INTERACTION, AUTHENTICITY AND SPOKEN CORPORA: BUILDING TEACHING MATERIALS FOR ADULT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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I dedicate this thesis to adult English language learners in the U.S. I hope that in some way my work contributes to increasing their English language skills and the betterment of their lives in the U.S.

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TEACHING MATERIALS FOR ADULT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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This study investigated the needs and challenges of adult ELLs in the community college setting in the United States. The study was conducted in Western North Carolina (WNC), where administrators, teachers, and students of three different community colleges were interviewed. Interviews determined the needs and challenges of this group of learners, the language skills they are most interested in acquiring, and how effective current teaching materials are in helping meet their needs. Interviews were transcribed to detect patterns in participant responses. The learners were primarily interested in increasing speaking and listening skills so that that they could communicate in their communities in situations they encounter on a regular basis. Results from the interviews, as well as extensive research conducted regarding effective ELT for adult ELLs helped establish criteria for teaching materials that would be beneficial for this group of learners, specifically with speaking and listening. Textbook evaluations were created and applied to three textbooks that were commonly used within all of the community colleges that participated in the study. The evaluations were also applied to a corpus-based textbook that was created using the *Cambridge Corpus of Spoken North American English*, which focuses on spoken English, to compare with the other textbooks. The findings of this

study suggest that there needs to be teaching materials, both textbook and computer

programs, created for this group of learners that focus on the qualities of native spoken

English within situations that adult ELLs in the U.S. will encounter in their day to day

lives.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Developing a successful adult English language program is an in-depth process in which educators must combine research and practice to ensure students are provided the most effective and productive learning environment possible. A successful program is one that has appropriate courses which systematically follow the progression of students' learning and needs (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Graves, 2001; Richards, 2001). Non-credit adult English as a Second Language (ESL) programs provide foreign-born adults living in the United States an opportunity to learn English, but programs are not as strong as they would be if innovative approaches based on research and practice were implemented (Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Chisman, 2008; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; McHugh, Gelatt, & Fix, 2007; Rodriguez, Burt, Peyton, and Ueland, 2009).

Research has determined that bringing innovative approaches that have proven successful into the majority of programs in the U.S. is a challenge; teachers and administrators are responsible for bringing the research and practice into the classroom, but are often limited in time and resources (Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Chisman, 2008; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004) However, since textbooks and teaching materials are the most commonly utilized resources in the language classroom a logical solution would be to incorporate innovative research and practice into those materials. Designing textbooks and teaching materials using corpus-based grammar and data, and incorporating the 'real' language that adult English language learners (ELLs) in the U.S. frequently encounter, will benefit non-credit ESL programs and increase English proficiency in the foreign-

born adult population in the United States. The purpose of this study is to determine how to strengthen teaching materials that enhance learning through innovative teaching approaches and content that is relevant and useful to the learners, derived from corpora of American Spoken English.

Statement of the Problem

The foreign-born population in the U.S. continues to grow, with an increase of 6.9 million between 2000 and 2008 ("Migration Policy Institute", 2010). While the young children and youth of this population are receiving English language instruction in the public schools, adults are accountable for their English language learning. The opportunity to learn English is available through community colleges, though programs aid in improving English, they are not as strong as they could be (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Chisman & Crandall, 2007; McHugh et al. 2007; Warriner, 2007). As a solution to strengthening programs, Chisman & Crandall (2007) concluded that instituting a national peer learning system in which professionals can exchange innovative ideas about improving non-credit ESL programs is imperative. However, such a system would require extensive funding and take time to implement.

Designing textbooks and teaching materials with an innovative approach that better meet the needs of the learner population represents a solution that would benefit teachers, administrators and students. In order to determine how to most effectively build such materials, the needs of adult ELLs attending non-credit ESL programs must be determined, as well as the attitudes of teachers and administrators regarding learners' needs, successful teaching practices, and existing teaching materials. Analysis of existing

materials is then necessary. The latest research and practice on English Language

Teaching (ELT) must be utilized in discovering how to build the most productive

teaching materials for the learner population. Quality materials can facilitate and

strengthen the second and foreign language learning process (Tomlinson, 1998).

The following sections outline the necessary courses of action that should be

taken in order to develop teaching materials for adult ELLs in the U.S. A description and

rationale for each action is provided. Actions include the following: establishing the

needs of the learners as well as the attitudes of administrators and teachers of existing

programs; analyzing textbooks and teaching materials; and illustrating how to integrate

research and practice in the language classroom through textbook and teaching materials,

including a discussion of corpus-based materials.

Needs of Learners

In order for textbooks and teaching materials to be beneficial, they must meet the

users' needs. Prior to designing teaching materials, a needs analysis of the population

must take place. As established by Stufflebeam, McCormick, Brinkerhoff & Nelson

(1985), "Needs analysis as a distinct and necessary phase in planning educational

programs emerged in the 1960s as part of the systems approach to curriculum

development and was part of the prevalent philosophy of educational accountability" (as

cited in Richards, 2001, p. 51). Needs analysis can be conducted through a variety of

methods: questionnaires, self-ratings, interviews, meetings, observation, collecting

learner language samples, case studies, and analysis of available information. Among the

information that needs analysis can reveal are the types of situations in which English is

frequently used, difficulties encountered in language situations, common communication problems, and preferred teaching activities by both teachers and students (Belcher, 2006; Celce-Murcia 2001; Graves, 1996: Richards, 2001; Rodriguez et al., 2009). This information can be used in knowing what and how to teach targeted groups of learners. Warriner (2007) claims, "I suggest that we…re-imagine the literacies of schooling in ways that value and support students' most important goals and priorities…" (p. 308).

Attitudes of Administrators and Teachers

As research has highlighted, oftentimes adult ELLs stop attending programs because their needs are not being met; there is a mismatch in program and learner goals (Brown, 2009; Lambert, 2008; McHugh et al., 2007; Schalge & Soga, 2008; Warriner, 2007). Determining what the administrators and teachers perceive to be the needs and goals of the learners aids in bridging the gap between the learner population needs and goals and that of the program. Further, administrators' and teachers' attitudes toward the textbooks and teaching materials that are currently available to this population must be investigated. Administrators and teachers can not only disclose the materials currently in use, but offer insight concerning the usefulness of those materials.

Textbook and Materials Analysis

Textbooks and teaching materials can offer a great deal of support to the instructors using them (Cece-Murcia, 2001; Graves, 1996; Illes, 2008; Timmis, 1998). Knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of existing materials can be applied to improved designs. Designing innovative textbooks and teaching materials requires

analysis of the ones that non-credit ESL programs currently use. With acquired knowledge of learner needs, as well as the attitudes of administrators and teachers regarding language programs and available resources, gaps in existing teaching materials can be detected. There are no grounds for improvement without investigating what already exists.

Applying Research and Practice

A great deal of research has been dedicated to second language acquisition and effective adult ELT; this research emphasizes the importance of interaction for communicative purposes (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; McKay & Schaetzel, 2008; Schwarzer, 2009; Watanabe, 2008; Watanabe & Swain, 2007). Additionally, the role of authenticity in adult English language learning has continually been affirmed (Aufderhaar, 2004; Celce-Murcia, 2001; Chisman, 2008; Friedman, 2008; Gilmore, 2007; Hillyard, Reppen, & Vasquez, 2007; Mayora, 2009; Mishan, 2004; Richards, 2001; Schwarzer, 2009). Considering that authentic texts have benefits in language teaching, and that corpora are essentially a body of authentic texts, it is practical to consult corpora in designing teaching materials. Further discussion of corpus linguistic and corpus-based research and findings is provided in Chapter 2.

As discussed in Richards (2001), some teachers find using authentic texts to be a burden: "In order to develop learning resources around authentic materials, teachers have to be prepared to spend a considerable amount of time locating suitable sources for materials and developing activities and exercises to accompany materials" (p. 253). However, textbooks and teaching materials with a foundation in corpus-based grammars

that integrate interactive activities based on authentic situations and language samples can allow for the necessary combination of research and practice to materialize in the language classroom. Teachers would not have to spend extra preparation time and students would benefit.

Purpose of the Study

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study is to investigate both the language and social needs of adult English language learners attending non-credit ESL programs and to determine how effective existing textbooks and teaching materials are in meeting the needs of the population. The study further examines how spoken corpora of American English can be used in developing teaching materials for adult ELLs attending community colleges in the United States.

Need/Rationale for Study

Community colleges throughout the nation offer adult ESL programs for the foreign-born population in the United States. Though these programs do aid in the improvement of English, they are not as successful as they could be (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Chisman & Crandall, 2007; McHugh, Gelatt, & Fix, 2007; Warriner, 2007). Textbooks and teaching materials are and will continue to be a key component in the language classroom. Designing teaching materials with innovative ideas and the latest research is an effective way to reach and impact a large majority of administrators, teachers, and ultimately learners in this setting.

Teaching materials can help improve non-credit ESL programs if designed with the specific needs of the learners as the driving force. In turn, it is expected that learners will experience increased English proficiency in decreased amounts of time, which will build learner confidence and motivation. Increased English proficiency should result in greater ease adapting to and succeeding in the target language community. Considering the growing foreign-born population and the amount of limited English proficient (LEP) adults among that population, improving adult ESL programs should be a priority. Increased English proficiency opens the door for better opportunities in the community, allowing the foreign-born adult population to contribute more fully to society. Chisman & Crandall (2004) state:

Hence, they are a large and essential part of our human capital, and they will continue to be regardless of what federal immigration policies are adopted. In many ways, the future prosperity of the American economy depends on the contributions immigrants make, and it is very much in the interest of all Americans to ensure that they can make the greatest contribution possible. In addition, immigrants are neighbors, consumers, and, increasingly, voters. It is in the national interest to enable them to contribute fully in these roles as well. (p. 4)

Aiding the population of this study in reaching increased English proficiency would ultimately benefit society at large.

Description of Study

The following section provides a description of the researcher's process. Details of the needs assessment and evaluation of textbooks are provided. The expected outcome of the study is discussed.

Needs Assessment

The specified learner population of this study is adult ESL students furthering their English language education in a community college setting in the United States. The population for this study was located in Western North Carolina (WNC); three community colleges within WNC were examined. The needs assessment investigated the needs of the students in the three community colleges programs that participated in this study. First-hand data from learners as well as teachers and administrators was obtained. The method used in determining needs was a one-on-one interview with administrators, teachers and students in the programs, which was recorded.

The interviews with the learners explored their needs, challenges, and goals. Information obtained in the interview process, the design of which was influenced by Richards (2001), included but was not limited to, situations in which English is most commonly used, difficulties encountered within situations, perceived difficulties with different aspects of language use, common communication problems, and preferences for different teaching activities. The interview was designed with open ended questions that led to more specific questions depending upon learner responses.

The interviews with the teachers and administrators provided insight into their perception of learner needs, as well as teaching approaches that they find most effective with the learner population. In addition, the interviews explored administrators' and teachers' attitudes toward existing teaching materials. Teachers and administrators of existing programs have experience working with this group of learners and are able to identify learner needs, as well as effective ways of approaching those needs, at least to some extent. The interviews determined mismatches, if any, in learner needs and perceived needs of learners by administrators and teachers.

Analysis of Teaching Materials

After determining attitudes of students and teachers/administrators, an analysis of existing teaching materials was conducted. The textbooks used in the evaluation included three series common to the colleges of this study and one textbook built with a spoken corpus of American English, which none of the colleges used, to compare with the others. The textbook and materials evaluation explored the approaches used within the various texts and materials and whether those texts are capable of meeting the learner populations' needs based on teacher and student responses in interviews.

Goal of Study and Expected Outcome

The goal of the study is to reveal the language and social needs of adult English language learners enrolled in non-credit ESL programs in order to determine how to build textbooks and teaching materials that will ultimately strengthen programs. It was hypothesized that students' are primarily concerned with strengthening their listening and speaking skills in order to improve their communication with native English speakers.

Existing textbooks and teaching materials were expected to not fully meet the needs of the learner population. As a result of the above, teaching materials developed using spoken corpora are presumed to provide the quality of teaching materials necessary for adult ELLs in the U.S. to acquire increased English proficiency and develop the ability to communicate in their target language communities.

Research Questions

What are the language needs and social needs of adult ELLs enrolled in community college ESL programs in the United States?

What challenges do existing programs face in meeting those needs?

Based on teacher and student reactions, how effective are existing textbooks and teaching materials in meeting the needs of the population?

How can spoken corpora of American English be used to strengthen teaching materials for adult ELLs attending community colleges in the United States?

Significance to Field

The research conducted for this thesis is chiefly concerned with meeting the needs of adult ELLs in the community college setting and how materials can play a major role in that process. As Tomlinson (1998) states, "…materials developers…should pay more attention to what teachers and learners believe about the best ways to learn a language and also to what they want from the materials they use" (p. 22). This study sets out to

determine how to build materials that meet the specific needs and goals of this group of learners through the research and methodology employed.

Adult ELLs in community colleges would benefit greatly, as would teachers of programs, if teaching materials were created that fully met learner needs. The processes utilized by the researcher can be applied to learners in a variety of language learning settings to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of materials used and ways to strengthen the development of new ones.

Further, the research and findings of this study can be used for creating better teaching materials with existing spoken corpora as well as a catalyst for developing spoken and multimodal corpora that fully meet the needs of adult ELLs in the community college. Additionally, this research can act as a vehicle for bringing together researchers with similar interests, who together could bring technological advances to language learner that could be revolutionary to second language teaching.

Ethical Considerations

The research entailed no risk of the psychic, legal, physical, or social to participants. Each participant was informed of the nature of the research and signed a consent form approved by the Institutional Review Board. For confidentiality, participants' names will not be disclosed and information obtained will be accessible to researcher and participants only. The data collected does not relate to illegal activities. All subjects are protected from future potential harmful use in this experiment because information will be kept confidential and it is not of harmful nature.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature review will contain several components. The first section of the literature review will address information regarding characteristics of the growing foreign-born population. Implications for society at large will be discussed. The next section will focus on adult community college or non-credit ESL programs; the general needs of this learner population, an overview of the varieties of existing programs, and the challenges that are typical in this setting will be explored. The following section will discuss research regarding effective teaching approaches, practices, and materials for adult English language learners. An introduction to a corpus-based approach to language teaching, with specific attention to spoken corpora will follow. The last section will address incorporating corpora into the language classroom.

As the foreign-born population in the United States continues to grow and merge into society, these individuals' English language success determines a great deal of their future connection and contribution to society (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Larrota, 2009; McHugh et al., 2007, "Migration Policy Institute', 2010). Of this population, the majority of adults are limited English proficient (LEP) ("Migration Policy Institute", 2010). Though adults have the opportunity to improve their English language skills in non-credit ESL community college programs, these programs are not as strong as they could be due to diverse student populations, lack of funding, and challenges that absenteeism and retention pose in effective teaching and learning

(Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; McHugh et al., 2007; Rodriguez et al. 2009).

Effective teaching strategies for this population have been recognized, such as providing learners with opportunities to learn outside the classroom, incorporating authentic projects and experiences in the classroom, and through integrating computer technologies (Chisman, 2008; Friedman, 2009; Gilmore, 2007; Hillyard et al., 2007; Mayora, 2009). The importance of interaction in language teaching and learning has been emphasized as well (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; McKay & Schaetzel, 2008; Schwarzer, 2009; Watanabe, 2008; Watanabe & Swain, 2007). Further, research has determined that language corpora can facilitate materials design and classroom activities, which benefit the learner (Adolphs & Carter, 2003; Bennett, 2010; Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1994; Biber, Conrad, & Leech, 2002; Carter, 1998; Davies & Gardner, 2007; Fuertes-Olivera, 2007; Grant, 2007; Henry & Roseberry, 2001; Henry, 2007; McCarthy, 1998; Mumford, 2009; Palacios-Martinez, 2006; Reppen, 2010; Tao, 2007; Timmis, 2005; Tomlinson, 1998). However, effective strategies, approaches, and research are not being utilized in the creation of effective teaching materials in the majority of non-credit adult ESL programs. Research has determined that there needs to be a way for professionals to communicate about innovative approaches to their curriculum and course design in order to strengthen existing programs (Chisman & Crandall, 2007).

Foreign-born Population

The most current information regarding the immigrant or foreign-born population in the United States is found through the Migration Policy Institute's (MPI) website and

the website is the source for the statistical data referred to in this review of literature. MPI's data is obtained through the United States Census Bureau. As MPI's website states it is "an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide" ("Migration Policy Institute", 2010). A crossroads for elected officials, researchers, state and local agency managers, grassroots leaders and activists, local service providers, and others, MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy is dedicated to understanding and responding to the challenges and opportunities today's high rates of immigration create in local communities. The characteristics of the foreign-born population that are included for the purpose of this research are population growth, language and education, and workforce.

According to MPI, the immigrant population represented 12.5 % of the total U.S. population in 2008. Of this population, 69.5 % were of working age (18-54) and 22.7 % were 55 or older. Acquiring adequate English language proficiency is a common challenge for this population. In 2007, 52.4% of this population reported themselves to be limited English proficient (LEP), a number that has steadily increased. In 1990 47.0 % of the foreign-born population was LEP, and in 2000 51.0% were. The immigrant population has been on a steady incline since the 1990s and thus, the number of adults who are LEP is growing substantially. McHugh, Gelatt, and Fix (2007) state, "…the number of individuals five or older who report that they are LEP grew from almost 14 million in the 1990 census to over 21 million in the 2000 census and over 23 million in the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey" (p.3).

