1993) that SLPs should be more involved in the education of language differences.

4.2.2 Code-switching and contrastive analysis

Code-switching and contrastive analysis are both components of an awareness approach to the education of non-standard dialect speakers. In the current study, SLP participant comments echoed the literature regarding code-switching as a valuable skill to teach ESD students. Code-switching can help students express their identity and solidarity (Wardhaugh, 2010). Wardhaugh (2010) suggested that monolinguals can be critical of code-switching, viewing it as a haphazard mixing of languages due to laziness or ignorance. Education of staff and students, as detailed above, is essential to combat negative views of non-standard dialect use.

Contrastive analysis is the systematic comparison of the grammar and social use of the standard variety to the non-standard variety (Ball et al., 2006). Unfortunately, there is not much information available on the features of First Nations dialects. Without

knowing the features it is difficult to point out the differences between non-standard and standard varieties of English. An additional point to consider when using contrastive analysis as a teaching tool, as mentioned by Malcolm (1999), is that it is important to consider the non-linguistic differences between the vernacular and the standard as well as the linguistic differences. Participants in the current study commented on the need to be aware of the non-linguistic aspects of First Nations English by recognizing and respecting the way Aboriginal students speak and how their use of language reflects a difference in culture and dialect.

4.2.3 Oral practice

Many participants mentioned oral practice as one of their methods of instruction in ESD, a method that is supported by the literature. Adger et al. (1993) suggested that oral practice is essential because language development depends on practice. They proposed that silent classrooms can be detrimental to educating language minority students. Adger et al. (1993) concluded from their observations of special education and general classroom settings that children need to have more opportunity to use standard English in the classroom to talk about academic subjects and that they are not given enough opportunity to use the academic linguistic register.

4.2.4 Issues for consideration

Education on language diversity for all students and educators would decrease the myth, misunderstanding and negative views regarding language variation. This could lead to a school environment where culturally and linguistically diverse students are acknowledged and respected and are able to share their knowledge. Other approaches such as the use of code-switching and contrastive analysis are valuable tools, but can

only be used to their full potential if the features of First Nations Englishes are known or can be observed.

4.3 Language, culture and identity

Although most participants commented on the need to consider Aboriginal students' culture in ESD programming, and several commented on the link between a student's culture and the way they use language, not many discussed specifically how the link between language, culture and identity should be approached in an ESD program. Discussions of assessment, Aboriginal education, ESD vs. ESL, and the need for collaboration all demonstrate participants' approaches to this complex issue and are elaborated on in this section.

4.3.1 Assessment

Several participants expressed a desire for a template or direction for their programming, especially in terms of assessment. Participant comments regarding assessment of ESD students reflected the views of many authors in the literature that current assessment tools are not able to differentiate between a language difference and language delay. Some participants were ambivalent about which assessment methods to use, while others suggested the need for consistency in assessment methods.

Currently, there are no assessment tools normed on local First Nations populations. The Policy and Guidelines document states that an assessment of English proficiency should consider cultural and linguistic diversity (for example, should avoid requiring cultural knowledge) and be non-discriminatory (Ministry of Education, 2009). Unfortunately, a review of the literature shows a lack of valid assessment tools to assess the language of non-standard dialect speakers (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008). Standardized tests are designed to provide information on a child's performance on specific test items

in comparison with children of the same age and language background (Gould, 2008a). First Nations children often come from linguistic and cultural backgrounds that are very different from those of their peers; thus, the test may be an unfamiliar type of activity as well as inappropriate dialectally.

Alternatives to standardized testing described in the literature review include the use of dynamic assessment and language sampling. The amount of time required to use these assessment techniques is significant in terms of gathering speech and language samples, conducting analyses, or testing, teaching and retesting. With most participants commenting on ESD program time constraints, these may not be very realistic options. However, a number of participants also commented on the necessity of conducting a thorough assessment in order to accurately describe a student's language abilities. A further consideration in the use of alternative assessment techniques mentioned by participants is the training of the service provider. An SLP is likely to be familiar with dynamic assessment and language sampling while a resource, ESD or classroom teacher may not have been exposed to these techniques in their training.

Student demographics within a school district may further play a part in which and how many assessments are used. A district with a large population of Aboriginal children may have higher numbers referred for assessment and requiring service. ESD providers with large caseloads may not have the time to do extensive testing. Additionally, as suggested above, ESL specialist training can vary and a district may not have a specialist qualified to administer assessments.

4.3.2 ESD and Aboriginal education

It is difficult to separate a discussion of ESD from a discussion of Aboriginal Education given that First Nations students are the most highly represented cultural group in ESD. An ESD program for Aboriginal students should have strong ties to the Aboriginal Education program, as suggested in the Guide for ESL Specialists (1999b). However, the importance of a link between the two programs was only commented on by two participants.

