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Ахмедов Б.Э., Рахимова Ю.М., Гаппарова Д.А. Этические рассмотрения при проведении исследований с не носителями английского языка

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Ethical considerations in conducting research with non-
native speakers of English

В данной статье исследуется проблема неговорящих английского языка участников, которые были изучены с точки зрения критической теории в свете литературы по этике научных исследований в различных дисциплинах. Качественный запрос и анализ данных были использованы для определения ключевых тем, которые сосредоточены вокруг чести и уважения "голоса и исследователей участников воспринимаемых ограничений университетских исследований советов по этике (РЭП) для решения надлежащим образом свои проблемы при работе с не-носителями английского языка

Ключевые слова: спикер, рассмотрение, неродной, этика, дисциплина

This article researched the problem of nonnative English-speaking participants which were examined from a critical theory standpoint in the light of the literature on research ethics in various disciplines. Qualitative inquiry and data analysis were used to identify key themes, which centered around honor and respect for participants' voices and the researchers' perceived limitations of university research ethics boards (REBs) to address adequately their concerns when working with non-native English speakers

Key words: speaker, consideration, non-native, ethics, discipline

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Over the last 30 years, research into English-as-a-second-language (ESL) acquisition and instruction has expanded exponentially. As comprehensive and varied as much of the research in ESL is, little of what has been written addresses the ethical

considerations inherent in and raised by ESL research. In contrast, ethical considerations for research are being discussed in various other disciplines such as medicine and nursing (Edwards, Lilford, Thornton, & Hewison, 1998; Turale, 2006), psychology and psychological counseling (Fisher, 2004; Stuart, 1998; West, 2002), Aboriginal studies (Ellis & Earley, 2006; Piquemal, 2001), and anthropology (Gottlieb, 1997). By extension, therefore, it seems appropriate that ethical issues in ESL research should also be identified and examined, especially because much of the research in ESL is conducted by teacher-researchers and/ or researchers in countries where ethical concerns may not be addressed formally or by encompassing human rights legislation. However, even in countries such as Canada where all universities have research ethics boards (REBs), it is important to investigate whether the ethics protocols laid out by university REBs adequately address the needs of researchers working with participants who are non-native speakers of English.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the ethical concerns of researchers in the education faculty at a Canadian Prairie university whose participants are frequently non-native speakers of English and to consider these concerns in the light of the REB protocols in this university. Specifically, this study aimed to determine what ESL researchers considered the most salient ethical issues when conducting research with participants for whom English is not a first language—such as international students, newcomers or immigrants to Canada, and Aboriginal people—and to explore how researchers address these issues. This study also sought to investigate whether researchers felt that the ethical requirements laid out by the REB at this university sufficiently addressed the needs and concerns of education researchers working with non-native English-speaking participants [1.p.47]. The research question is: What are the main ethical concerns of researchers who conduct research with non-native speakers of English? Additional research questions include: How do researchers address these ethical concerns or issues in their own research? How sufficiently do REBs such as the education REB at this university address these concerns?

Background/Conceptual Framework

As comprehensive as much of the research in the field of ESL is, little in the literature addresses the nature of ESL research itself; specifically, little is being written on the ethical considerations inherent in and raised by ESL research. Although in Manitoba the term *English as an Additional Language* (EAL) is currently used to refer to students who are non-native speakers of English, I continue to use the term ESL in the parameters of this study as it is recognized both in Canada and internationally and has, therefore, broader conceptual uses. According to Gottlieb (1997), as we begin to "interrogate the foundations of the research endeavour, the more we discover that the issue is fraught with complexities" [3. p.127]. As Gottlieb suggests, it is not good enough to assume that all research, in this case, research with non-native speakers of English, is being conducted ethically, transparently, and unproblematically. Rather, by examining the beliefs and practices of researchers with non-native speakers of English, we can better understand the ethical issues involved.

To help pinpoint what the ethical considerations specific to research with non-native speakers of English might be, I briefly turn to a discussion of ethics in the larger domain of education research and across other disciplines. By no means exhaustive,

this list includes issues of informed consent, the use of language, respect for participants' voices, the relationship between researcher and participant, and the role of REBs. First to be considered is the notion of informed consent, which requires that participants fully understand the nature of the research being conducted as well as their role in and contribution to the research. Their involvement must be free and voluntary, and they must understand that withdrawal from the research is possible at any stage without penalty. Fisher (2004) outlines a set of criteria for establishing and maintaining informed consent, and although her guidelines pertain to clinical research involving children and adolescents, many of her suggestions are relevant to research involving non-native speakers of English. Of primary importance is that researchers "use language that is reasonably understandable to the learner" [2. p. 834]. But researchers' responsibility to ensure that participants fully understand what their involvement in the research entails is not limited solely to the use of appropriate language. Non-native language speakers may for cultural reasons feel that they cannot refuse a request to take part in research because they may perceive the researcher as being in a position of authority. The participants' own culture(s) thus come into play. It is arrogant to assume that the culture of the researcher or the culture in which the research takes place must take precedence. In considering research with North American Aboriginal populations, Piquemal (2001) argues that researchers frequently assume that participants are "able to give full permission in a communicative code that happens to belong to the researcher" [3.p.165]. So if the participant and the researcher belong to different cultures, it is possible that both ethics and the research process will mean something different to each. Participants who are non-native speakers of English sometimes come from cultures markedly different from those of researchers, so more may be needed on the part of the researcher to meet the participants' expectations.

Thus when considering ethical issues in research with non-native speakers of English, the role of the researcher needs to be considered. In discussing ethical issues in the field of anthropology, Gottlieb (1997) argues that "researchers, as human beings, are continually subject to emotional reactions to their research, and such reactions *must* be interrogated if the research endeavour is to be understood" [1.p. 8]. Researchers' emotions and values shape their research decisions, and if how this happens goes unquestioned, ethical concerns may be raised. Research is never value-free, and to assume that it is can be problematic. Researchers must position themselves in their work; they have an ethical responsibility to be up front about their values, beliefs, and biases in order to make research with non-native speakers of English more accountable.

In discussing accountability, it is natural to consider university REBs. But is satisfying REBs all that is ethically needed on the part of the researcher? Davison, Brown, and Moffat (2006) explore this question in their discussion of student researchers' experiences navigating through research review boards. In a study involving novice researchers working with northern Aboriginal communities, the writers found that new researchers encountered many difficulties in negotiating the sometimes conflicting agendas of university REBs and those of the communities in which they were conducting their research. They concluded that "ethics review should ... not exist as a procedural hurdle that is distanced from the reality of the research experience" [4,p.9]. In

discussing research in nursing, Stuart (1998) is more critical in her appraisal of REBs, asserting that they "are designed to protect the re-searcher and the institution from lawsuits" [4, p. 305]. Such concerns are magnified when the research is conducted with non-native speakers of English who are probably unfamiliar with such institutions and who may feel alienated from the dominant culture.

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