Learning to speak, read, and write in English is essential for success in the United States and represents the biggest challenge that immigrants face in integrating into U.S.

society. McHugh et al (2007) recognize the benefit that improved English language skills would bring both immigrants and their communities:

> English is truly the language of opportunity for today's immigrants: it opens the door to jobs that pay family sustaining wages and allows immigrants to communicate with their neighbors, their children's teachers, healthcare providers, landlords, and others with whom they must interact on a regular basis. English skills are also crucial to passing the U.S. citizenship exam, which serves as a gateway to full participation in the life of one's community, including the ability to vote in local, state, and federal elections. (p. 3)

As the foreign-born population continues to grow (the majority of which is working age adults), these individuals are becoming prominent in the workforce of communities across the nation. According to Crandall and Sheppard (2004), nearly half the growth of the workforce in the 1990s was due to immigrants and they are expected to account for most of the net growth of workers age 25-54 during the first two decades of the 21st century; therefore, the role of community colleges should not be overlooked. Crandall and Sheppard (2004) state, "Community colleges play a large, important role in providing ESL instruction to adults throughout the U.S." (p.10). As reported through MPI, between 1990 and 2000 the number of foreign-born workers grew 51.3% and between 2000 and 2007 that number grew 40.2%. Further, in 2007 15.8% of civilian employed workers age 16 or older in the United States were immigrants as compared with 12.4% in 2000 and 9.2% in 1990. Though immigrant workers were reported to account for 24.3% of all low-wage full time workers, they did account for 13.1% of high-wage full time workers ("Migration Policy Institute", 2010). With effective English

language instruction and improved language proficiency, the percent of foreign-born

workers with more than minimum wage jobs would increase and they would have greater

hope for economic stability (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004).

Immigration and immigrants allow the U.S. to be a more productive, competitive

and successful nation (Meissner, Meyers, Papdemetriou, & Fix, 2006). Meissner et al.

discuss the benefits of the immigrant population as being complementary to the

workforce because "…infusions of young taxpaying immigrants are helping the United

States overcome worker, skills, and entitlement program shortfalls" (p. 14, xiv). In order

to increase the positive impact brought on foreign-born individuals, their English

language proficiency must increase. Increased English language proficiency in the adult

immigrant population would propel the nation farther past shortfalls; this population is in

need of effective English language instruction.

Many community colleges or non-credit ESL programs across the nation offer

adult English language instruction, but as research has continually shown, these programs

face challenges and barriers in providing effective ESL instruction (Chisman & Crandall,

2007; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Chisman, 2008; Lambert, 2008; Rodriquez et al.,

2009; Schalge & Soga, 2008; Schwarzer, 2009; Warriner, 2007; Warriner, 2010).

Establishing ways of improving programs and increasing English proficiency for adult

immigrants would benefit society at large and should be a priority. McHugh et al. (2007)

state, "Providing English language instruction is an investment in the human capital of

the nation that generates quantifiable results in the form of increased tax revenues, lower

social welfare payments, and improves educational and workforce outcomes among

children of immigrants" (p. 11). The following section discusses existing adult ESL

programs and the challenges they face in aiding adult ELLs in increasing English proficiency.

Adult ESL Programs

Adult English language education is offered through many community colleges and other continuing education programs in the United States. These programs are offered to students at no charge or for very low costs and are referred to as non-credit ESL. As Chisman (2008) states, "The primary focus of the curriculum is usually on 'life skills' English—the application of core skills to situations students are likely to face at work or in everyday life" (p.1). Chisman's (2008) report is based on the findings from four lengthy research projects that explored the nature and effectiveness of adult ESL education programs at several community colleges. The studies were all conducted for the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy (CAAL). The first among these reports was *Adult ESL and the Community College* (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004), which focused on the role of community colleges in providing adult English language services. The paper addressed challenges that community colleges face in meeting the needs of a diverse population, solutions that some programs have developed to meet challenges, and the need for further research. Chisman, as well as other researchers (Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Chisman, 2008; Lambert, 2008; Rodriquez et al., 2009; Schalge & Soga, 2008; Schwarzer, 2009; Warriner, 2010; Warriner, 2007; Zachry, Dibble, Seymour, Leibman, Larson & Ferguson, 2007), recognize the numerous and diverse challenges, which existing adult ESL programs face that prevent effective teaching from taking place. These challenges include, but are not limited to, a population of learners with differing

backgrounds, needs, and goals both language and social, administrators and teachers not

being able to fully understand and facilitate needs and goals, and lack of funding.

Research has determined that adults in existing ESL programs come from diverse

nationalities, have differing educational backgrounds, are attending the programs for

various reasons, and have responsibilities outside of the educational realm that affect

their attendance (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Lambert, 2008; Rodriquez et al., 2009;

Schalge & Soga, 2008; Warriner, 2007; Zachry et al., 2007). As stated by Crandall &

Sheppard (2004) "There is no typical adult ESL student" (p.4). It can be assumed,

however, that a commonality shared among this population is that they want to improve

their English language proficiency because they are living in a society where English is

the dominant language. Enrollment in the majority of these programs is free and students

attend by choice, which shows motivation to improve language skills. However, living

and working in the community can interfere with their ability to attend class, which may

limit their capacity to achieve increased proficiencies. Absenteeism is an ongoing

challenge that non-credit ESL programs experience from their students and there are

different reasons for lack of attendance and retention in these programs. Warriner (2007)

states:

> …recent immigrants and refugees find themselves in a double-bind familiar to the
>
> working poor: they must choose between foregoing the job security provided by
>
> their low-wage job in order to obtain further training and credentials for the
>
> workplace and staying in the dead-end job with no benefits which involves
>
> postponing the pursuit of educational opportunities that might open doors, provide
>
> better pay, or ensure greater economic security. (p.322)

Though adult ELLs struggle with regular attendance due to the realities of work and children, research has also found that learners will stop attending programs if they do not feel that their needs are being met or that the content and topics in courses are not relevant or interesting to them (Brown, 2009; Lambert, 2008; Schalges & Soga, 2008; Schwarzer, 2009). In an ethnographic study Schalge & Soga, (2008) state, "Students often explained absenteeism in terms of frustration with the program, such as unmet needs or boredom" (p. 154). Absenteeism due to work and family is out of the control of program administrators and teachers, but building effective courses that engage and meet the needs of the students is an area that can be improved upon. The responsibilities of administrators and teachers of these programs are extensive, but keeping students enrolled should be a top priority. Administrators and teachers need to be aware of the needs of their students and be able to meet those needs by integrating practice and theory of adult second language acquisition with topics and content that are relevant to the students' lives. Schwarzer (2009) states: "When adult learners see their English class as connected and helpful to their real lives, they are more likely to invest the effort it takes to attend class and to approach their out-of-class lives as a language-learning laboratory" (p. 27). Research can assist administrators and teachers in this process by combining knowledge of student needs and effective teaching approaches. Materials can then be created for the benefit of educators and learners (Tomlinson, 1998).

In a brief for the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA), it is discussed that administrators must implement the program's vision and goals, determine progress and success in meeting goals, manage financial and policy requirements, as well as have knowledge of second language acquisition, research-based instructional

approaches, and the daily realities and needs of teachers and learners (Rodriquez et al., 2009). Though each of these components contributes to the overall success of programs, the knowledge of second language acquisition and familiarity with research and practice-oriented publications in the field is of utmost importance for both administrators and teachers (McHugh, et al., 2007; Rodriguez et al. 2009). McHugh et al. (2007) establish the need to create incentives for using well-trained, highly skilled teachers in adult ESL: "Currently, states set the standards for ESL teacher qualifications and the result is a patchwork of differing rules where, predictably, some are quite rigorous in the training or experience they require, and some are more lax" (p.14). Having higher qualifications for instructors, including more extensive training in the field, would result in more effective teaching. Though highly qualified instructors would be ideal, locating new instructors and replacing current ones would be strenuous. A logical solution to acquainting teachers with expertise and ideas in successful teaching approaches for adults is through textbooks and teaching materials, which remain a constant in language education.

The list of challenges that adult ESL programs face is long, but there are existing programs that have demonstrated success through a variety of different practices. In research conducted by Chisman and Crandall (2007), five exemplary community college ESL programs were studied for two years to determine why and how these programs were more successful, or thought to be more successful than others. Chisman (2008) summarized the findings from Chisman and Crandall (2007) and other research conducted for CAAL concerning adult non-credit ESL programs. Among the strategies that appeared to be the most effective were: high-intensity instruction, learning outside the classroom, authentic projects and experiences, technology, and the ability to deal with

diversity. The colleges that practice these strategies appear to be more effective, but as Chisman (2008) notes, "…few if any colleges have implemented very many of these strategies…" (p.3). These strategies in combination with effective teaching approaches for adult English language learners (ELLs) should increase English language proficiency at rates that allow learners to recognize progress and the importance of attendance. Finding a way for these strategies to reach more classrooms is the challenge, but creating materials that incorporate these strategies and making them available to programs would be an efficient and effective solution.

Effective Teaching for Adult ELLs

In order to maximize learning outcomes, teaching must be as effective as possible. For effective teaching to occur, the needs of the students must be first and foremost. Since adult ELLs attending community college ESL programs in the U.S. encounter the language everyday and must comprehend and produce it to survive, they need to be able to communicate using English. McKay and Schaetzel (2008) state:

> The development of oral interaction skills is paramount for adult English language learners. Speaking and listening skills are essential to their ability to participate effectively in the workplace and community: for example, talking with their co-workers and employers, discussing their children's education with teachers and school officials, or negotiating a lease for an apartment or a loan for a house or car (p.1).

In developing speaking and listening skills, interaction has been noted as an important component in the adult ESL classroom (Larrota, 2009; Lightbown & Spada, 2006;

McKay & Schaetzel, 2008; Schwarzer, 2009; Warriner, 2010; Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Watanabe, 2008) In addition, authenticity has proven beneficial for adult ELLs in order to prepare them for the language and situations they will encounter in their day to day lives (Aufderhaar, 2004; Celce-Murcia, 2001; Chisman, 2008; Friedman, 2008; Gilmore, 2007; Hillyard, Reppen, & Vasquez, 2007; Mayora, 2009; Mishan, 2004; Richards, 2001; Schwarzer, 2009). The following sections discuss the role interaction and authenticity can play in effective teaching for adult ELLs.

Interaction

Interaction is a term commonly referred to regarding English language learning and is believed to be an effective way of improving English language skills in adult learners (Larrota, 2009; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; McKay & Schaetzel, 2008; Schwarzer, 2009; Warriner, 2010; Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Watanabe, 2008). Warriner (2007) states, "The ultimate goal of learning a language is to be able to communicate and interact with the people that speak it" (p. 27). Interaction in the language classroom allows learners the opportunity to acquire and practice skills to prevent communication breakdowns or gaps between what they want to say and what their listener understands (Warriner, 2007). Learners can practice these skills and receive feedback in the classroom setting. Researchers (Larrota, 2009; Schwarzer, 2009; Warriner, 2007) emphasize the importance of creating a community in the ESL classroom by providing a safe environment where learners can interact and practice using the language, which will build learner confidence in communicating outside the classroom. Interactive activities in the classroom increase communication; students are speaking and listening in English in an environment that is comfortable and not intimidating.

Interaction in the English language classroom can occur between the teacher and the student(s) and/or among the students themselves, which is known as peer-peer interaction. Watanabe and Swain (2007) and Watanabe (2008) both reported on the positive impacts of peer-peer interaction, specifically collaborative dialogue, in the language classrooms of their studies. "Collaborative dialogue is 'dialogue in which speakers are engaged in problem-solving and knowledge-building' (Swain, 2000)" (as cited in Watanabe and Swain, 2007, p. 121). Watanabe (2008) found that when engaged in interactive activities, peers recognized effective partners as those who attempted to engage in collaborative dialogue, regardless of whether their partner was less proficient or not. In other words, students of differing proficiency levels can benefit from working together in interactive activities. Considering the diversity of adult ELLs in community colleges, that finding is paramount.

McKay and Schaetzel (2008) also conclude that students benefit from interaction and that teachers need to examine their current practices with the goal of including more opportunities for interaction: "Interaction activities can be incorporated into classrooms at any language level and at any point in a lesson. With careful planning and support, opportunities for interaction can make classroom learning more meaningful" (p. 5). Different activities involving peer interaction in the classroom include but are not limited to: discussion questions; conversation grids that have learners' names vertically down the side of the grid and questions they can ask each other horizontally across the top; peer interviews; various presentation activities including focused listening tasks using authentic sources of sound as a springboard for interaction in pair or group work;

problem based learning where students interact to solve a problem; task-based learning; and evaluation/feedback activities (McKay & Scheatzel, 2008).

When preparing for classroom interactions, to better prepare students for interactions that they will encounter in work settings and social situations, it is important to carefully select topics, help learners understand diverse communication styles, and give students specific tools for successful interaction. These strategies will aid learners in developing interaction skills and increasing English proficiency (McKay & Schaetzel, 2008). Learners can be provided opportunities to practice communicating in situations such as job interviews, service encounters, conferences with their children's teachers, negotiating the purchase of cars or homes, and conversations with their neighbors or co-workers. Textbooks and teaching materials can instigate interactive activities through pair and group work, role-play, and discussions that focus on situations these learners will encounter in their day to day lives. Specific attention can be brought to the way the communication differs depending on the situation it is used in. Interactions will be more meaningful if they represent authentic situations that students are likely to encounter.

Authenticity

Chisman (2008) determined that among the strategies that proved effective for adult ELLs in the community college setting was learning outside the classroom and incorporating authentic projects and experiences in the classroom. The goal of both strategies is to expose students to the English that will be used in the situations they will meet every day. "Practice in authentic situations expands the range of opportunities students have to apply their English skills and leads to gains in vocabulary, grammar,

pronunciation, comprehension, and other skills beyond the planned activities of formal

instruction" (p.4) When learners recognize the value of what they learn and can directly

transfer it to their real world encounters with the language, they will be more motivated

to attend class.

Many other researchers agree that using authenticity in ELT is effective

(Aufderhaar, 2004; Celce-Murcia, 2001; Chisman, 2008; Friedman, 2008; Gilmore, 2007;

Hillyard, Reppen, & Vasquez, 2007; Mayora, 2009; Mishan, 2004; Richards, 2001;

Schwarzer, 2009). Gilmore (2007) uses Morrow's (1977) definition of authenticity: "An

authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real

audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort" (p.98). The research

conducted by Gilmore (2007) serves to illustrate the inadequacy of many current

textbooks, which due to their lack of authenticity fall short of helping learners develop

overall communicative competence.

Though, "Providing 'real' English input in a meaningful way is a dilemma that

faces most language programmes" (Hillyar et al., 2007, p. 126), there are ways to

incorporate 'real', authentic English. As research has highlighted (Aufderhaar, 2004;

Chisman, 2008; Hillyard et al.,2007; Friedman, 2009; Mayor, 2009; Schwarzer, 2009)

there are many approaches to incorporating authenticity into the language classroom.

Authenticity can be incorporated through exposing students to authentic situations in

which they must use the language, as well as engaging them in authentic spoken and

written text to use as a springboard for interactive activities. Hillyard et al. (2007) discuss

how an Intensive English Program (IEP) managed to design a class that brought authentic

English into the curriculum. As arranged through this class, students volunteered at

various community organizations, which they selected based on their interests. Students were exposed to authentic English input and the hybrid class acted as a support for that input.

The class was called the 'multi-experience' class and consisted of students' involvement in the community placement, class meetings, electronic discussions, paper journals and a final reflection paper.

> The variety of formats for this class had several benefits. Students were well motivated during the class meetings to discuss and share experiences…The variety of formats also provided the teacher with a springboard for class discussions ranging from broader pragmatic and sociolinguistic issues to specific pronunciation problems (p.129).

Though the 'multi-experience' class was created for students attending an IEP at a University and not a non-credit ESL program, both learner populations are composed of adults living in the U.S., where English is dominant. This innovative approach to language teaching can be used as a resource for ideas about exposing students to authentic situations that motivate them to communicate in the language.

Integrating authentic spoken and written text also gives learners exposure to 'real' language and can act as a springboard for ideas and interactive activities such as discussions and pronunciation exercises. Television programs, films, newspapers, magazines, signs, billboards, and posters that are representative of the language students will encounter in their day to day lives can be brought into the language classroom for the benefit of the students (Schwarzer, 2009). A study conducted by Aufderhaar (2004) used

several authentic audio texts, meaning texts that were created for native speakers by native speakers of the language, to aid learners in reaching increased levels of proficiency, specifically with pronunciation. Texts included audio recordings of poems, theatre productions, and selected short stories. Students analyzed the stress, tone, and intonation, or suprasegmentals, and in doing so completed the following: transcribed the text; practiced performing the text; recorded their performances of the text and compared their pronunciation with the native speakers. The instructor provided feedback regarding pronunciation. All students reported that the audio literature was helpful. This study represents another resource for generating ideas of different ways to incorporate authenticity in classroom activities.

Another way to integrate authentic language is by using the internet. Friedman (2009) and Mayora (2009) both conducted studies incorporating the Web into adult English language classrooms. Friedman (2009) supports the Web as a tool for using authentic text in ELT. Adult Japanese ELLs studying at a university used the Web to create a communal dictionary composed of lexis and example sentences. The language in the database was then used to facilitate peer teaching of lexis. Learners paid attention to lexical form, function, and meaning when composing. Though the learners in this study differ greatly in needs and reasons for studying English, especially when compared to adult ELLs in non-credit ESL programs, this study offers another approach to incorporating authentic language for the learners' benefit.

Mayora (2009) investigates how YouTube (YT) can play a role in providing contexts for authentic writing. The article suggests that YT's comment-posting feature represents a context in which ELLs can write for an authentic purpose and audience, on

topics of interest; it also allows learners to practice listening skills: "By browsing videos in YT, teachers and learners can find videos on almost any topic (political, science, math), spoken in different varieties of the language (standard, foreign accent, etc.) and at different levels of difficulty" (p.1). YouTube is a one stop source of authentic language, but it may not always exemplify the language used in situations that adult ELLs living in the United States commonly encounter.