Several participants commented on the inclusion of non-Aboriginal students in ESD programs. If ESD were to be an exclusively Aboriginal program, one may question whether it would be more appropriate for it to be part of Aboriginal Education rather than ESL. On the other hand, a multicultural ESD program provides the opportunity to work on several important aspects of standard language instruction including the development of an appreciation for the language and culture of home and the development of an awareness and appreciation for diversity (LeMoine & Los Angeles Unified School District, 1999).

Including only Aboriginal children in ESD programs within Aboriginal Education may make it easier to deliver a culturally relevant program, especially given the link between language, culture and identity. When viewed from the context of history, it is evident that Aboriginal ESD students are a population distinct from other non-standard dialect speakers. They have a history of colonialization, cultural assimilation, and marginalization different from any other language or cultural minority group in Canada. The language strengths and needs of Aboriginal ESD students are unique and may require a unique approach. However, there are many non-standard dialects other than First Nations Englishes and speakers of those dialects may need specific service in order

to improve their standard English skills within their own culturally relevant context. As British Columbia school districts become increasingly multicultural, the demand for ESL/D services is likely to increase. The decision about the composition of ESL/D classes may need to be responsive to the relative numbers and needs of all non-standard dialect speakers in the individual districts.

4.3.3 ESD and ESL

One point brought up by several participants and also addressed in the literature was that ESD and ESL may be related but are not equivalent. Participants suggested that ESL and ESD require the use of different approaches and different assessments. This view is supported in the literature, not only with assessment tools as described above, but with teaching methods as well. Canadians Epstein and Xu (2003) suggest that teaching methods in ESD for Aboriginal students must take into account the Aboriginal students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds including traditional Aboriginal approaches to teaching and learning. Oral tradition, visual learning style, and cooperative learning are just a few of the Aboriginal learning styles they suggest should be incorporated into an effective ESD pedagogy.

Australians Malcolm and Konigsberg (2001) suggest that ESL and ESD may differ because of failure to access the conceptual differences across dialects in second dialect acquisition. They suggest that the acquisition of a second dialect is more than just the acquisition of a linguistic system. Speakers of Australian Aboriginal Englishes conceptualize and communicate in different ways (Malcolm & Konigsberg, 2001). For example, Aboriginal English speakers do not always order events and experiences chronologically and may move between present and past. Additionally, many standard Australian English lexical items have spiritual meanings in Australian Aboriginal English

such as the word “clear”, which means to clear of bad spiritual associations (Malcolm & Konigsberg, 2001).

The authors suggest that due to these differences in conceptualization, Aboriginal youth encounter communication barriers when applying their unique narrative and conceptual conventions to the interpretation or verbalization of standard English (Malcolm & Konigsberg, 2001). While these are examples from Aboriginal English in Australia, many of the same unique aspects of communication have been documented in First Nations Englishes in North America (Peltier, 2010).

4.3.4 Issues for further consideration

(1) There is an urgent need for an in-depth assessment tool that can differentiate between a dialect difference and a language delay. Until such a tool is developed, ESD service providers administering assessments will have to use alternative techniques such as dynamic assessment and language sampling. ESD service providers may require additional training in the effective use of these techniques. (2) Aboriginal ESD students have a unique cultural and linguistic history requiring a different approach to standard dialect instruction than that required by ESL students. Findings from the current study suggest that a Ministry of Education document specific to Aboriginal ESD students detailing appropriate assessment protocols and culturally relevant programming would be welcomed by service providers.

4.4 Need for collaboration and consultation

Participants in the current study highlighted the need for collaboration not only with classroom teachers, but with local First Nations community members as well in order to have a model of community language norms and to develop relationships and trust. Participants in every district mentioned that they would like to be able to spend

more time talking to teachers in order to explain what ESD services are and why they are important, and commented on the lack of time for consultation and collaboration with school staff and colleagues. Consultation/collaboration could help foster good working relationships between ESD staff and classroom teachers and foster important relationships with First Nations community members. The importance of collaboration was exemplified by Rickford and Rickford (1995) in their discussion on changing attitudes toward using AAVE to teach standard American English. They suggested first establishing good relations and trust with students, parents and community on a small scale, one classroom at a time.

An example of collaboration in Australia is Malcolm et al.'s (1999) project aimed at engaging linguists, Australian Aboriginal English speakers, and educators in the creation of a more "user-friendly" Education for Australian Aboriginal English speakers. They utilized a training component to enable teachers, ESD service providers, and others involved in Aboriginal education to "appreciate Aboriginal English and how it bears on communication and education" (Malcolm et al., 1999, p. 2). Important aspects of the project were (1) collaboration between Aboriginal English speakers and standard English speakers and (2) having Aboriginal people play a large role in collecting and interpreting linguistic data from Aboriginal children in order to understand not just the form of Aboriginal English, but the content and function as well (Malcolm et al., 1999).

4.4.1 Issues for further consideration

There is clearly a need at all levels for an opportunity for discussion in order for service providers and educators to work together and benefit from each other's knowledge while respecting the diversity of school districts and Aboriginal populations in B.C. Any changes to current ESD policy and guidelines will need to come from the

collaborative effort of many individuals including First Nations community members, educators, policy makers, and researchers.

