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Breaking The Silence For Long-Term English Learners With Risa Oral Interactions

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BREAKING THE SILENCE FOR LONG-TERM ENGLISH LEARNERS WITH RISA ORAL INTERACTIONS

by

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To my family for always encouraging me to be my best self and offering the love and support I need to grow and be challenged. Thank you to my husband, Todd, for making it possible for me to reach my dreams - I could not do it without your love. This is for all the past students I have ever had the pleasure of teaching and for all the future students I will have the pleasure of teaching; thank you for making my job the best job in the world. May you be the center of all things education.

"Until the lion tells his side of the story,
the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter."
African Proverb

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Marco was a "good student".[1] He always followed directions. He never misbehaved or disrupted the class. When it was time to work, he never had a question and got right to it. I believed it to be true and so did his classroom teacher. In fact, this was the case with the majority my English as a Second Language (ESL) students throughout my first three years of co-teaching ESL in fourth grade, in a large midwestern urban district. They were well behaved, on task, and hardworking, yet their state test scores, quarterly grades, and daily assessments and assignments were far behind grade level. They had been in the district receiving English Language instruction for five years, and still remained at the intermediate level for English Language Proficiency (ELP). After completing my first English Learner Shadowing Observation (Soto, 2012), I realized that "well-behaved" and "compliant" was synonymous to "disengaged" and "lost". These seemingly desirable student habits were actually inhibiting them from accessing content and engaging in meaningful interactions.

[1] The name Marco is a pseudonym as well as all subsequent names.

I spent four hours closely observing and shadowing six English Learners (ELs) in their fourth grade social studies lesson. Most of the students never spoke in the four hours I observed. The primary speaker was the teacher giving directions, modeling, paraphrasing, or redirecting behavior. When students spoke, it was usually the same five hands and they spoke one at a time. The ELs rarely rose a hand. When the students were not talking they were looking around the room, picking fingernails, playing with hair, or pulling the carpet. When it was time to return to work, they sat uncertain about how or where to begin. During group work, most other students took charge leaving little opportunity for participation for less aggressive students. Although "non-disruptive," these students continue to go unnoticed. This chapter introduces the common experience shared by ELs and the problematic nature of the lack of opportunity to speak and engage in learning with native and non-native speaking peers. It also provides context for the present study which introduces the social constructivist theories that drive my research.

Who are Long-Term English Learners?

The students I have described above are at risk of becoming Long-Term English Learners and will be referred to as LTELs throughout this paper. LTELs differ from other EL identifications: SLIFE, newcomers, and exited ELs. Typically, LTELS are second generation immigrants. Although they were born, or grew up in the U.S., they come from home where the family speaks a language other than English. Most began learning English in Kindergarten (Olsen, 2014). SLIFE are students with limited or interrupted formal education. This means that they may have never gone to school or missed a substantial amount of formal schooling due to war or similar circumstances. Although

SLIFE students share similar characteristics to LTELs, their historical narratives differ greatly. Newcomer students are those who are new to the country. Usually students maintain this label for no more than two years. Lastly, exited ELs are students who have demonstrated academic ELP for their grade level and no longer receive English Language Learner (ELL)[2] services.

There are many definitions of LTELs. Kim and Garcia (2014) define LTELs as students who have been attending schools in the U.S. for seven years but remain Limited English Proficient (LEP[3]) as defined by state language proficiency exams. A slightly different criterion is six years of schooling in the U.S. with little to no English growth and academic underachievement (Olsen, 2010). For Owen-Tittsworth, five years of schooling in the U.S. is the minimum (2013). Those at risk at becoming LTELs can be identified as early as the fourth grade because various linguistic research indicates it takes five to seven years to develop academic language proficiency (Olsen, 2010a). Generally, LTELs are students who are "stuck" at a moderate level of ELP. They struggle to reach a high level or native like English Language Proficiency, negatively impacting academic achievement.