As research has demonstrated, authenticity can be integrated into the language classroom through a variety of sources. However, educators in existing programs do not have extensive amounts of time to sift through assorted resources and materials, which may be difficult to locate, and develop activities. Authentic materials and ideas for incorporating authenticity in the language classroom need to be brought to educators. Textbooks and teaching materials can aid in creating authentic situations by suggesting different activities with audio texts, the Web, YouTube, and community involvement projects. Suggestions can also be incorporated about watching television programs and movies to develop listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills in adult ELLs. Further, lessons involving authentic texts such as newspapers, magazines, signs, billboards, and posters can be featured to increase exposure to the language associated with each. The activities highlighted in the research above, are the types of innovative approaches that can be incorporated in teaching materials. Teachers will not have to locate and create materials and activities, the ideas can be brought to them.

All of the examples provided in the research above, give adult ELLs exposure to authentic situations and language in the ESL classroom. Another valuable source of authentic language both spoken and written can be found in corpora. Corpora of language

are valuable tools that offer a computer database of real language existing within different context that that can be used for linguistic study and ELT. Corpora can demonstrate nuances of language and act as a foundation for both teaching materials and activities in the language classroom. Some of the same activities discussed above can be created using authentic text found in corpora.

The following section begins with an overview of a corpus-based approach to language teaching and the specific benefits for adults ELLs. Taking into account the importance of oral communication skills for adult ELLs in the community college, a discussion of spoken corpora and their value follow; different studies conducted using spoken corpora, as well as existing spoken corpora are provided. Different ways corpora have been used in the English language classroom are included.

A Corpus-based Approach to Language Teaching

A corpus-based approach to language teaching is a method of language study that emphasizes language use as oppose to structure. Specifically the use of language features and their characteristics, Biber, Conrad, & Reppen (1998) introduce the reader to the goals and methods of a corpus-based approach, "From this perspective, we can investigate how speakers and writers exploit the resources of their language…we study the actual language used in naturally occurring texts" (p. 1). As highlighted in the book:

The essential characteristics of corpus-based analysis are:

-it is empirical, analyzing the actual patterns of use in natural texts;
-it utilizes a large and principled collection of natural texts, known as a "corpus," as the basis for analysis;

-it makes extensive use of computers for analysis, using both automatic and
interactive techniques;

-it depends on both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques. (p. 4)

This approach allows for in-depth analysis of genuine language, which other approaches cannot accomplish. Corpus-based analysis provides empirically tested data that can be utilized to answer questions about language rather than relying on intuitions. Teaching ELLs about actual language use in familiar and useful contexts helps specifically meet the students' needs of this study (Crandall, 2008; McKay & Schaetzel, 2008). The linguistic features of specific genres of language can be identified and taught to ELLs.

Studies conducted by Henry (2007) and Henry and Rosenberry (2001) both utilized corpus linguistics to identify common linguistic features in specific genres of language to aid in teaching adult ELLs. Henry and Rosenberry (2001) conducted a corpus analysis of the moves and strategies used in the genre 'Letter of Application.' Upon determining the linguistic characteristics of this genre, Henry (2007) used the corpus data to develop a website for ELLs to use while writing a 'Letter of Application.' Learners all had significant achievement gains while writing their letters with the use of the website as opposed to without. Learners had real evidence of the linguistic characteristics that are common to these letters and with the help of the website could apply them to their own. This is just one example of how valuable corpus analysis can be in building teaching materials for a specific purpose and specific learner population. The qualities of language change according to the context and learners must be aware of how and when these changes occur; being aware of language use gives them more effective strategies to use in

their own communication. The type of language used in familiar and relevant context to the students can be the foundation for teaching materials.

In approaching the ESL/EFL classroom, the learners' needs should be the driving force in curriculum and materials development. ELLs attending non-credit ESL programs, who are living and working in the United States, need to increase their communication skills, particularly speaking and listening (McKay & Schaetzel, 2008; Schaetzel, 2009). Considering the importance of speaking and listening skills for this learner population, and especially their interest in conversational English, it is crucial for them to understand the ways in which spoken and written language differ depending on use.

In the *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (LSGSWE) (Biber, Conrad, & Leech, 2002) the discoveries of the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (LGSWE) are presented. The LGSWE made important innovations in the method of grammar study and is a valuable resource to consult about the frequency of grammatical features in different kinds of language. The LSGSWE recognizes that the grammar and vocabulary used in communication is influenced by a number of factors, such as the reason for the communication, the relationship among participants, the setting, and whether the communication is spoken or written.

As discussed in the *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (LSGSWE), there are several discourse circumstances that effect the grammar of conversation. The following features show up in the way the grammar of conversation is used:

- It takes place in a shared context.

- It avoids elaboration or specification of meaning.

- It is interactive.

- It expresses politeness, emotion, attitude.

- It takes place in real time.

- It employs a vernacular range of expression (p. 435).

Taking into account the differences between spoken and written language, especially regarding grammar, it is practical to consult corpora of language to discover these specific differences and teach accordingly. Not only can nuances of spoken language be investigated, but with technological advancements, spoken corpora of authentic English can be used for speaking and listening purposes in the English language classroom and utilized as a foundation for building teaching materials.

Spoken Corpora

The practicality and effectiveness of using spoken corpora for ELT has been established (Timmis, 2002 & 2005; Campbell, McDonnell, Meinardi, & Richardson, 2007; Carter, 1998; Bennett, 2010; Reppen, 2010). Studies conducted using spoken corpora have revealed specific nuances of spoken language, as well as the way language is used in different speech acts (McCarthy 1998; Koester, 2002; Svenja & Carter 2000). Advances in technology have allowed for computer programs in which learners can listen to sound files and slow them down while reading transcripts of the file for detailed study (Campbell ea al., 2007). More recent technological advancements have allowed for exploring language beyond the spoken word, and multimedia corpora are being created in response (Adolphs & Carter, 2007; Ackerly & Coccetta, 2007). The findings of this research reveal and advocate the use of spoken corpora in the ESL classroom and discuss

the effectiveness of using spoken corpora for advancing speaking and listening skills in ELLs. There is definite value for adult ELLs attending programs in the U.S., as they ultimately need to be communicating with native speakers. The earlier ELLs are exposed to and become familiar with native speech and all the qualities therein, the more successful their communication will become (Campbell et al.).

Carter (1998) states, "The word 'real' invariably carries positive associations. People believe they want or are told to want or, indeed, *actually* want what is real, authentic, and natural in preference to what is unreal, inauthentic, and unnatural" (p. 43). Corpora of spoken language reveal real, authentic, natural speech occurring in different contexts. Considering that many ELLs are primarily interested in learning language to use it, it is important to expose students to as much authentic speech as possible. Timmis (2002) investigated both students and teachers of ESL/EFL to determine attitudes about native-like proficiency in regards to pronunciation and spoken grammar. The results of this study, which drew from 400 respondents from 14 different countries, concluded that the majority of students interviewed wanted to sound like native speakers of English, with the exception of students from South Africa, Pakistan, and India. Further, these students were all interested in learning the grammar associated with native spoken English, which varies a great deal from the grammar taught in most ESL/EFL textbooks. Timmis' discovery of English language learners' and teachers' attitudes about native spoken English support a corpus-based approach to language teaching. The presence of segmentals, suprasegmentals, affective domain, ellipses, and vague language in spoken English are some of the major differences between spoken and written registers. These differences establish a specific grammar associated with speech. Using spoken corpora in

the ESL/EFL classroom provides students exposure to these grammatical aspects of speech, thus aiding in comprehending and producing spoken English.

According to McCarthy (1998), spoken language is viewed as the "…most important raw material in understanding language in its social context, and wishes its place within pedagogical models to be at the forefront" (p. 21). Based on the positive responses from ELLs regarding learning the grammar of spoken English and taking into consideration systematic features of spoken language including: ellipsis, flexible word order, vague language, the different uses of 'like', and agreement by synonym, Timmis (2005) worked towards a framework for teaching spoken grammar. Timmis (2005) did not use a spoken corpus, but rather employed a video text from a 1990 BBC series 'People and Places," which contained a number of interesting features of spoken language; corpus findings were the driving force behind the framework. He did not focus solely on grammatical features with this text as a teaching material, but also on four types of listening tasks: cultural access tasks, global understanding tasks, noticing tasks, and language discussion tasks. A simple response questionnaire was given to the 60 learners and the results were as follows: "92% found the language tasks useful or very useful. 80% found the materials interesting. 86% agreed that they had learned something useful about spoken English" (Timmis, 2002, p. 122). One learner responded, "It was interesting to find out how native speakers speak to each other. I could find connection to my mother tongue, which make things (in English) clearer" (Timmis, 2007, p. 122). Though Timmis did not use an existing corpus for his listening and grammatical practice, his framework was motivated by language features discovered using spoken corpora. However, more recent advancements in technology have allowed for the practical uses of spoken corpora

in the English language classroom; there are spoken corpora available online, computer programs are being created that allow for students to listen to sound files from a spoken corpus and slow down the files while listening and read the transcripts, and multimedia corpora are being created that provide audio and video so students can study verbal and nonverbal aspects of face-to-face communication.

Campbell, McDonnell, Meinardi, and Richardson (2007) of Dublin Institute of Technology recognize the need for incorporating spoken corpora into the ESL/EFL classroom. The real world examples of speech provided in a spoken corpus have more relevance to the student. "If a learner feels that they will be able to use the language learned in the 'real world', the efforts concerned with the learning process will seem more of an investment rather than a chore" (Campbel et al., 2007, p. 6). In recognition of the fast speech associated with native speakers of English, Dublin Institute of Technology's Digital Media Center, with Campbell and McDonnell, and their School of Languages, with Meinardi and Richardson, are developing a Speech Corpus and a software program, DIT*Call*. The software program, designed specifically for the Speech Corpus, will connect digitally recorded, natural speech between two native speakers and the transcription of that speech with its sound file. Users can locate speech samples, play them, analyze them and slow them down for a more detailed study. As discussed in the study, when learners are exposed to authentic spoken language, they are able to build up a store of contextual and cultural clues and improve communication skills in the target language. At the time of this study, the program was in the process of being commercialized for ELLs. Not only does the development of such a program display the

need for a speech corpus but also puts one to practical use for learners of English. Campbell et al. (2007) state:

> …in order to be able to facilitate language learners in becoming part of the L2 speech community, they need to be exposed to as much authentic speech as possible … which has resonance to the learner's field of interest, their professional expertise and their current or prospective surroundings (p. 18).

Speech corpora can be used in exploring the speech acts used in fields of interest as well. Koester (2002) argues for a discourse approach to language based on a 34,000-word corpus of spoken discourse that focuses on speech acts in workplace conversations. "The naturally occurring data…are part of a small corpus of 66 conversations between colleagues at work recorded in eight different offices in a variety of locations in the USA and Britain" (p. 169). The corpus looks at two particular speech acts, giving advice and giving directives. The way in which the speaker(s) conducts these speech acts have important implications for the teaching of functional language "…their incorrect use can have the unintended effect of the speaker sounding too direct or even rude" (177). Analyzing aspects of speech with spoken corpora gives teachers insight into how language functions within the speech acts as well as the cultural norms associated with them. The teacher can then teach accordingly, giving the students an advantage in communicating in their target language communities. With Koester's development of this small corpus, he proves both how a corpus can be used to discover specific uses of language in different contexts and also that corpora can be created by a language teacher to meet specific needs of students.

Svenja and Carter (2003) conducted a study using CANCODE (Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English) that looked at the function of 'like', which is five times more common in spoken English than in written. Arguing for the importance of teaching frequent words in English, this study uses spoken corpora in discovering specific nuances of spoken language. The corpus used for this study, CANCODE, which focuses on language in informal settings appears to provide the most thorough examination of spoken language, of any spoken corpus to date. The CANCODE corpus was the basis for *Spoken Language and Applied Linguistics* (McCarthy, 1998) and categorizes spoken language use into four broad types: intimate, socializing, professional, and transactional, in which three interactions types, non-collaborative, collaborative, and transactional can be assigned. The findings of CANCODE, regarding spoken English, are a valuable resource when approaching the English language classroom. The research conducted by McCarthy using CANCODE as well as others provides insight into what aspects of spoken grammar are most important to teach and can also be used as a listening device for ELLs to develop communicative strategies in speaking with native and fluent speakers. Depending on the relationship between participants in a conversation and the topic or situation they are engaged in, the language they use and the strategies they employ differ, corpora aid in discovering these differences. Making adult ELLs aware of these differences, aids them in communicating in their target language community.

CANCODE, which features only spontaneous speech, is part of a larger 1 billion word corpus, the Cambridge International Corpus (CIC). A variety of teaching materials have been developed using the CIC and can be explored at

http://www.cambridge.org/elt/corpus/. Finding and listening to samples of speech on CANCODE is not an easy task and Cambridge encourages the purchase of their English language teaching materials. Cambridge does offer a textbook series for adult ELLs, but analysis of the textbook revealed that it does not fully meet the needs of this study's learner population; further explanation is provided in Chapter 4. Though the CIC containing CANCODE is not easy to access without the purchase of materials, there are easily accessible spoken corpora that can be used for ELT on the web.

The British National Corpus can be found online at http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/ and searched for free, however, the only aspect of the spoken corpora that can be found are transcriptions. Transcriptions may be helpful in knowing what to teach ESL/EFL students and in answering questions based on real evidence, but they do not aid in speaking and listening skills as much as the actual sound files would. The same is true for the American National Corpus, only transcriptions are available, which can be found online at http://americannationalcorpus.org/. However, the American National Corpus online is not as easy to navigate as the British National Corpus. You must download the Corpus in order to access it and, once again, there are no sound files for listening. Another corpus found online, the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), http://www.americancorpus.org/, offers a tour of how to use the corpus and what the corpus offers, including lists, charts, key words in contexts (KWICs) and comparisons, but once again, no sound files for listening.

There are a few corpora online that do provide sound files: the Michigan Corpus of Spoken Academic English (MICASE), the Santa Barbara Corpus of English, and the TalkBank project. MICASE is available online at http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micase/

and sound files as well as transcriptions can be accessed. MICASE is a valuable tool for teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP), but the corpus does not contain communicative interactions outside of academia. The Santa Barbara Corpus of English can be found online at http://www.linguistics.ucsb.edu/research/sbcorpus_obtaining.html. At the time of this study, the website explained that only Parts 1-4 can be accessed, a section which features 249,000 words and can be purchased through the Language Data Consortium, or downloaded using TalkBank. The sound files provided by the Santa Barbara Corpus of English feature informal, conversational style spoken English and can be accessed for free, but they do not provide the quantity of spoken English that CANCODE does. TalkBank can be found online at http://talkbank.org/ and provides speech samples to listen to; however, they must be downloaded, which takes more time than accessing sound files on MICASE.

In response to the proven effectiveness of spoken corpora in the English language classroom for both understanding nuances of spoken English and for speaking and listening purposes, advancements in technology have allowed for the creation of corpora that explore language beyond the spoken word. Adolphs and Carter (2007) acknowledge that "…social interactions are in fact multimodal, combining both verbal and non-verbal elements" (p. 133). Therefore, their research seeks to develop a multimodal corpus which will advance linguistic analysis of natural language. Head nods and gestures that accompany backchanneling are the focus of their research, which at the time of publication of their study was in the early stages. They recognize the challenges of creating such a corpus, but considering the non-verbal elements of natural language, they believe there is a need for multimodal corpora:

The impetus towards multimodal corpora recognizes that natural language is an embodied phenomenon and that a deeper understanding of the relationship between talk and bodily actions, particularly gestures, is required if we are to develop a more coherent understanding of the collaborative organization of communication (p. 143).

Adolphs and Carter are not alone in their quest for multimodal corpora. Ackerly and Coccetta (2007) discuss research being done at Padua University, where the Multimedia English Corpus (Padova MEC) and a multimodal concordance MCA (Multimodal Corpus Authoring System, Baldry 2005) are being used to investigate both verbal and non-verbal aspects of spoken language. As stated in the study:

This highly innovative concordance enables the retrieval of parts of a video and audio from a tagged corpus and access to examples of language in context, thereby providing non-verbal information about the environment, the participants and their moods, details that can be gleaned from a combination of word, sound, image, and movement (p. 351).

A few problems exist with the corpus: it is being created in a country where the target language is not the native language; some of the texts are semi-scripted, but do have real communicative goals; and at the time of publication the corpus only consisted of approximately 120,000 words. However, the technological advancements that are represented in this body of research have aided in developing useful and effective language teaching materials.

Promoting an autonomous, constructivist approach to language learning, University of Padua Language Centre finds value in multimodal data-driven learning; it exposes learners to authentic language and they are encouraged to explore language use. Having audio and video allows students to have a greater understanding of the context of the spoken language. They are able to gather information from spoken language as well as gestures, facial expressions, proximity, intonation, and gaze, all of which are important factors in comprehending the language. A multimedia corpus, in conjunction with a multimodal concordancer, used in the development of online teaching materials, allows for exposure to verbal and non-verbal native English speech.

The insights that corpus linguistics has provided about language as is actually exists far exceed what intuition can determine and have allowed for a corpus-based approach to language teaching. With technological advancements, the intelligence of spoken corpora is becoming highly sophisticated. Students can not only hear native speakers, but see them as well. With software such as DIT*Call*, as highlighted in the research of Campbell, McDonnell, Meinardi, and Richardson (2007), ELLs of all levels have the opportunity to enhance speaking and listening skills; the software allows for listening and slowing down speech samples while looking at a transcription. Discoveries using spoken corpora display nuances about language, which help teachers know what to teach. Lesson plans can be created using existing spoken corpora and their sound files that can be located on the web. Projects, such as CANCODE, have allowed for the development of corpus-based teaching materials. As an English language teacher today, there are ample corpus-based tools to utilize in the language classroom. Further, there is always the possibility of creating spoken corpora based on the specific needs of the

language learners. As the driving force in curriculum development, the needs of the students must always be on the forefront of lessons and activities. Spoken corpora in the speaking and listening classroom are the key to ELLs reaching higher proficiency levels with speaking and listening skills in the English language.