4.5 Limitations and future research

This interview study on current practices regarding assessment and implementation of ESD programs involved four B.C. school districts and nine individuals involved in those programs. The data gathered through semi-structured interviews represents the perspectives of those nine individuals only. Participants come from different backgrounds, professions, levels of education, and cultures. Their opinions and perspectives do not represent those of all ESD service providers. Additionally, the data gathered during the interviews reflects the opinions and perspectives of the participants on that particular day.

It can be argued that participants for this study involved two levels: the school districts at the level of participating organizations and the speech-language pathologists and other educators involved in each district's ESD program(s) at the level of participating individuals. The analysis was done at the level of the individual rather than the level of the organization in order to maximize the anonymity of the participants and to avoid identification of school districts. The individual was also chosen as the level of analysis in order to present the perspectives of people involved in the delivery of ESD services. A different story could undoubtedly have been told if the analysis had been at the district level, allowing for a comparison of themes across districts. The results of this study are intended to provide thought and direction and are not intended to represent a complete picture of ESD programming in B.C. The themes and patterns that emerged from the data, along with information presented in the literature review can be used to shape future research directions.

It is evident that there needs to be more research on the features of First Nations Englishes in B.C. in order for ESD service providers to be able to use approaches such as contrastive analysis, which have proven to be successful in other countries. Evidence from the literature and patterns in the interview data also point to a need for an education program geared to teaching language specialists and educators about the nature of vernacular varieties, how they influence students learning, and the benefits to using students' dialect skills to improve their skills in standard English.

4.6 Personal reflections

Through the process of writing this thesis my perspectives, beliefs and opinions regarding ESD service delivery have evolved. I began with perspectives and expectations based on my personal background, SLP training, and clinical practicum experiences. As a native speaker of the dialect associated with prestige and power, I believed that fluency in standard English was the key to success in school and life in modern Canadian society. I felt that every child should be given the opportunity to master standard English. I believed that the goal of an ESD program should be proficiency in standard English.

Although my SLP training led me to understand that all dialects are linguistically equal, the literature review brought to my attention the importance of considering the non-linguistic elements of First Nations dialects and their contribution to communication. I hoped that the interviews would shed some light on how to address the non-linguistic dialectal characteristics in an ESD program and how non-linguistic dialectal characteristics fit into code-switching.

After the interviews I began to think that code-switching may not always be a realistic goal. Instead of wondering how an ESD program could teach the differences

between the non-linguistic aspects of the standard and non-standard dialects I began to ask whether it was appropriate to address these elements of communication at all.

Finally, after many discussions with supervisors, colleagues, and friends I started to question standard English proficiency as the end goal of an ESD program. This may not only be an unrealistic goal, it may also may not be a desirable goal for some First Nations families. The education system has an obligation to provide supports for all students so that they can succeed in the education system. What this means for First Nations children will depend on the student and their family and community. I would like to believe that proficiency in standard English is not a requirement for success in Canadian society. I hope that with education on language and cultural differences people will begin to accept diversity and give non-standard dialect speakers the opportunity to communicate their knowledge and skills in their own unique ways.

I believe that an ESD program has the responsibility to begin to educate all students and educators about language/dialect diversity, and that this education should be a program priority. Many of the challenges non-standard dialect speakers face in school and in “broader Canadian society” (Ministry of Education, 2008, Policy, para. 2) are not due to weak standard English skills, but are due to the negative opinions and stereotypes they encounter within the school environment.

The perspectives and opinions described above reflect my current thinking. I am a new clinician with limited experience working with First Nations students and no experience delivering ESD services. As I gain experience, continue to read the literature, and discuss dialect issues with colleagues, educators, and First Nations community members my views will likely evolve and change.

4.7 Conclusions

Throughout the participant comments described in the results chapter, there is a pattern of culturally responsive instruction. ESD service providers want to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of their ESD students and have a strong desire to see them succeed in school but may need direction in how to accomplish this task. Approaches that have worked in Australia or the United States may or may not meet the unique needs of our B.C. ESD students or the school districts that serve them. However, the literature and the interview data presented here suggest a number of directions for B.C. ESD programs as highlighted in the above-mentioned implications for policy and education.

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Appendix A: Interview guide

- 1) Can you tell me about your background and how you came to be involved in your district's SEDS program?
- 2) How do you see your role in SEDS intervention?
 - How do you see the role of the resource/ ESL teacher?
 - What are your goals for the program? Are these goals shared by others?
- 3) There seems to be a lot of variability in SEDS programs in the province. Do SEDS programs vary from school to school in your district? If so, how?
 - If you moved to a different school district, how do you imagine your program would look?
- 4) How do you identify a dialect?
- 5) What instructional methods do you use in your SEDS program?
 - What motivates your choices?
 - What kinds of materials do you use?
- 6) What are some of the challenges you've encountered in SEDS intervention?
 - Do you have any ideas of how to mitigate those challenges?
 - What do you consider to be your successes?
 - If you could start over from scratch, how would you envision your SEDS program?