Corpus-based Teaching Materials

As research has shown there are both corpora and corpus-based studies that can be used to aid in ELT; they are proven effective and beneficial to the learner. However, teachers have difficulty accessing them and knowing how to use them (Bennett, 2010; Reppen, 2010). The need for corpus-based textbooks and teaching materials for this specific population of learners is great; corpus-based materials are a way to bring authenticity straight into the classroom. Though some textbooks do claim to incorporate authenticity they are often times misleading. Wong (2002) states:

> ...textbook conversations fail to match findings from empirical studies. The mismatch between textbooks and naturally occurring language has implications for teachers and the writers of teaching material, especially since dialogues of the sort analyzed frequently appear in textbooks marketed as offering authentic, natural language, or language which is true to life. (p. 37)

In a more recent study Cullen & Kuo (2007) investigated twenty-four mainstream textbooks to analyze their coverage of spoken grammar; they concluded that "the coverage of spoken grammar is at best patchy" (p. 361). All textbooks analyzed were common in the British ELT market. The United States market is not near as advanced in applying corpus-based findings to textbooks and teaching materials.

In teacher resource books, both Bennett (2010) and Reppen (2010), in their separate publications, explain corpus data and provide teachers with ideas for incorporating this insight into the language classroom. They both provide information on how to use MICASE and COCA, as well as other corpora, for creating classroom activities. Reppen (2010) offers *Your Turn* activities throughout the book, which give the reader an opportunity to interact with the material being presented and do an activity; each draw focus to the learners that the reader will be working with and their needs. Considering that many instructors are intimidated by and unsure of how to use corpora, these publications are of much value. Both these publications also use the *Touchstone* series as an example of a corpus-based textbook, which is one of the only series created with a corpus-based approach for adult ELLs and is evaluated for this study; it will be discussed further in Chapter 4. These two publications offer not only an overview of corpus linguistics and the value of corpus data in language teaching, but practical suggestions of how to use corpora in the language classroom.

Summary

Statistics have made evident the continuing growth of the foreign-born population. Adults dominate the growth in population and over half are LEP. The need for improving English language instruction for this group of learners, as well as the benefits society at large would experience have been established. Existing adult ESL programs struggle with challenges that prevent them from being as successful as they might be though some effective strategies have been revealed. Among those strategies, the importance of authenticity and interaction has been highlighted. Building a community in the classroom where students feel comfortable interacting is recommended

in enhancing speaking and listening skills. Authentic situations and materials should be
the premise for interaction so that students may directly transfer learning in the classroom
into their day to day lives in the community and workplace. Corpora of language offer a
source of authentic language occurring in authentic situations that can be used as a
catalyst for interactive activities.

Corpora can be consulted for knowing and understanding the grammar of the
language most frequently encountered. Further, with technological advancements, spoken
corpora can provide audio sound files for listening to 'real' English being spoken in the
types of situations they will encounter; the possibility of multimedia corpora that allow
for the study of both verbal and nonverbal language is becoming greater. A corpus-based
approach to building teaching materials is the most effective way of bringing research
and practice into adult non-credit ESL programs and improving learner proficiency
outcomes; this approach is centered on corpus-based grammar with specific attention to
spoken language, provides audio sound files for listening exercises, and promotes
interaction in authentic situations based on authentic language that is relevant and useful
to the students.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate the current status of existing adult ESL programs, evaluate teaching materials currently used at those programs and determine how to build teaching materials for adult ELLs in the U.S. using corpora of spoken American English as a basis for the grammar and source of authentic language.

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1) What are the language and social needs of adult ELLs enrolled in community college ESL programs in the United States?

2) What challenges do existing programs face in meeting those needs?

3) Based on teacher and student reactions, how effective are existing textbooks and teaching materials in meeting the needs of the population?

4) How can spoken corpora of American English be used in developing teaching materials for adult ELLs attending community colleges in the United States?

The first two questions were answered using a qualitative case study where interviews were employed. This study explored the language and social needs of adult ELLs in the U.S., specifically in Western North Carolina, as well as the barriers and challenges faced in meeting those needs. Students as well as teachers and administrators of existing programs were interviewed. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed in order to detect patterns in participant responses.

The third question of this study sought to determine the effectiveness of textbooks and teaching materials currently used at the participating institutions. Four textbooks were analyzed to determine if they could meet teacher and learner needs based on participant responses. Each textbook was inspected with respect to its presentation, unit topics, emphasis on grammar, incorporation of interactive activities, and integration of authentic materials and situations. Three of the textbooks were ones commonly used among all of the programs and one of the textbooks was built with a corpus-based approach and not used in any of the participating programs. Analysis of the corpus-based textbook was conducted for the purpose of comparison, as well as to determine if it would better meet the needs of the learner population of this study.

The final question was answered by consulting an extensive number of research studies as well as secondary research focused on a corpus-based approach to language teaching in combination with the results from the needs assessments of this study. The evaluation of the corpus-based textbook provided an example of this type of teaching material. Discussion of the final question is addressed in Chapter 5, as there were no methodological procedures performed in it.

The following sections detail this project:

- The setting of the study

- Description of participants

- Data collection procedures and method of analysis for interviews and textbooks

Setting

This study took place within three community college programs in Western North Carolina (WNC). The three community colleges were chosen for this study because they all have ESL programs and were located within in an accessible distance for the researcher. Each of the community colleges offers degree, diploma, and certificate programs. Each college also has a continuing education department in which their non-credit ESL programs are housed; based on the research conducted for the review of literature this is typical of most ESL programs in the U.S.

The first community college, where Administrator 1 was interviewed, has approximately 300 ESL students a year; the second community college, where Administrator 2 was interviewed, has approximately 700 ESL students a year; and the third community college, where Administrator 3 was interviewed, has approximately 400 ESL a year. All interviews took place at the respective colleges: interviews with administrators took place in their offices at the respective colleges; students were interviewed while they were attending class, and the researcher had a separate room for interviewing students individually; interviews with teachers took place in an identical fashion, and students were left with independent tasks while teachers were being interviewed.

Sample/Participants

The sampling procedure used by the researcher was purposive sampling; the individuals met the criteria for the study. The only criteria for the study were that all participants were affiliated with the adult ESL program at the three participating community colleges; each participant was an administrator, a teacher, or a student of one of the participating institutions. Participants of the study included three administrators, one from each program, six English language teachers, and thirty-three adult ELLs. All of the administrators and teachers were from the United States and all were Caucasian females.

The student portion of the participant population was diverse in both age and ethnic background, which is representative of student populations found in community colleges across the United States. Their ages ranged from approximately 20 to 70. Of the 33 student participants interviewed, 15 were female and 18 were male. 16 of the students were from Mexico, three from Ecuador, two from Ukraine, two from South Korea, and one each from the following countries: Brazil, Romania, Honduras, France, Cambodia, El Salvador, India, Puerto Rico, Germany, and the Philippines. Table 1, *Learner Population Overview*, provides a description of the student population. Table 2, *Learner Population Details,* found in chapter 4, provides further details about each student participant including gender, number of years in the U.S, and native language.

Table 1: *Learner population overview*

Native Country	Number of Students
Mexico	16
Ecuador	3
Ukraine	2
South Korea	2
Brazil	1
Romania	1
Honduras	1
France	1
Cambodia	1
El Salvador	1
India	1
Puerto Rico	1
Germany	1
The Philippines	1

Data Collection/Procedure

As mention earlier, data collection for this study consisted of two main

components: interviews with students, teachers, and administrators and evaluation of

textbooks. All of the instruments used in data collection were created by the researcher.

The interview questions used for teachers and administrators can be found in Appendix 1.

Interview questions used for students can be found in Appendix 2. Textbook evaluations

can be found in Appendices 3 and 4.

Interviews with Participants

As seen in Appendix 1, the interview questions for teachers and administrators

were constructed to determine what they perceive to be the language and social needs of

the learners, the challenges and barriers they face in helping students meet those needs,

the kinds of activities they find beneficial, their attitudes toward incorporating

authenticity into the classroom and toward current textbooks and teaching materials. After interview questions were created and revised the following procedure was conducted:

1) Program administrators were contacted to inform them of the nature of the study and to request their participation. Administrators were first contacted via email followed by phone calls to establish rapport and set up meeting times.

2) The researcher met with each administrator at the community college where she was employed. Upon arrival, the researcher described the study in further detail, providing background information about herself and reasons for research interest; the researcher answered any questions the administrators had.

3) After the researcher informed the administrators that the interview would be recorded and they were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and their confidentiality maintained, the researcher requested each administrator's signature on a consent form that was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the researcher's home university. The consent form can be found in Appendix 5.

4) The researcher then began the interview recording with a Sony MP3 IC Recorder.

5) After the interviews were conducted, researcher and administrator established a time for the researcher to return to the program to interview teachers and students.

6) Interviews with teachers and students then took place at the scheduled times following the above procedure. Teachers were asked the same questions as administrators.

As seen in Appendix 2, the interview questions for the students were designed to determine their language and social needs, the challenges they face with English, the language skills they find most important for survival in the U.S., the kinds of teaching activities they find beneficial, their goals in attending the program, and preferred teaching materials. The researcher went to the community college that the students were attending during their normally scheduled class and interviewed the students one at a time. Though the researcher attempted to ask every student each of the questions and in the same order, there were occasions when questions were asked out of order or not asked at all; either the proficiency level of the student prohibited some questions from being asked or students answered some questions in response to a different question. Teachers and students were interviewed on the same day.

The interview data collected from administrators, teachers, and students was partially transcribed. The researcher transcribed the participant responses to questions for the study. Participants occasionally got off subject during the interview and provided the researcher with information that was not pertinent to the study; the researcher refrained from transcribing every word in these circumstances. After transcribing, patterns in participant responses were detected. The questions that were answered the same or similarly by the majority of participants were identified; these were considered key pieces

of evidence, gathered from multiple sources, that specifically addressed one or more of the research questions.

Textbook Evaluations

After visiting the three participating programs, the researcher determined three textbook series commonly used by all three and one corpus-based textbook designed for adult ELLs, which none of the institutions used. These textbook series were the following:

- Molinski, S.J., & Bliss, B. (2002). *Side by Side: Student Book 3* (3rd ed.). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.
- Spigarelli, J. (2008). *Step forward: Language for everyday use, 3.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C., Hull, J., & Proctor, S. (2005). *Interchange: Student's book 3.* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- McCarthy, M., McCarten, J., & Sandiford, H. (2006). *Touchstone: Student book's 3A.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Touchstone was created using the *Cambridge International Corpus (CIC)* and was evaluated in comparison with the others to determine if it is better capable of meeting the needs of adult ELLs attending language programs in the U.S.

The researcher purchased copies of the textbooks for evaluation. Due to lack of funding, the researcher was only able to purchase one level of student books from each textbook series; no teacher resource books or other teaching components were analyzed

with the exception of the audio CD component of each text. To remain as consistent as possible, the researcher chose the third edition or student book level three from each series.

The checklist and questionnaire, found in Appendices 3 and 4 respectively, were applied to each textbook for evaluation. The checklist was created based on information provided in both Celce-Murcia (2001) and Tomlinson (1998); it provides an overview of each text including a general evaluation of how well it would fit adult ESL programs. The researcher had a difficult time locating literature regarding textbook evaluations. As stated by Johnson, Kim, Ya-Fang, Nava, Perkins, Smith, Soler-Canela, and Lu (2008), "…empirical studies revealing what experienced textbook evaluators actually do are rare" (p.157). Though rare, there are a few studies and chapters in textbooks that offer guidance in textbook evaluation (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Johnson et al., 2008; Richards, 2001; Stoller, Horn, Grabe, & Robinson, 2006; Tomlinson, 1998). Each of these resources emphasizes the importance of the learner needs in materials evaluation and selection; learner needs were the driving forces of the evaluations created for this study. In order to create the questionnaire, which addresses the specific needs of the student population, the researcher relied upon data provided in the literature review and data collected during interviews with participants; their answers determined the criteria for what textbooks would meet these learners' needs.

Evaluation of the textbooks involved a cover-to-cover, page-by-page analysis. The results for each individual textbook provide the overview and checklist found in Appendix 3, followed by a prose discussion of the questions found in Appendix 4. Each

textbook was evaluated separately. A discussion of the texts follows the separate evaluations.

Corpora in Materials Development

The last question of the study addressed how spoken corpora of American English can be used to develop teaching materials to best meet the needs of the learners of this study. The researcher was fortunate to gain access to the *Cambridge Corpus of Spoken North American English,* which is part of the *CIC*; it contains just over a million words of spoken American English. The speech in the corpus is conversational in nature. The conversations in the corpus occur in a variety of different context and within situations that adult ELLs in the U.S. frequently encounter. This corpus is the largest corpus of American spoken English that focuses solely on conversation, it contains 181 transcriptions. The researcher created a sub-corpus to explore for this study, the sub-corpus includes 40 transcriptions. An overview of the sub-corpus is provided in Chapter 5. Other existing corpora and their role in strengthening teaching materials for this population are provided as well. The researcher provides examples of how corpora can be used in teaching materials and integrated in the English language classroom

The methodology used in this study was designed to answer the research questions by the most effective and accurate means. All of the data in this study: interviews with administrators, teachers and students; textbook evaluations; and discussion of corpora for language teaching was included because each component was necessary in determining how corpora of spoken American English conversation can be

used in the development of effective teaching materials for adult ESL programs in the

United States.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

As described in Chapter 3, the data collected and analyzed for the purpose of this study was used to determine the language and social needs of adult ELLs in the community college setting and ultimately determine if and how corpora of American spoken English can be used to build teaching materials for adult ELLs in the community college setting. The first component, a series of interviews with administrators, teachers, and students, was conducted to answer the following:

- What are the language and social needs of adult ELLs enrolled in community college ESL programs in the United States?

- What challenges do existing programs face in meeting those needs?

Data collected during interviews honed in on the specific needs of adult ELLs in community colleges. All three participant groups aided in the understanding the challenges and barriers faced in meeting needs. Responses from student participants, in particular, revealed the reasons that learning English is important to them and what they hope to gain from attending community college programs. Information obtained in the interviews guided the questionnaire and checklist for textbook evaluation, which were created to answer the third question of the study:

- Based on teacher and student reactions, how effective are existing textbooks and teaching materials in meeting the needs of the population?

The textbook evaluation not only inspected materials currently in use, but also an existing textbook created using a corpus-based approach. As previously mentioned, the needs of this study's learner population were the main criteria in materials evaluation.

The final research question of this study was as follows:

- How can spoken corpora of American English be used in developing teaching materials for adult ELLs attending community colleges in the United States?

In order to answer the final question, the researcher relied upon existing corpus-based studies and textbooks featuring ways to incorporate corpora in ELT, which revealed the value of and ways in which corpora can be used in the language classroom. The contents of the sub-corpus of the *Cambridge Corpus of Spoken North American English* also revealed how this corpus could be used to build teaching materials for this population. Additionally, the data revealed by participants of this study aided in knowing what a spoken corpus must have in order to fully meet the needs of this population of learners. The final question is addressed in Chapter 5.

The results of the data are organized to present information regarding the language and social needs of the adult ELLs attending the participating programs as well as, the challenges faced in meeting those needs. Interviews with administrators, teachers, and students were examined to determine patterns in participant responses regarding needs and challenges. Individual sections discussing the results for each group of participants are provided. Following the interview sections are results from the textbook

evaluations, including both the checklist and questionnaires found in Appendices 3 and 4 respectively.

Interviews

Administrator Interviews

Three program administrators were interviewed. Program administrators were asked questions that were designed to provide information about the following:

- their perceptions of the needs of the leaner population

- the challenges and barriers they face in aiding students in meeting those needs

- the strategies they use in teaching and curriculum design

- their attitudes about existing materials, including the use of authentic materials

Results highlight themes that were determined in administrator responses. Quotes from the participating administrators and/or brief discussions about their responses are provided; quotes from each administrator are not provided for each question.

The first question focused directly on the needs of the learners in their programs:

1) What do you perceive to be the needs, both language and social, of English Language Learners in this program?

The overriding theme that emerged from administrators, with respect to this question, was the need of students to learn English for survival purposes, be able to communicate in their communities, and obtain or excel in their jobs.

Administrator 1 stated:

"…most of the ones that we have just need to begin to learn English…they come with no English whatsoever, so they need it for shopping, for making calls, you know, for going to the doctor, dentist, taking their kids to school, reading what their teacher sends home with their children, just the basic everyday life, survival…"

Administrators 2 said:

"…the needs, to learn English and that they come regularly…the social…to be able to…when they come here from another country, they come in survival mode, it will take them 1 to 5 years to get into this office, once their survival needs are met, housing, job, kids in school, and I'm not working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week anymore, then they're coming and going I need to learn English for my job…that stability I guess…"

The second question inquired about challenges and barriers:

2) What have you found to be some of the greatest challenges and barriers in meeting those needs?

The theme that emerged here was that learners' lives posed the greatest challenge and barrier. Two of the administrators specifically mentioned childcare and transportation as posing a barrier while the third declared that it was all aspects of students' lives that posed a challenge. For example, Administrator 3 declared:

"…The greatest challenges and barriers is their life, their lifestyle and it has to do with , you know, we're talking about people who are not high earners…wage earners…so there's so much…up and down with that…"

After inquiring about needs, challenges, and barriers, the administrators were asked about successful teaching approaches:

3) What are some successful teaching approaches that you use in the classroom?

Though none of the administrators were currently teaching, they were able to offer information about approaches they have used in the past as well as what the teachers in the programs currently do.

➢ Administrator 1 emphasized the importance of using interactive activities and games.

"…the things that seem to work best for our teachers are if they have their lesson plan with lots of games and interactive activities that go with the learning. If you try to just sit down with a book and get students working on grammar, they won't come back…"

➢ Administrators 1 and 2 both mentioned that a grammar based approach does not work with this group of learners.

➤ Administrator 2 stressed bringing "reality" into the classroom, she stated:

"I like to use a lot of what they call reality…things they're going to run into everyday, like we're going to actually role play and pretend we're going to the post office or grocery store, things they can leave the classroom and use right away versus really in-depth grammar analysis kinds of lessons."

➤ Administrator 3 discussed the systematic textbooks that her program uses.

Administrator 3's program uses three different textbooks, each of which offers different strengths. The textbooks are used in conjunction with ten topics that she has chosen as the focus of the ESL curriculum based on experience with this population of learners and their needs. Her program is structured, but teachers are allowed creativity within that structure. The other two programs do not use any particular textbook, but they offer their teachers a library of a variety of textbooks and materials that they can pick and choose from.

The administrators were then asked about the use of authentic materials:

4) Do you feel that using authentic text, both written and spoken, aids in increased proficiency with this group of learners?

All three administrators responded with a positive answer.

Administrator 2 said:

> "…yeah, I think so, definitely…most of them aren't going on to academic
> pursuits, I think most of them just want to do a better job at the job they
> have, or help their kids in school, or just be able to function in daily life…
> in American society."

Administrators 1 and 3 both discussed the teacher's role in bringing authentic materials into the classroom.

Administrator 3 stated:

> "…oh absolutely…yeah definitely… the book topic is really just a skeletal
> framework of stuff they need to know for their every single day life and
> the teacher enhances it…"

The next question addressed existing teaching materials:

5) From your experience, are there teaching materials that are available which
   facilitate the needs of this specific population of students?

The overriding theme in response to the this question was that there were, but that the materials are located in a variety of places and teachers unavoidably have to bring in other materials to enhance what is already available.

> ➢ Administrator 1 referred to the internet as a "wealth of information"

> ➢ Administrator 2 discussed how the textbooks are "a sort of backbone" and
>   that teachers always have to go off and bring in extra stuff.
>
> ➢ Administrator 3, who uses three different textbook series to facilitate the
>   needs of ELLs in her program said, "…there's no one series that does it…"

Summary

Interviews with program administrators revealed the following regarding adult English language learning in the community college setting:

- Learners need to learn English to survive and succeed in their communities.

- Student's lifestyles, including lack of transportation and childcare as well as the nature of their employment poses a challenge in their participation and attendance in programs.

- Teaching activities that work for this group of learners include interactive activities, games, and bringing reality into the classroom.

- Authenticity is important for these students.

- There is no textbook series that fully meets the needs of these learners.

The information revealed during interviews is congruent with findings found in the review of literature regarding the needs of adult ELLs and the challenges and barriers found in meeting those needs. All of the administrators believed that bringing authenticity into the classroom is beneficial for this group of learners. The insight provided regarding available materials revealed the critical role that teachers play in

finding aspects of available materials that are relevant to students and bringing in authentic materials to supplement them.

Teacher Interviews

Teachers were asked the same questions that the administrators were asked; as mentioned in chapter 3, six teachers participated. The results from teachers are as follows:

1) What do you perceive to be the needs, both language and social, of English Language Learners in this program?

Though teachers had similar perceptions of adult ELLs' needs, they provided more detail than the administrators did. The need for to learn English for survival was expressed, but more specifically, four out of six teachers referred to oral communication skills as being essential to address both language and social needs.

Teacher 4 said:

"…I'll go with social first because I think it's communication that most of them are interested in, oral communication, so I feel like they want to be able to talk with anybody really…"

Teacher 5 responded:

"I guess number one to speak and understand, and socially would be the same thing."

One of the teachers emphasized the importance of making a social connection for this group of learners due to the anxiety they may feel about learning the language. She felt that the language classroom was a good place for adult ELLs to establish connections in a comfortable environment. In addition, she felt they needed to learn English that is useful to them, according to what their individual goals are. Another teacher felt students needed to learn grammar, specifically verb tenses for communicating with people. She also mentioned the need for learning idioms, focusing again on social interaction:

"…some of them will come to me with words they don't understand or idioms…most of them hear idioms on their jobs and they'll come to me and say what does that mean and I'll explain it to them, so in the social aspect, those kinds of things, the idioms and phrases that they've heard in communicating with people…"

The following question addresses the challenges and barriers in meeting learner needs, and teachers had an array of responses:

2) What have you found to be some of the greatest challenges and barriers in meeting those needs?

➢ 3 teachers referred to sporadic and inconsistent attendance being a major challenge.

Teacher 1 stated:

"That's an easy question, the greatest challenge in this class is the sporadic attendance of the students…this is very classic of this group of learners…I

don't know how it could be changed…they are going to earn the money
first…you dig ditches all day you are not going to come to class…you're not
going to come trottin' into class ready to learn."

➢ 2 teachers credited the students' lack of education in their native language
or from their native countries as being a major barrier in meeting learner
needs.

➢ 1 teacher concluded that not speaking the language at home caused
challenges.

The teachers also contributed other factors to the challenges and barriers that students
face with English; fear of making mistakes when talking and not being able to follow
directions were both mentioned. Teacher 2 believed that lack of materials was
challenging:

"Finding materials that are high interest, that are pegged at things they can use,
sometimes that's challenging. There are a lot of materials out there but maybe
not…I sort of pick and choose from different sources…so there's no…there's no
one piece of material, one textbook whatever that's gonna meet your needs…"

Question three dealt with successful teaching approaches:

3) What are some successful teaching approaches that you use in the classroom?
➢ 3 teachers mentioned pair, group work and student interaction.
➢ 3 teachers also remarked on the importance of using a variety of teaching
approaches.

➢ Using games was also suggested by 3 teachers.

Teacher 2 responded:

"…pairing, doing small group work, a lot of game formats, some use of the computer…there are a lot of websites that offer reinforcement, um getting the students to get up and be the teacher…and trying to vary the focus…trying to take into account what the adult learner needs and can use, and what they can tolerate and enjoy."

In addition to the above, the following were mentioned as effective teaching approaches for adult ELLs:

- using kinesthetic activities
- using pictures
- incorporating situations that actually happen in their lives
- reading aloud
- finding ways to generate discussions

The answers the teachers gave regarding effectively teaching adult ELLs emphasized the importance of using a variety of different approaches, incorporating pair and group work, interaction, and games. Providing this group of learners with an assortment of methods was believed to sustain their attention and interest.

The next question focused on authentic text:

4) Do you feel that using authentic text, both written and spoken, aids in increased proficiency with this group of learners?

Five out of six teachers had positive responses:

> ➢ Teacher 1: "…yes, yes, yes, absolutely, definitely the written, definitely the spoken and written…"
> ➢ Teacher 2: "…yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, absolutely yes…"
> ➢ Teacher 3: "…pretty much, yes."
> ➢ Teacher 4: "…yes, yes I think authenticity seems like a no brainer almost…"
> ➢ Teacher 5: "…yes, yes, yes…"

All five of these teachers were positive that authentic materials were beneficial to the learners and strived to bring these materials into their classrooms. The sixth teacher did not think that authentic materials benefited the advanced students she taught, but did think that lower level students benefited from authentic materials.

The next question dealt with effective teaching materials:

5) From your experience, are there teaching materials that are available that facilitate the needs of this specific population of students?

None of the teachers responded with a direct answer to this question.

> ➢ 1 teacher explained that there are a lot of materials to pick and choose from, "…you just have to cut and paste", she said.

➢ 1 emphasized the need for interactive computer programs for students to learn from and listen to.

➢ 2 teachers gave brief responses about what different textbooks offer.

The last teacher explained her personal experience with the materials offered at her facility. She felt that the materials they used were out of date and discussed how that affected students' attitudes in a negative way. She concluded by stating:

"…none of the material that we have is standalone…there's always some supplemental material that we need…I don't see anything as standalone…no one knows anything about the books…"

When asked what she would change about the material, she responded:

"…getting material that would be more…practical…if I could change anything it would be more practical."

Summary

Teachers' responses were similar to those of the administrators and, as previously mentioned, provided more detail. An overview of teachers' is as follows:

- Learners need to improve their oral communication skills.
- Sporadic attendance poses a major challenge in increasing language skills.
- Using a variety of different approaches, including (but not limited to); pair and group work, interactive and kinesthetic activities, discussions, pictures, reading aloud, and computer programs prove beneficial for this group of learners.

- Authenticity is crucial.

- Materials are available, but they must be found and pieced to together; they are not in one location and do not always offer practical skills.

Interviews with teachers shed light on the reality of teaching adult ELLs in programs in the United States. A great deal is expected of teachers; they bear the weight of determining student needs within their classrooms and piecing together materials that will facilitate these students' increased English language proficiency. One thing all teachers appeared to share was an overall compassion for this group of learners and determination to continue to find ways to better their teaching for the benefit of the students.

Student Interviews

The 33 participants in the student portion of the study were diverse in both age and ethnic backgrounds. Table 2, *Learner Population Details*, which is shown below, provides details about each student participant.

Table 2: Learner Population Details

Student	Gender	Native Country/language	Amount of time in U.S.
1	female	Brazil/Portuguese	3 years
2	male	Mexico/Spanish	11 years
3	male	Mexico/Spanish	8 years
4	female	Mexico/Spanish	2 years
5	female	Ecuador/Spanish	10 years
6	male	Ecuador/Spanish	12 years
7	male	Mexico/Spanish	5 years
8	female	Mexico/Spanish	9 years
9	female	Mexico/Spanish	4 years
10	female	Ecuador/Spanish	15 years
11	male	Mexico/Spanish	5 years
12	male	Mexico/Spanish	12 years
13	male	Ukraine/Russian	A few months
14	male	Romaine/Romanian	1 year
15	female	Ukraine/Russian	4 months
16	male	Mexico/Spanish	18 years
17	male	Mexico/Spanish	11 years
18	female	Mexico/Spanish	20 years
19	female	Mexico/Spanish	15 years
20	female	Mexico/Spanish	3 years
21	female	France/French	3 years
22	female	South Korea/Korean	17 years
23	male	South Korea/Korean	17 years
24	female	Cambodia/Cambodian	2 months
25	male	Mexico/Spanish	45 years
26	male	El Salvador/Spanish	9 year
27	male	Mexico/Spanish	22 years
28	female	India/Hindi	9 years
29	male	Puerto Rico/Spanish	3 years
30	female	Germany/German	2 months
31	female	Philippines/Filipino	7 years
32	male	Mexico/Spanish	23 years
33	male	Mexico/Spanish	3 years

The questionnaire for the student interviews featured eleven questions. Due to the

proficiency level of some of the students, not all participants responded to all eleven

questions; therefore only seven of the questions will be discussed in the results. The

seven questions were chosen because they were most pertinent to the study, and the majority of students were able to answer them. These questions inquired about students' frequency of English language use, most difficult aspect of learning English, most important English language skill for living in the U.S., preferred teaching activities, reasons for wanting to improve English language ability, goals they hope to accomplish while in the program, and favored teaching materials. The questions addressed in the results of this study are:

1) How often do you use English?

2) What is the most difficult thing about learning and using English?

3) What English language skill do you think is the most important?

4) What kinds of teaching activities work the best for you?

5) Why do you want to improve your English language skills?

6) What goal(s) do you wish to accomplish while in this program?

7) What types of teaching materials help you learn the best? CDs, books, computer programs, websites, etc.

The results are presented with numbers whenever possible. Quotes and discussions are provided, once again, highlighting themes that emerged.

When asked about frequency of English language use, the results included the following:

1) How often do you use English?

  ➢ 13 students said they use English every day.

  Student 9 said:

"I need to speak English everywhere…in the store, in the school,

the office doctor and everything…"

➢ 5 students said they use English while at work.

Student 17 stated:

"I use it at my work…I am the only Spanish guy who work there

and nobody else. I'm learning and I practice there".

➢ 4 students said they only use English when they come to school.

➢ 2 of the students said they use English with their children

➢ The remaining students said that they do not use English often.

Student 15 said:

"very little, so my English it's bad language…"

The above findings are featured in Table 3:

Table 3: Frequency of English language use

Frequency/situation of language use	Number of participants out of 33
Everyday	13
While at work	5
Only while at school	4
With their children	2
Do not use English often	9

Regarding the most difficult aspect of learning English, students were asked:

2) What is the most difficult thing about learning and using English?

> ➢ 20 students found traits of speaking and/or listening to be most challenging. Student 8 responded:

> "…speak is more difficult to speak…I can understand a little but not speak…"

Of those 20, 7 of the students struggled with pronunciation.

> Student 14 replied:

> "I think the most difficult thing in English, to learn English, is my pronunciation…because it is very different from the native language even if I speak English, I speak with a, with a bad accent…"

> ➢ 3 of the students specifically mentioned having problems listening to native speakers due to the accents of the speakers or their fast speech. Student 11 responded:

> "…more difficult is to hear because of accent…for example when I hear it in the T.V. or in the movies or another person coming from another state outside to Asheville or North Carolina and the accent is different it is difficult for me to understand…"

> ➢ 3 students indicated that their greatest challenge is not having anyone to practice speaking English with.

Of the students who did not mention speaking or listening:

> ➢ 11 mentioned aspects of grammar being the most difficult, 4
>
> specifically talked about verbs as being a challenge.
>
> ➢ 1 referred to the difference between English and their native.
>
> ➢ The other student did not mention an aspect that was most
>
> challenging, but said:
>
>> "I like it…of course…mistakes…I know that I used to tell my
>>
>> teacher…the only thing I know is that I don't know
>>
>> anything…there is always opportunity to learn and improve…"

The participant responses to difficult aspects of learning English are featured in Table 4:

Table 4: Difficult aspects of learning English

Difficult aspect of learning English	Number of Participants out of 33
Speaking and/or listening	20 (7 specifically mentioned pronunciation)
Grammar	11 (4 specifically mentioned verbs)
Difference between English and native language	1
Other	1

After students expressed difficult aspects of learning English, they were asked:

3) What English language skill do you think is the most important?

29 out of 33 students answered this question. Out of the 29 students who did respond the

results are as follows:

> ➢ 24 mentioned speaking and/or listening to be the most important
>
> English language skill.

Student 16 stated:

"…listening…I think sometimes I think I can talk with other person and but I hear the music or radio, they talk too fast and I can't understand…"

Student 23 said:

"...speaking more understanding more listening more…"

Student 26 said:

"I think here in the United States, I think it's speak…you have to speak…speaking and listening…"

Out of the five students who did not mention speaking and/or listening to be the most important"

- ➢ 3 students said writing.
- ➢ 1 said reading.
- ➢ 1 student said:

"…everything…I believe it's everything…for me anyway…"

The above findings are featured in Table 5:

Table 5: The most important English language skill

Most important English language skill	Number of participants out of 29
Speaking and/or listening	24
Writing	3
Reading	1
Everything	1

Students were then asked about the kinds of teaching activities that work best for

them:

4) What kinds of teaching activities work the best for you?

25 out of 33 students answered this question. Out of twenty-five students:

➢ 10 students said that conversation or speaking activities worked best.

Student 14 said:

"…I think conversations are best".

Student 21 stated:

"…I like activity, but for me its better speaking with the

people…my problem is speaking…for me it's no problem for

reading…for me it's better speaking."

➢ 4 students said reading and /or writing activities were helpful.

➢ 3 students claimed that watching television or movies in English was

most helpful.

Student 5 replied:

"…watching T.V. and reading the subtitles that helped me a lot…when we watch like *Friends* or *Seinfeld* they have simple sentences everyday and you listen and read and that's how you learn…"

➢ 2 students mentioned grammar games and exercises as working for them.

➢ 2 students said they like exercises in the book.

➢ 2 students said they liked everything.

➢ 1 student liked working in pairs

➢ 1 student liked the different skills they worked on during different days of the week.

The above findings are featured in table 6:

Table 6: Teaching activities that work best for students

Teaching activity that works best	Number of participant responses out of 25
Conversation or speaking activities	10
Reading and/or writing activities	4
Watching television or movies in English	3
Grammar games and exercises	2
Exercises in the book	2
Everything	2
Working in pairs	1
Different skills on different days of the week	1

Next students were asked:

5) Why do you want to improve your English language skills?

Students were able to respond quickly and with confidence when asked why they wanted to improve their English language skills. All participants answered with the exception of two; 31 out of 33 responded. Out of the thirty-one that responded:

- ➢ 12 replied that they wanted to improve their English for job related reasons; students wanted to improve English to find a job, excel in their current job, or start their own business.

    Student 26 stated:

    > "…well if you got better English you can find better job…that's the most important for me, to find better job…"

    Student 5 said:

    > "…because at my type of job I have to write business letters, I have to talk to clients and coordinated schedules so I need to be really clear with the people so they can understand me…"

    Student 17 promptly answered:

    > "Because I want to start my own business."

- ➢ 7 students declared that they wanted to improve English so they could have communication with American people.

    Student 3 responded:

    > "I like to…I like to have…a lot of friends…I like to meet friends everywhere…I like to speak much better …for I have better communication."

    Student 25 said:

    > "…to speak with the American people."

Student 30 responded:

"…that I can understand the people better and have
conversations…"

➢ 4 students proclaimed that they wanted to improve their skills in order to
speak more clearly or fluently.

Student 1 said:

"…I think it is important for me to speak correctly."

Student 9 stated:

"…speaking…yes pronunciation because I can write, I can write
but when I need to have communication, no one can understand me
because my pronunciation is bad…"

➢ 4 of the students wanted to improve English for their children.

Student 28 said:

"…because I have one day 16 and a half year old boy. He is 11th
grader and another is 4 years old and I'm thinking I learn more
English like grammar and all skill wise so after that I can teach
them good or I can go to school and I don't want to just sit down
and not participate with teacher so that is my goal for doing…"

➢ 2 students expressed that they were interested in furthering their
education. Student 33 replied:

"I would like to go to college one day…I want to go to college…I
think that here the more you know about English is gonna get you
where you want to be…"

- ➢ 1 student wanted to improve listening and understanding skills.

- ➢ 1 student said:

    "…yes because I need everyday to use it."

- ➢ 1 of the students that stated a desire to improve English language skills for job related reasons also had other notable reasons:

> "…because I want to find a better job. I want to feel comfortable when I meet a person that want to speak with me. It is several things. I want to have a friend that speak English and they can understand me. I want to go to the store and don't say I want to ask for this but I don't know how to ask. When I hear music that is in English…I hear it's beautiful thing and I don't know…sometimes I know what they say but I want to singing with the music and I don't know how to do that…I want to understand everything…for know what is the music, what do the people say…I want to be part of the American community but I don't know how because my English is limited…"

The above responses are featured in table 7:

Table 7: Reasons for wanting to improve English

Reason for wanting to improve English	Participant responses out of 31
Job related	12
For communication with American people	7
To speak more clearly or fluently	4
For their children	4
Furthering education	2
Improving listening and understanding skills	1
To be able to use it everyday	1

After students were asked why they wanted to improve their English language skills, the researcher asked:

6) What goal(s) do you wish to accomplish while in this program?

Only 15 students responded to this question.

> ➤ 6 of those students simply wanted to learn and improve English skills.
>
>   Student 1 replied:
>
>   "…To improve English language…vocabulary…reading…like
>
>   polish you know the language a little bit so can speak better…."
>
>   Student 3 said:
>
>   "…if I learn English…my life is more….if no speak no
>
>   understand English, my life is blank…"
>
> ➤ 3 students wanted to get their GED.
>
> ➤ 2 students reported that their goal was to get a better job.
>
> ➤ 2 students wanted to improve their speaking and pronunciation.

> ➢ 1student wanted to take CNA classes.

> ➢ 1 student did not have any goals.

The students' goals for attending the program are featured in Table 8:

Table 8: Goal(s) to accomplish while in the program

Goals	Participant responses out of 15
To learn and improve English	6
To get a GED	3
To get a better job	2
To improve speaking and pronunciation	2
To take CNA classes	1
None	1

The last question that the students were asked was:

7) What types of teaching materials help you learn the best? CDs, books, computer programs, websites, etc.

23 out of 33 students answered the question. Out of twenty-three students:

> ➢ 11claimed that computer programs helped them learn best.

> > o 3 students specifically mentioned a program called *USA Learn.*

> > o 1 student referred to a program called *Crossroads*.

> > o 1 student mentioned *Rosetta Stone*.

The students liked the computer programs because they could use them at home and because they had the opportunity to listen.

Student 24 said:

"I think studying from the computer is also helpful…*USA Learn*…I can

learn by myself at home…"

Student 9 stated:

"I use computer programs at home and it's really good for me…because I

can   listen and I can type…and it's good and online there is many

Webs that is free…"

➢ 7 students declared that the book(s) helped them learn best.

➢ 2 students said it was everything.

➢ 1 student said CDs.

➢ 1 student emphasized the importance of everything being taught in

English.

➢ 1 student mentioned the importance of being able to listen:

"…I think it could be good if we can only listening in English talk…I

think the teacher is good, listening to the teacher but we need to

listen…we don't have a recorder or anything like that we only listen to the

teacher…"

The preferred teaching materials of students interviewed are featured in Table 9:

Table 9: Preferred teaching materials

Teaching Materials	Participant responses out of 23
Computer programs	11
Books	7
Everything	2
CDs	1
Everything being taught in English (teacher)	1
Being able to listen	1

Summary

A summary of findings from the student interviews is as follows:

- Learners use English often and for a variety of reasons pertaining to survival in the U.S. They use English to function in society: at the store, at the doctor's office, at work, at school, and with their children.

- Over half of the students found the most difficult trait of learning and using English to be speaking and/or listening.

- Of the 29 students who responded to the question about the most important English language skill, 24 said speaking and/or listening.

- A large portion of students found conversation and speaking activities to work best for them in the language learning process, supporting the emphasis on interaction expressed in the research as well as the interviews with administrators and teachers.

- Students wanted to improve their English language skills for a variety of reasons: many for job related reasons; others to be able to speak with American people,

specifically more clearly and with better pronunciation; a few to be able to speak with their children; and some to further their education. Students' goals were more specific aspects of these reasons.

- Students conveyed that computer programs and books helped them learn the best.

The information given by the students provided insight into their needs, interests, and goals in learning English. Overall, students expressed a great deal of interest in improving oral communication skills, as the teachers claimed were crucial for this population. They wanted to be able to speak with American people, find better jobs, and/or participate in the community. They conveyed that teaching materials that provided opportunity for listening were important. Many students wanted to improve pronunciation. Interviews with students offered the opportunity for first-hand data from a population of learners who are motivated to and genuinely want to improve English for the betterment of their lives.

Textbook Evaluations

All four of the textbooks analyzed for this research were evaluated according to the checklist and questionnaires found in Appendices 3 and 4, respectively. As stated in Chapter 3, only the student books were analyzed; the other components were not. The results are sectioned by textbook; the checklist is provided first, followed by discussion and explanation of each question from the questionnaire.

Textbook Evaluation Overview and Checklist

Title: *Side by Side, 3rd Edition, Student Book 3*

Author: Steven J. Molinsky and Bill Bliss

Publisher: Pearson/Longman

Intended Audience: Beginner to intermediate adult English language learners

Components: Student Book 3, Activity Workbook 3, Student Book 3 Audio Highlights, Teacher's Guide 3, Testing Program 3, Side by Side picture Cards, Student Book, 3 Audio Cassettes, Student Book 3 Audio CDs, Activity Workbook Audio Cassettes, Activity Workbook 3 Audio CDs

Subdivisions:

- 10 Chapters, each containing between 4-8 topics with corresponding vocabulary

- 4 'Gazettes' after every 2-3 chapters which are describes as "magazine-style" pages.

- 1-5 grammar points in each chapter

- 1 aspect of functional communication

- 1-2 listening and pronunciation exercises

- 1-2 writing exercises per chapter

Overview of a Chapter or Unit: Chapter 6: Present Perfect Continuous Tense

Sequence of Activity:

- Discussing duration of activity: Students are provided with 12 pictures of people doing different things with the amount of time they have been doing those things underneath the picture. Though there are no instructions provided, it is assumed that they create sentences including the length of time the people in the pictures have been doing what they are doing. The book is designed this

way throughout; there are pictures with words and phrases underneath with no instructions provided on what to do.

- ➢ how long have you been waiting
- ➢ they've been arguing all day

- Reading
    - ➢ there's nothing to be nervous about

- Interview
    - ➢ have you ever…

    - role-play at a job interview
        - ➢ complete this conversation and act it out with another student

    - reading

    - listening
        - ➢ which word do you hear
        - ➢ who is speaking

    - pronunciation, reduced *for*
        - ➢ listen then say it
        - ➢ say it then listen

    - side by side journal
        - ➢ write in your journal about places you have lived, worked, and gone to school

* Note: there are minimal instructions for how to use this book

Evaluation of Fit	Yes (a good fit)	Perhaps (an adequate fit)	Probably not (a poor fit)	Absolutely not (wrong curriculum, students, and/or teachers)
*has appropriate linguistic content		X		
*has appropriate			X	

thematic content				
***explanations understandable and usable for students**				X
***examples understandable and usable for students**				X
***activities appropriate for students**			X	
***thematic content understandable and culturally appropriate for students**			X	
***fits language skills of teachers**	X			
***fits knowledge base of teachers**	X			
***provides explanations that can be used by teachers**			X	
***provides examples that can be used and expanded upon by teachers**			X	
***should the text be selected?**				X

Questionnaire Explanation

Book 3, *Side by Side* is geared toward beginner-intermediate adult ELLs. As stated on the series website:

> *Side by Side,* Third Edition, is a new and improved version of this dynamic, all-skills program that integrates conversation practice, reading, writing, and listening—all in a light-hearted, fun, and easy-to-use format that has been embraced by students and teachers worldwide.

As this statement reveals, the book is designed for ELLs worldwide; it is not designed specifically for adult ELLs in the United States.

In regard to being corpus-based, there is no evidence provided in the book or on the book's website suggesting that the book was designed with a corpus-based approach. Based on a cover to cover evaluation of the textbook, the researcher determined that it was not corpus-based and further, does not teach the grammar of spoken English. As discussed in LSGSWE, conversational English has a different grammar and students that are interested in improving conversation skills need to be exposed to such. Though the book does attempt to teach conversation skills, the examples provided are not authentic; in other words, they are not representative of real spoken language. Regarding incorporation of authentic materials, the *Side by Side Gazettes* offers more authentic language than of any other part of the book.

The book integrates interactive activities in only a few of the units: Chapter 1 offers an interactive activity sharing opinions; chapter 5 offers a role play exercise; chapter 6 offers an interview activity and a role play activity. The other chapters do not offer interactive activities. Although the interactive activities that are offered do highlight necessary skills for communication in the target language and in situations that students are likely to encounter, learners would benefit if more of these activities were offered throughout the book.

The book is accompanied by an audio CD for listening, but the spoken language featured is not conversation; rather, it features speakers reading short excerpts of the reading sections from each unit. Considering that adult ELLs in the community college

setting expressed interest in conversational English, the listening component of the textbook should offer speakers having conversations, not just reading a text. While the textbook does offer practice with speaking, listening, and pronunciation skills, the audio CD does not provide learners with a reference point for these skills. In order for the speaking and pronunciation practice to be effective, the learners need authentic examples of speech in ordinary context. For listening purposes, the learners will be more successful listening to native or fluent speakers of English in the real world if they have had exposure to that language in the classroom; they are then able to practice listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills in a safe environment.

As this book does not place strong emphasis on speaking and listening skills, it does not focus on strategies for learning and improving these skills. Students need to be taught strategies to use to aid them in better communicating with native speakers. They can be made more aware of their own learning process, or metacognitive skills, so that they may apply successful learning techniques to learning English. Cognitive skills such as elaborating, using prior knowledge, and grouping and classifying information can also be taught. In addition, there are social strategies used by native speakers while speaking, which learners can be taught; a corpus of spoken English can be used as a reference point for these skills. Learners can also use strategies such as cooperation and positive thinking to lower their affective filters (Oxford, 1990). As stated above, this textbook does not place emphasis on any of the above strategies.

The topics and content of the textbook are at times relevant to the students of this study and their needs and at times not. As previously established, the series is not

designed specifically for adult ELLs in the U.S., but for learners worldwide; therefore, the topics and content could be more relevant to this population, focusing specifically on skills needed for situations they will frequently encounter. For example, since the book is focused on grammar, it is organized that way. The population of this study did not express a strong interest in grammar, but more so, being able to communicate in their communities. Instead of being grammar-based, the textbook would benefit this group of learners more if it was organized by topics or tasks and the situations that occur within them; grammar could be a secondary and not a primary point. The students of this study are more interested in speaking and listening skills than in grammar. While grammar is still important, the findings of this study suggest that it should not be the driving factor in materials development.

Book 3, *Side by Side* offers grammar points that are necessary in learning English; verb tenses, and vocabulary use such as *since/for* or *so, but*, or *neither* are necessary in understanding and learning English. However, the book does not teach the grammar of spoken English; the discourse circumstances that are common to conversation are not featured. The conversation skills and strategies for speaking that the book offers are necessary, but students would benefit more if the audio CD provided examples of speakers utilizing the skills to provide students a more thorough understanding of when and how speaking strategies are commonly used. In addition, the book is greatly lacking in interactive activities. The researcher recognized that the teacher's edition of the book might provoke more interactive activities, but the student book is in need of more. After evaluation of this textbook, the researcher concluded that this book could facilitate English language learning in the context of this study, but it is not capable of adequately

meeting the needs of adult ELLs in the U.S. There needs to be more emphasis on

conversational English including far more interactive activities. The book should focus

on topics and situations this group of learners is likely to encounter as opposed to

focusing primarily on grammar. Using a corpus and determining when to use grammar

points according to their frequency within certain contexts would empower the students

in their language use.

Textbook Evaluation Overview and Checklist

Title: *Step Forward: Language for Everyday Life* Book 3

Author: Jane Spigarelli   **Series Director**: Jayme Adelson-Goldstein

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Intended Audience: Low-intermediate adult learners

Components: Step Forward Student Book, Step Forward Audio Program, Step Forward
Step-By-Step Lesson Plans with Multilevel Grammar Exercises CD-ROM,
Step Forward Workbook, Step Forward Multilevel Activity Book, Step
Forward Test Generator with ExamView® Assessment Suite

Subdivisions: 12 units each with a general topic. Each unit contains:

- a variety of life skills and civic competencies
- vocabulary relevant to the topic
- grammar points
- critical thinking and math concepts
- reading and writing skills
- listening and speaking skills including pronunciation
- CASAS life skills and competencies

- standardized student syllabi/LCPs
- SCANs competencies
- EFF content standards

Overview of a Chapter or Unit: Unit 7: Money Wise

The units are divided into 5 lessons and also include a review and expand section at the end; this is the case with each unit throughout the textbook.

Lesson 1: Vocabulary

- learn banking vocabulary
  - ➢ talk about questions with your class
  - ➢ work with classmates matching words with pictures
  - ➢ listen and check new vocabulary with a partner
  - ➢ work with a partner writing other banking words you know, check your dictionary
  - ➢ work with a partner practicing the example conversation
- learn about banking services
  - ➢ look at the bank's website; what kind of accounts, services and tips do you know about? which ones are new to you?
  - ➢ work with a partner reading the questions and looking at the website
  - ➢ talk about the questions with your class

Lesson 2: Real-life writing

- read about financial planning and goals
  - ➢ look at the picture, talk about questions with class
  - ➢ listen and read story about financial planning
  - ➢ check your understanding, mark your sentences true or false
- write about a financial plan
  - ➢ talk about questions with your class

> ➤ write about your financial plan using the model
>
> ➤ use the checklist to edit your writing
>
> ➤ exchange stories with a partner

Lesson 3: Grammar

- learn real conditionals
    - ➤ read the conversation, study the chart, underling the 3 if-clauses form the conversation above
    - ➤ complete the sentences, use the verb in parenthesis
- learn questions with real conditionals
    - ➤ study the chart and then match the questions with the answers below
    - ➤ complete the questions
- grammar listen
    - ➤ listen to the questions, circle *a* or *b*
- practice talking about future plans
    - ➤ work with 3 classmates, talk about what you see in the picture
    - ➤ what do you think will happen, write 5 sentences with your group, use and if-clause and a main clause in each sentence
    - ➤ read the sentences with another group

Lesson 4: Everyday Conversation

- learn to report a billing or bank error
    - ➤ look at the picture, listen to the conversation, then mark the sentences below T (true) or F (false)
    - ➤ listen and read, what is the problem with the bill
    - ➤ role-play a conversation with a partner, use the example above to make a new conversation
- learn future events with time clauses

> ➢ study the chart, match the clauses below to make complete sentences
> ➢ complete the sentences with your own ideas, practice the sentences with a partner

- practice your pronunciation
  - ➢ look at the chart while listening to the pronunciation of the linked words in these sentences
  - ➢ listen, circle the linked words
  - ➢ listen again and check, repeat the sentences
- focus on listening
  - ➢ talk about the questions with your class
  - ➢ listen to the account information, mark the sentences T (true) or F (false)
  - ➢ listen again, complete the account information
- real-life math
  - ➢ read about Town Bank's Savings Accounts, answer the questions below, then compare your answers with the class

Lesson 5: Real-life reading

- get ready to read
  - ➢ has anyone ever used your name or credit card number to buy something without your permission
  - ➢ read the definitions
  - ➢ look at the title and pictures in the article, what is the article about
- read and respond
  - ➢ read the article
  - ➢ listen and read the article again
  - ➢ mark the sentences T (true), F (false), or NI (no information)

> ➢ study the chart, circle the correct words in the
>
> sentences below

- talk it over

> ➢ think about the questions, make notes about your
>
> answers
>
> ➢ talk about the answers with your classmates

Evaluation of Fit	Yes (a good fit)	Perhaps (an adequate fit)	Probably not (a poor fit)	Absolutely not (wrong curriculum, students, and/or teachers)
*has appropriate linguistic content	X			
*has appropriate thematic content	X			
*explanations understandable and usable for students	X			
*examples understandable and usable for students	X			
*activities appropriate for students	X			
*thematic content understandable and culturally appropriate for students	X			
*fits language skills of teachers	X			
*fits knowledge base of teachers	X			
*provides explanations that can be used by teachers	X			
*provides examples that can be used and expanded upon by teachers	X			

*should the text be selected?	X			

Questionnaire Explanation

Book 3, *Step Forward: Language for Everyday Life,* as stated in its introduction is:

- the instructional backbone for single-level and multilevel classrooms.

- a standards-based, performance-based, and topics-based series for low-beginning through high-intermediate learners.

- a source for ready-made, four-skill lesson plans that address the skills our learners need in their workplace, civic, personal, and academic lives.

- a collection of learner centered, communicative English-language practice activities.

The introduction provided in this textbook offers great insight into the ideas and considerations made in creating the series. The author acknowledges the following: the wide spectrum of learner needs; the value of utilizing students' prior knowledge as a resource for effective teaching; the importance of learning objectives; the essential role of tools needed to achieve life skill, civic, workplace and academic competencies; and the impact that a variety of instructional techniques and strategies can have on effective instruction.

Though the book does not directly state whether it is specifically designed for adult ELLs in the United States, the researcher concluded that it was. The standardized

tests that the book provides competencies for are ones used in the U.S. to measure adult English language proficiency. Further, information on American culture is found throughout the book.

The book does not state that it is corpus-based and based on the researcher's analysis, it is concluded that it is not. Additionally, the book does not teach the grammar of spoken English, specifically conversation. As highlighted in the *Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (LSGSWE), conversation includes the use of inserts and interjections, utterances which elicit response, attention-signaling forms, and reduced forms, among many others. These qualities of spoken language should be taught to the learners of this study, who are interested in improving conversational skills. Though the book does integrate skills and strategies used in conversation including words and phrases common in spoken communication, the source for skills, strategies, and spoken vocabulary is not from a corpus of American spoken English.

The textbook incorporates materials that are representative of authentic ones such as an event invitation, a work memo, a sales advertisement, an email, a job application, wedding and death announcements in the newspaper, among others, but the materials are not equal to authentic ones, which would contain the real language associated with those registers.

Though the textbook does not contain authentic materials, it does encourage interactive activities based on situations this group of learners is likely to encounter. The types of interactive activities provided in this textbook are the ones adult ELLs in the U.S. need because they provide them with the opportunity to practice speaking and

listening in a non-threatening atmosphere and also with skills needed to succeed in their

communities. The interactive activities incorporated within each unit throughout this

textbook include pair and group work, conversation practice, and discussions. Though the

book does not explicitly focus on strategies for language learning, the strong

incorporation of interactive activities offers the students the opportunity to increase social

strategies for learning English. They can increase communication skills in the safe

environment of the classroom and transfer skills to the real world. Further, the audio CD

that accompanies the book provides the students specific strategies for listening and

speaking, such as listening for details and strategies for improving American English

pronunciation.

As mentioned above, included with the text is an audio CD for listening, but the

conversations highlighted in the CD are scripted and not natural; therefore, the speakers

are speaking slowly and have exaggerated articulation, which is not representative of the

speech that learners will encounter outside of the classroom. The book provides activities

that directly correspond with the CD's spoken text and offers practice with speaking,

listening, and pronunciation skills. However, speakers featured on the CD do not have

accents from different regions in the U.S.; they are frequently non-native English

speakers; speakers have Latin American accents or accents from countries other than the

U.S. Though learners will encounter English speakers with the accents featured, they are

more likely to encounter speakers with accents from different U.S. regions. In the student

interviews, learners expressed having difficulty listening to different accents and with the

rapid speed of native English speech; therefore, the audio CD would be more beneficial if

the conversations featured corresponded with the qualities of native speakers' natural speech.

As previously stated, each unit is centered on a topic, and the content of this textbook is relevant and useful for the learner population. The topics directly relate to life in the United States; in addition to teaching language skills needed for survival in the U.S., the book teaches about American culture. Learners are introduced to the educational system in the U.S., common weekend and recreational activities, job and interview related skills, community resources, food, money and banking, healthy living, automobile issues, the criminal justice system, life events, and civic responsibilities; the topics are all necessary for survival in the U.S.

Book 3, *Step Forward: Language for Everyday Life* is a well organized textbook that is clearly intended for adult ELLs in the U.S. The systematic design of the textbook, with five lessons in each unit and specific objectives assigned to each lesson, allows the teacher and learner the opportunity to monitor the skills being acquired. The interactive activities dispersed throughout the text give students the chance to communicate and use the language in the classroom. However, if the textbook was corpus-based, the conversational skills, strategies, and vocabulary provided would be better represent the language and grammar needed to communicate with native and fluent English speakers in the U.S. Further, if the audio CD featured spoken language used by participants in real encounters, it would greater aid the students in comprehending the language they will be exposed to and expected to understand and produce in the real world; they would have the opportunity to develop speaking and listening strategies in the classroom that could

directly transfer, especially if these strategies were explicitly taught. In evaluation of this text, the researcher concluded that though it is largely positive in meeting the needs of the leaner population, it lacks aspects of the grammar of spoken English and real conversational English for listening purposes because it is not corpus-based. It is, therefore, not as capable of meeting learners' needs as it would be if it did contain those components.

Textbook Evaluation Overview and Checklist

Title: *Interchange Third Edition Student Book 3*

Author: Jack C. Richards with Jonathan Hull and Susan Proctor

Publisher: Cambridge University Press

Intended Audience: Intermediate adult learners

Components: Student's book, workbook, teacher's edition, audio program

Subdivisions: 16 units each containing general topics that are accompanied by a variety of relevant subcategories. Each unit is then divided into sections that include:

- speaking
- grammar
- pronunciation/listening
- writing/reading
- an interchange activity.

Each section has corresponding objectives. There are frequent progress checks throughout the text.

Overview of a Chapter or Unit: Unit 9: At your service

Each unit is divided into 12-14 sections.

Snapshot

- Eight commonly offered services: house painting, pet-sitting, language tutoring, house cleaning, music lessons, financial services, essay typing, handyman services
  - ➢ why would someone need these services, have you ever used any of them, what are some other common services and skills people offer

Perspectives

- Listen to an advertisement for Hazel's Personal Services
  - ➢ would you use a service like this
  - ➢ What do you need to have done, what questions would you ask Hazel

Grammar Focus

- Have or get something done
  - ➢ Use have or get to describe a service performed for you by someone else
  - ➢ Imagine you want to have someone do these things for you, write questions using the active form of *have* or *get*
- Pair work: take turns asking the questions, answer using the passive with *have* or *get*

Pronunciation: Sentence Stress

- Listen and practice, notice that when the object becomes a pronoun, it is no longer stressed
- Group Work

> ➢ ask questions about three things you want to have done, pay attention to sentence stress, other students give answers

Discussions: different places, different ways

- Group work
    - ➢ are there services available in your country, for those that aren't do you they would be a good idea

Interchange 9: Because I said so

- what do teenagers worry about

Word Power: Three-word phrasal verbs

- match each phrasal verb in these sentences with its meaning, then compare with a partner
- pair work
    - ➢ take turns making sentences with each phrasal verb

Conversation: I need a date!

- listen and practice
- class activity
    - ➢ what are some other good way to meet people

Grammar Focus

- making suggestions
    - ➢ with gerunds
    - ➢ with modals + verbs
    - ➢ with infinitives
    - ➢ with negative questions
- match each problem below with the best suggestion, then write sentences using the phrases form the grammar box

- group work
  - ➢ take turns asking and answering the questions in part A, what other suggestions can you think of for each problem

Listening: All you have to do is…

- listen to three different suggestions for each problem in the chart, write down the suggestions you think are best
- group work
  - ➢ compare your choices, think of another suggestion for each problem

Speaking: Problems and solutions

- group work
  - ➢ give three suggestions for each of these problems, then share your solutions with the class, which solutions are most creative

Writing: A letter of advice

- imagine you are an advice columnist at a magazine, chose one of the letters below and make a list of suggestions, then write a reply
- group work
  - ➢ take turns reading your advice, whose advice was best, why

Reading

- read the article, then write the number of each paragraph next to its main idea
- complete the chart
- group work

> ➤ which of the suggestions do you find the most
> useful, why

Evaluation of Fit	Yes (a good fit)	Perhaps (an adequate fit)	Probably not (a poor fit)	Absolutely not (wrong curriculum, students, and/or teachers)
*has appropriate linguistic content	X			
*has appropriate thematic content		X		
*explanations understandable and usable for students		X		
*examples understandable and usable for students		X		
*activities appropriate for students		X		
*thematic content understandable and culturally appropriate for students		X		
*fits language skills of teachers	X			
*fits knowledge base of teachers	X			
*provides explanations that can be used by teachers	X			
*provides examples that can be used and expanded upon by teachers	X			
*should the text be selected?		X		

Questionnaire Explanation

The blurb on the back of the book states, "The philosophy of the series is that English is best learned when used for meaningful communication." The philosophy is in line with one of the needs of adult ELLs in the community college setting, but the text is not designed specifically for adult ELLs in the United States; it is, however, written in American English. The blurb on the back states, "*Interchange Third Edition* is written in American English, but reflects the fact that English is the major language of international communication, and is not limited to one country, region, or culture."

The book is not corpus-based. Though it does include conversation practice, the conversations are not based on data found in a corpus of American conversational English and therefore do not adequately teach the grammar of spoken English. Students of this study revealed great interest in learning conversational English, and therefore, it is important for textbooks and teaching materials to accommodate that need. The page by page evaluation revealed that the book does not attempt to incorporate authentic material of any sort. However, the book does integrate interactive activities throughout each unit, including pair and group work, role play exercises, and discussion. Many of the role-play exercises in this textbook offer situations that adults learning English in the U.S. will meet. Additionally, the emphasis on interaction provides the learner with ample opportunity to practice speaking in the classroom. Therefore, this text incorporates speaking and listening skills, including pronunciation; each unit focuses on a specific aspect of American English pronunciation. Some of the pronunciation exercises include: linked sounds; intonation in complex sentences; intonation in questions of choice; sentence stress; syllable stress; and intonation in tag questions, among many others. All

of the pronunciation exercises offered in this text are valuable to adult ELLs living in the U.S in both their comprehension and production of the language. Though the book is not explicit with teaching strategies, the exercises offered give the students the chance to strengthen language strategies.

The book does offer an audio CD for listening, but unfortunately, it features scripted unnatural conversations; consequently, students do not have the opportunity to hear the true pronunciation qualities of native or fluent speakers while in the classroom with the exception of their teacher. The more exposure students have to native and fluent English speakers, the more prepared they will be when encountering and communicating with them in the real world.

Finally, the topics and content included in this text are at times relevant and useful to the leaner populations' needs and at times not; because the book is designed for learners of English living in countries all over the world and not specifically for learners living and working in the U.S., some of the topics are interesting but not relevant. For example, there is a unit dedicated to tourism and traveling abroad; one discusses pet peeves; another unit features how movies are made; another on historic events. Though these may be interesting to some students, they are not as useful as the units that focus on career moves, lifelong learning, qualities for success, social issues, and challenges and accomplishments; these topics can aid the learners of this study in accomplishing the needs and goals they have expressed in learning and improving English.

In evaluation of this textbook, the researcher determined it contains enough positive qualities to be a functional tool for adult ELLs in the U.S. The topics addressed

and activities presented could all be utilized. The activities provided are interesting and fulfill the philosophy stated in the blurb on the back of the book; they allow learners to use English in meaningful communication. However, the textbook would be more effective if it was designed specifically for adult ELLs functioning in American society. Further, the textbook would be more beneficial for this group of learners if it was based on a corpus of American spoken English and included the grammar of conversational English within contexts relevant to the learners, if it integrated authentic materials and if the audio CD featured natural conversations by native and fluent speakers of English so that learners ears could be trained for the English they will encounter in their communities.

Textbook Evaluation Overview and Checklist

Title: *Touchstone Student Book 3A*

Author: Michael McCarthy, Jeanne McCarten, Helen Sandiford

Publisher: Cambridge University Press

Intended Audience: Beginning-intermediate young adult learners

Components: Student's Book with self-study audio CD/CD-ROM, workbook, teacher's edition, and class audio CDs and cassettes

Subdivisions: The textbook consists of 6 units each featuring a topic with 2-3 corresponding functions for the topic. Each unit also contains the following:

- grammar
- vocabulary
- conversation strategies

- pronunciation
- listening
- reading
- writing
- vocabulary notebook
- free talk practice.

Overview of a Chapter or Unit: Unit 4: Family Life

Each unit is divided into 4 lessons

Lesson A: Family Gripes

- Getting started
  - ➢ Read the messages on the Web site above, what problems do the people have
  - ➢ Complete the sentences about the people above
  - ➢ Pair work- Do you have any gripes like the ones above, tell a partner
- Grammar: Verbs *let, make, help, have, get, want, ask, tell*
  - ➢ Complete the sentences with verbs
  - ➢ Pair work- Make five sentences above true for you, tell a partner
- Listening and speaking: Reasonable demands
  - ➢ Parents often make demands on their children, which parents' demands below do you think are reasonable, which are not
  - ➢ Listen to four people above talk about their parents' demands, each conversation is incomplete, what demand is each person talking about, match
  - ➢ Now listen to the complete conversations, check your answers

> ➢ Group work- do your parents make any of the demands above, what other demands do they make, tell the group

Lesson B: Family Memories

- Building vocabulary and grammar
  - ➢ Listen and read the article, what memories do these people have
  - ➢ Complete the chart with male or female members, then tell a partner about your family
  - ➢ Find all the examples of *used to* and *would* or *'d* in the article, do you think these activities and situations are finished or still continue
- Grammar: *used to* and *would*
  - ➢ What family memories do you have, complete each sentence, and add a sentence with *would*, then compare your memories with a partner
- Speaking naturally: *used to*
  - ➢ Listen and repeat the sentences above, notice the reduction of *used to*
  - ➢ now listen and repeat these sentences
  - ➢ pair work- tell a partner five things about yourself as a child, use *used to*
- Vocabulary notebook: Remember that?
  - ➢ See page 42 for a useful way to log and learn vocabulary

Lesson C: If you ask me…

- Conversation strategy: giving opinions
  - ➢ Which person is stating a fact, which one is giving an opinion

> ➤ Now listen, what does Paula say about her family life
>
> ➤ Complete these sentences with expressions from the above to give your opinions, then discuss your opinions in groups

- Strategy plus: Agreeing
  - ➤ Listen, write the responses these people use to agree, then practice the conversation with a partner

- Talk about it: Ideal families
  - ➤ Group Work- discuss the questions, which topics to you agree on, tell the class

- Free talk: Family history
  - ➤ See *Free Talk 4* for more speaking practice

Lesson D: Childhood memories

- Reading
  - ➤ When you were a kid, did you argue with family members, what about, tell the class
  - ➤ Read Rhonda's blog, why did Rhonda and her brother use to argue
  - ➤ Find expressions on the left in the blog, match each one with a similar expression
  - ➤ Read the blog again, for each statement below, check true or false, correct the false statements, then compare ideas with a partner

- Listening and writing: Family activities
  - ➤ Listen, what did these people in the pictures use to do, number the pictures
  - ➤ Group work- think of three things you used to do with your family, tell your group

➤ Choose a family memory from your childhood,
write a blog about it

➤ Group work- read your classmates' blogs, then ask
questions to find out more information

Evaluation of Fit	Yes (a good fit)	Perhaps (an adequate fit)	Probably not (a poor fit)	Absolutely not (wrong curriculum, students, and/or teachers)
*has appropriate linguistic content	X			
*has appropriate thematic content		X		
*explanations understandable and usable for students	X			
*examples understandable and usable for students	X			
*activities appropriate for students	X			
*thematic content understandable and culturally appropriate for students		X		
*fits language skills of teachers	X			
*fits knowledge base of teachers	X			
*provides explanations that can be used by teachers	X			
*provides examples that can be used and expanded upon by teachers	X			

*should the text be selected?	X			

Questionnaire Explanation

In contrast to the other three books, the Touchstone series is corpus-based and none of the participating institutions used this book. As stated in a short letter in the beginning of the book:

> We created the *Touchstone* series with the help of the *Cambridge International Corpus* of North American English. The corpus is a large database of language form everyday conversations, radio and television broadcasts, and newspaper and books. Using computer software, we analyze the corpus to find out how people actually use English….The corpus helps us choose and explain the grammar, vocabulary, and conversation strategies you need to communicate successfully in English.

Based on a page by page evaluation of the text, the researcher concluded that it was not designed specifically for adult ELLs living in the United States. Though the book does teach North American English, it is geared toward learners in other countries interested in learning this variety of English, as evidenced on p. 24 where numerical facts are provided about different geographical features in the world. The first number provided is in metric units, which are used in most countries with the exception of the United States and a few others. The customary units used in the U.S. are provided, but the metric unit is first. Additionally, on p. 52 there is an exercise that instructs, "The next time you go to pass a restaurant, look at the menu. Translate 5 of the dishes to English."

If the users of this book were living in the U.S., all the menus they encountered would be in English. There are many examples throughout the book that show it was not designed for learners needing to learn English for life in America.

As previously stated, the book is corpus-based and does include the grammar of spoken English; it gives the reader phrases and vocabulary that are most common in American English conversation. For example, in the first unit on p. 3, the book provides the learner with the most common adverbs used in conversation based on corpus data. They include *quickly, easily, differently, automatically, slowly, properly, badly, strongly,* and *carefully*. Information such as this is valuable in assisting students in both being able to comprehend and produce the language with more native-like fluency. Corpus information is distributed continually throughout the text and refers most frequently to commonalties in conversation. In unit 4 on p. 39, it states, in reference to conversations, "Exactly, definitely, and absolutely are in the top 600 words." For students who are primarily interested in increased speaking, listening, and conversation skills, this information is useful and represents the language and how works in spoken form.

Authentic materials are incorporated in the textbook. The authors have included texts from newspapers, magazines, and the internet; actual blogs as well as authentic email communication have been provided with their sources. The textbook does encourage interactive activities. Pair and group work are incorporated throughout the text. However, this book is not designed specifically for adult ELLs in the United States and therefore does not encourage interactive activities based on situations commonly encountered by that group of learners. Though students in the U.S. would benefit and

enjoy many of the topics and activities highlighted therein, the book is missing situations

that are commonly encountered living in the U.S., which adult ELLs in the community

college setting need exposure to.

Included with this text is an audio CD for listening purposes. It features the

conversations that are included in the *Conversation Strategy* section from each unit. The

conversations are based on real-life language, which has been collected from corpus data,

and focus on strategies to utilize in conversation with speakers of North American

English. However, the conversations are scripted and the speakers speak slowly and with

exaggerated articulation. Because these conversations and strategies have been created

based on corpus data, they are still far more beneficial than any of the ones offered

through the other textbooks that have been evaluated. The strategies provided are

beneficial to any learner of American English. For example, the conversation highlighted

in unit 3 exemplifies strategies for being a supportive listener. Data from the corpus

revealed that speakers of North American English use the short responses *really* and *sure*

to agree and be supportive listeners. A conversation has been created featuring this

strategy. Another unit features speakers using short questions to keep the conversation

going, one unit focuses on giving opinions and provides the most frequently used

phrases; each unit's *Conversation Strategy* segment provides useful skills for maintaining

conversations with native and fluent speakers of North American English. Learners

would benefit even more if the actual, original conversations from the corpus were

provided for listening purposes, not just conversations created based on real data. For

adult ELLs in the U.S., the more classroom exposure they have to native speakers

speaking within real contexts, the more success they will have outside of the classroom listening to and producing that language.

Listening, speaking and pronunciation skills are incorporated into this textbook. As discussed above, the text offers a variety of speaking strategies that are used by speakers of North American English. There is a *Speaking naturally* section in each unit that works on natural pronunciation and intonation common to speakers of North American English. Though the book does offer specific cognitive strategies for speaking American English, it does not provide strategy instruction in the metacognitive or social domain. As stated in the evaluation of the previous textbooks, students would benefit from explicit strategy instruction in these areas. The interactive activities do give them an opportunity to enhance social strategies, but candid attention to these strategies is a must.

Finally, as previously mentioned this textbook series was not designed specifically for adult ELLs living and working in the U.S. and therefore the topics and content provided are not as relevant to this population as they would be if the book was designed for them. The topics are interesting and much of the content revolves around speaking strategies specific to speakers of North American English. The corpus data this series is based on exposes learners to the most frequent phrases and strategies actually used by native and fluent speakers of American English. Considering the emphasis on conversation skills and the importance of such skills as revealed by the learners of this study, this book would be beneficial for adult ELLs in the U.S. Additionally, if the topics and situations highlighted in the series were constructed specifically for the needs of that population, the book would be a more effective tool for them. Further, the audio CD

should contain original, authentic, unscripted conversations; in other words, the original sound files of native and fluent speakers' conversations should be provided for listening purposes to begin training the learners' ears for the language they will hear in their day to day lives. With technological advancements, such as with the DIT*Call* project, sound files of native speakers could be provided that allow learners to slow down, speed up, and read a transcription along with audio sound files.

Summary

Upon completing the textbook evaluations, the researcher determined, as the teacher and program administrators revealed in their interviews, that there is no one series that is capable of meeting the needs of adult ELLs in the U.S. The textbook that all of the programs claimed to use, *Side by Side*, lacks the most in meeting the needs of the learners of this study. The *Step Forward* series, being the only one designed specifically for adult ELLs in the U.S., offered a lot of positive aspects for this group of learners and if it was created using a corpus, as the *Touchstone* series was, it would meet their needs. The *Interchange* series also offered positive aspects for adult ELLs in the U.S. but was not designed specifically for that population and, therefore, the topics and content were not always relevant for that population. Further, the book was not created using a corpus-based approach as *Touchstone* was. The *Touchstone* series provided the learners with valuable conversation strategies and the most frequently used phrases in North American English, but since it was not geared toward adult ELLs in the U.S. it did not have the most relevant and useful topics for that group of learners. The researcher concluded that a series which combined the topics, content, and activities provided through the *Step*

Forward series with the corpus data and components of the *Touchstone* series and

included an audio CD featuring original, authentic conversations for listening would most

greatly aid adult ELLs in meeting their English language needs and goals for success in

the U.S.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The results of this study provided much insight to the language and social needs of adult ELLs in the community college setting. Administrators and teachers alike expressed the need for learners to improve oral communication skills for success within their communities. Learners wanted to improve listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills for greater ease and success in their communities. Interactive activities and the use of authenticity have proven beneficial in meeting the learners' needs in both the research conducted for the review of literature and the responses from the participants of this study. However, as pointed out by administrators and teachers, teaching materials currently used in the participating programs lack the qualities needed to aid teachers in enhancing learner proficiency. Teachers are forced to piece materials together and bring in outside sources for authenticity. As found in the textbook evaluations, some teaching materials have positive aspects to offer this learner population, but there is not a one-stop source. There needs to be materials designed specifically for adult ELLs in the U.S., incorporating interactive activities and authenticity using a corpus-based approach.

The *Cambridge Corpus of Spoken North American English* is a valuable resource providing linguistic data concerning spoken and conversational English in the U.S. The corpus could be used to develop textbooks and teaching materials for ELLs that would meet their needs. These learners' needs would further be met from more exposure to native English speakers while in the classroom. Technology has allowed for the advancement of recording equipment and computer programs that can be used to create

audio and video to accompany textbooks and teaching materials that would further promote speaking, listening, and pronunciation skills in this population.

Discussion of Corpora for Language Teaching

The *Cambridge Corpus of Spoken North American English,* which contains conversations, was compiled in the U.S. for the purpose of studying American English. The conversations represent the language that these learners will encounter everyday in their communities. The files in the corpus provide the transcripts of the conversations and information about the conversations including background of speakers, context of conversations, and speech acts featured in the conversations.

Speakers featured in the corpus are from different regions of the U.S., exposing students to different dialects. Data for the corpus was collected in four different states, from each of the following regions: Southwest, Southeast, Northwest, and the Midwest. In addition to providing information about the locations of the conversations, the corpus also provides information about where the speakers are from. The corpus provides information about the speakers' educational backgrounds and their jobs as well. Since the speakers featured in this corpus come from a wide range of backgrounds, students are exposed to differing sources of spoken English language. Included in the corpus is also the closeness of relationship among the participants of each conversation, since status plays a role in the way people communicate. The closeness of relationship among participants, as found in the sub-corpus of 40 files that was created for this study, is as follows:

1-Close family, very close friend

2-Friends, wider family circle

3-Colleagues of more or less equal status

4-Aquaintances

5-Stangers

6-Faculty/student

7-Boss/subordinate

The different contexts of conversation found in the sub-corpus are as follows:

- Just chatting
- Interview/professional advice
- Buying or selling goods or services
- In a teaching situation
- In a work situation, e.g. meeting, discussing work
- Engaged in a practical task (with information provided about what the speakers are doing)
- Other (with specifications)

All the speech acts featured in each conversation are provided as well. The speech acts found in the sub-corpus are listed below:

- Advising
- Announcing
- Apologizing

- Buying/Selling

- Complaining

- Discussing

- Enquiring

- Explaining

- Giving Instructions

- Inviting

- Making arrangements

- Meeting someone

- Reminiscing

- Requesting

- Telling anecdotes

- Telling jokes

- Other

Depending on when, where, and with whom a particular conversation takes place, different speaking and listening strategies should be employed. For example, listening to speakers at a city council meeting and understanding when to interject and participate is different than chatting casually with friends or communicating within a service encounter. Having authentic examples of these situations and being able to understand how native and fluent speakers communicate within them can provide ELLs with the knowledge and awareness they need to develop strategies for interacting in these situations outside the classroom. The details included within each file of the *Cambridge Corpus of Spoken North American English* provide enough information about the

conversations to provide learners with contexts so that activities could be created to aid in increasing listening and speaking strategies and skills based on different situations; being able to actually listen to the sound files would aid in strengthening those skills even more. There are online corpora that can be utilized for spoken language and provide sound files for listening such as MICASE, TalkBank, and the Santa Barbara Corpus of English. COCA can also be consulted for discovering and teaching nuances of spoken language, but no sound files are provided.

Reppen (2010) highlights general guidelines for using online corpora to develop activities:

Checklist for developing activities with online corpora

- Have a clear idea of the point you want to teach.
- Select the corpus that is the best resource for your lesson.
- Explore the corpus completely for the point you want to teach.
- Make sure that your directions are complete and easy to follow.
- Make sure that examples focus on the point that you are teaching.
- Provide a variety of ways for interacting with the materials.
- Use a variety of exercise types.
- If you are using computers, *always* have an alternative plan or activity in the event of computer glitches (p. 43).

Further, Reppen (2010) gives guidance navigating and using several online corpora and offers suggestions for classroom activities. The corpora include MICASE, COCA and the *Time* Magazine corpus, where 100 million words from the magazine are divided by decade. The websites of the corpora offer explanations of how use them as well, but the example activities that Reppen (2010) offers give the corpora function for language

teaching. In an example activity using the MICASE corpus for teaching spoken language, it instructs to search the corpus by speech event for the word *well*; the search will provide the speech event title, the matches for the word searched, the total word count of the transcript file, and the normed count or frequency/10,000 words, which allows text of unequal length to be compared. This information is provided in a table that allows you to click on the transcript file for a particular speech event. Students can then go the text and see how the word *well* is being used in that speech event; for example, it could be used as discourse marker, a filler, or an adverb. This activity can be insightful in seeing if there are common characteristics in the use of *well* across texts. There are many activities that could be created with any given sound file, but the MICASE corpus, in particular, focuses on academic English and is therefore, more suitable for advanced ELLs in academic pursuit.

Provided below is a transcript that is included in Biber, Conrad, and Reppen (1998) and comes from a corpus, the text features a formal conversation (an interview). Three participants are included. Suggestions for activities follow.

B: come in. come in - - ah good morning

A: good morning

B: you're Mrs Finney

A: yes I am

B: how are you – my names Hart and this is Mr Mortlake

C: how are you

A: how do you do .

B: won't you sit down

A: thank you - -

B: mm well you are proposing . taking on . quite something Mrs Finney aren't you

A: yes I am

B: mm

A: I should like to anyhow

B: you know what you'd be going into

A: yes I do (p. 150)

An activity that could be done with this text is to have three students read it aloud. The first time have the rest of the class simply listen. Have the students read it a second time, asking the other students to listen and count how many questions they hear in the conversation. Explain to students that questions are frequent in face-to-face interactions. Group the students in the class off in pairs or small groups and have them create their own conversation with a similar structure. Have each group present their conversation to the class. This type of activity is interactive, giving students the opportunity to practice speaking and listening skills in a comfortable environment, and represents an authentic situation adult ELLs in the U.S. are likely to encounter. The conversation featured above also demonstrated politeness strategies used by native speakers and an activity could be created with that as the premise. If there was a sound file included with this transcript, learners would have exposure to the stress and intonation associated with this conversation and listening and pronunciation exercises could be created as well.

The learners of this study would benefit if the actual sound files were provided in the teaching materials. Not only a textbook could be designed specifically for this population, but a computer program to accompany a textbook that features the transcripts and the sound files, which could be slowed down while reading the transcripts. Transcripts can be studied to understand how and why spoken language changes according to the context in which it being used; this information can be incorporated into textbooks and teaching materials, as it is in the *Touchstone* series. Furthermore, if the students were able to listen to actual examples of speakers and not scripted versions, it would train them for comprehending and producing the language in the target community. For adult ELLs in the U.S., who are constantly exposed to native speakers, this is essential.

There are corpora available online that feature natural speech for listening. However, the ones that feature spoken language in situations the learners of this study will encounter, such as CANCODE, the Santa Barbara corpus of English, and TalkBank, are difficult to access. MICASE is accessible, offers sound files and transcriptions, and is a great source for teaching EAP, but that is not the type of English the learners of this study are interested in. All of the above are valuable sources that can be used for ELT, but they are sources that teachers have to spend extra time locating and creating activities for. Many teachers are unaware of these sources and further, unsure how to use them in the language classroom.

The teacher resource books, *Using Corpora in the Language Classroom* (Reppen, 2010) and *Using Corpora in the Language Learning Classroom* (Bennett, 2010) aid

educators in using corpora for language teaching and provide example activities. They are both valuable resources. The ideas and activities provided could be made more readily available in teaching materials designed for adult ELLs in the U.S. Both teacher resource books and student books could provide examples of how to locate corpora and use them to answer questions about language use. Furthermore, teaching materials could offer suggestions and ideas for using the contents of online corpora as a springboard for interactive activities.

Limitations

The size of the participant population was a limitation. The participant population was small in comparison to other studies conducted with the same population of learners (Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Zachry et al., 2007; Chisman, 2008). The three textbooks evaluated were also a limitation; the three textbooks that were commonly used among the participating institutions of this study may not be common across all institutions in the U.S. Furthermore, the textbooks could not be evaluated in terms of their full capabilities. In order for a thorough evaluation to take place, the researcher would need to conduct a longitudinal study employing the textbooks in a teaching environment. For this type of research, a quantitative study would be most accurate with control groups. To truly measure the benefits of the corpus-based textbook, the same would need to occur.

Another limitation of this study is the absence of an in-depth analysis of the *Cambridge Corpus of Spoken North American English,* which is the only corpus currently being used to created teaching materials for ELLs learning North American

English in the U.S. An in-depth analysis could highlight specific aspects of the corpus that could be used to develop teaching materials for the learners of this study. More example activities highlighting additional aspects of native spoken English could be provided.

Recommendations for Future Research

Described above are areas that could be further researched in order to help build stronger teaching materials for the learners of this study. A longitudinal study, measuring learner outcomes with the use of different materials would provide a more accurate evaluation. An in-depth analysis of the *Cambridge Corpus of Spoken North American English*, including analysis of sound files, would further aid in understanding exactly how this corpus can be used to build teaching materials for adult ELLs in the U.S.

The research is specifically concerned with aiding adult ELLs in the U.S. in reaching higher levels of English proficiency by using corpus-based materials. Therefore, researchers interested in adult ELT in the community college setting in the U.S. or corpus-based materials could use this research as a catalyst for other studies. The first-hand data obtained in the interviews with administrators, teachers, and particularly students revealed the common interest of adult ELLs in increasing speaking and listening skills. The research of Campbell et al. (2007), who developed the DIT*CALL* program, allows students to listen to sound files from a corpus of native speech, control the speed of the sound files, while reading transcripts of the speech. The research of Adolphs and Carter (2007) as well as Ackerly and Coccetta (2007), both recognize the ability of technology to create multimodal corpora, which allows for the study of verbal and non-

verbal elements of natural language. Audio and video allows learners to study speech as well as the head nods and gestures that accompany backchanneling, which are communication strategies used by native speakers. For English language learners, who are primarily concerned with improving oral communication, the above research could be combined to revolutionize English language learning.

Conclusion

The *Cambridge Corpus of Spoken North American English* is currently being used to build teaching materials for adult ELLs worldwide. However, the corpus could and should be used to develop teaching materials for the learner population of this study. It features spoken English that takes place in all kinds of situations that adult ELLs living in the U.S. are likely to encounter. Further, it provides enough contextual information about the conversations and the speakers to aid in developing speaking and listening strategies for adult ELLs in the U.S.; the corpus reveals the grammar of spoken English associated with these situations, including common terminology as well as idioms used by native and fluent speakers. However, the original sound files need to be used in developing the audio CDs that accompany the textbooks. With technological advancements, interactive computer programs can be created featuring both the sound files and their transcriptions (Campbell et al., 2007). In addition, technology has allowed for the possibility of multimodal corpora, which exhibits gestures, facial expressions, proximity, intonation, and gaze- all of which are important factors in comprehending the language (Adolphs & Carter, 2007; Ackerly & Coccetta, 2007).

Learners need to hear and see native and fluent speakers engaging in the types of communicative situations that they will encounter in their daily lives. Activities and exercises can be created based on these situations. ELLs in the U.S. are surrounded by native and fluent speakers every day and would benefit from exposure in the classroom to the language they will encounter. Native and fluent speakers have fast speech and their speech varies greatly depending on the context in which it occurs. The more opportunity ELLs have to understand when and why these changes occur- to actually see and hear them happening- the more successful they will be communicating with native and fluent speakers in their communities.

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Appendix 1

Interview Questions for Program Administrators and Instructors

What do you perceive to be the needs, both language and social, of English Language

Learners in this program?

What have you found to be some of the greatest challenges and barriers in meeting those

needs?

What are some successful teaching approaches that you use in the classroom?

Do you feel that using authentic text, both written and spoken, aids in increased

proficiency with this group of learners?

From your experience, are there teaching materials that are available that facilitate the

needs of this specific population of students?

Is there any other information you would like to add related to this subject?

Appendix 2

Interview Questions for Target Learner Population

Where are you from?

How long have you lived in the United States?

How often do you use English?

What is the most difficult thing about learning and using English?

Do you have to use English for your job? Where do you work?

Do you use a textbook in this program? If so, is the information in the textbook useful to you? Can you give examples?

What is your weakest skill? Do you think you need this skill in order to survive?

What English language skill do you think is the most important?

What kinds of teaching activities work the best for you?

Why do you want to improve your English language skills?

What goal(s) do you wish to accomplish while in this program?

Are you able to attend class as often as you like?

What would you change or add to the program to make it better?

What types of teaching materials help you learn the best? CDs, books, computer programs, websites, etc.

Appendix 3

Textbook Evaluation Overview and Checklist

Title:

Author:

Publisher:

Intended Audience:

Components:

Subdivisions:

Overview of a Chapter or Unit:

Evaluation of Fit	Yes (a good fit)	Perhaps (an adequate fit)	Probably not (a poor fit)	Absolutely not (wrong curriculum, students, and/or teachers)
*has appropriate linguistic content				
*has appropriate thematic content				
*explanations understandable and usable for students				
*examples understandable and usable for students				
*activities appropriate for students				
*thematic content understandable and culturally appropriate				

for students				
*fits language skills of teachers				
*fits knowledge base of teachers				
*provides explanations that can be used by teachers				
*provides examples that can be used and expanded upon by teachers				
*should the text be selected?				

Appendix 4

Questionnaire: Textbook Evaluation

Is the textbook specifically designed for adult ELLs learning English and living in the U.S.?

Is this textbook created with a corpus-based approach?

Does the textbook teach spoken grammar?

Does this textbook attempt to incorporate authentic materials?

Does the textbook encourage interactive activities based on situations the students may realistically encounter? Explain.

Does the textbook include an audio CD for listening purposes? If so, are the recordings of authentic conversations or scripted?

Does the textbook incorporate speaking and listening skills, including pronunciation?

Does the textbook focus on strategy instruction for speaking and listening skills?

Are the topics and contents of the textbook relevant to the student and their needs?

Appendix 5: Consent Form

I _____, allow Courtney Cunningham, to interview and tape-record me for data in the Research Project, *Spoken Corpora: Building Teaching Materials for Adult English Language Learners*. This research will identify the specific needs of a target learner population, determine whether those needs are being met, and discover how to most effectively meet those needs. Investigating the above will aid in developing teaching materials designed to meet the specific needs of the learner population.

I understand that my name will not be used in the research and that confidentiality will be upheld.

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____