Besides the years spent in U.S. schools, there are other important characteristics that LTELs share. The most relevant characteristics of LTELs to the present study are students who struggle academically. They are two to three grade levels behind in math and reading (Olsen, 2010). They lack academic language and background due to years of

[2] In this paper, EL will refer to the student and ELL will refer to the service, course, or programming that ELs receive.
[3] Although the researcher recognizes LEP is a deficit based term, it is also an educational policy term. To parallel federal documents and other research, LEP will continually used in this paper.

unlearned content. Their linguistic growth is slow or stagnant and usually remains around the intermediate level of ELP. These alarming characteristics are hidden by native-like social skills and self-identification as a "good student". LTELs are highly motivated and have high academic goals such as college yet do not realize the gaps in their education that exist (Kim, 2014; Olson, 2010). These definitions are important because, although the participants in the present study do not reach the minimum requirement for years in U.S. schools, they share the common characteristics described above that put them at risk for continued academic underachievement and stagnant English proficiency growth.

By identifying students at risk at becoming LTELs and adopting preventive strategies, teachers can decrease the number of students who fall into this category. The following sub-section will briefly review the theories that shed light on the problematic nature of the silence and disengagement that exists among LTELs and students at risk at becoming LTELs.

Social Constructivism: Interaction and Cognitive Development

This paper has been written through the lens of social constructivism because research suggests that learning, both in the content area and linguistically, happens through interactions and the co-construction of knowledge (Kagan, 1989; Long, 1985; Long, 1996; Swain, 1995; Swain, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978). Originating from Lev Vygotsky's (1978), hypothesis of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), knowledge is obtained through interaction of individuals:

> Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in

> cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement. (p. 90)

What students are unable to do alone, as long as the task is within their developmental range, they are able to practice or work out the task with another student. The practice, imitation, and cooperation with a peer becomes what the child can do independently. Thus, the child has exhibited a learned behavior. It is important to note that the learned behavior can happen not just through interaction with a master or a teacher, but learning also occurs through interaction with peers. This is important when students share the teacher with 25 plus peers. It is through this lens that the lack of opportunity to practice academic speech is of great concern; if the students are not speaking and interacting, the students are not learning. Using strategies built from social constructivist approaches will disrupt the silent trajectory of LTELs and increase language use and student learning.

RISA Oral Interactions

The social constructivist strategy that is used and tested in this research is Routine, Integrated, Structured, and Academic Oral Interactions, or RISA Oral Interactions. RISA Oral Interactions is a framework created by Jill Watson as a culturally responsive approach to teaching SLIFE (2015). It is routine because the treatment is frequent, occurring two to three times per week. It is integrated because the conversation is incorporated in the content learning. It is structured because the conversations are planned or even scripted, expectations are modeled, and groups are strategic. Finally, it is academic because content related language forms and functions are introduced and practiced within the interactions.

Although originally developed for SLIFE, many have found it to be effective for all ELs for the following reasons. Like LTELs, SLIFE are plagued by silence in the American classroom. SLIFE and LTELs both come from strong oral traditions. According to Watson, "instruction that uses only reading, writing, and the teacher talking dooms SLIFE to fail" (2015). To address this inequity, Watson developed RISA. I will be using this type of oral interaction to encourage academic talk among students.

Location and Participants

To complete the study, I will observe and interview students and teachers from the school where I work. World School (pseudonym) is a public school in an urban district in the Midwest. It has been identified as a "focus school" under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). According to US Department of Education, focus schools are Title 1 schools that have the largest achievement gaps between students of color and their Caucasian peers or the lowest academic growth of the lowest achieving group. Achievement is measured by state standardized tests. While many believe these standardized tests are not valuable tools to measure student achievement, I believe this identifier is helpful to understand the inequities LTELs face at World School.

World School is also a magnet school in the district because it is an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IBPYP).[4] IBPYP is a international framework for education. Schools must meet certain criteria to be considered an IB school. The mission of an IB school is for students to develop the skills to become lifelong learners

[4] The district is divided into zones. Families can enroll a student in any zone in the district. Each zone includes a community school, an immersion school, and a magnet schools. When students do not choose a school, they will end up at the school nearest to their homes. Magnet schools are schools that "attract" or "draw" students in. They include STEM schools, art schools, and IB schools.

who are internationally minded and make the world a more peaceful place. As a result of these characteristics, the school has attracted a wide variety of students, families, and staff. While 71% of the students receive free or reduced price lunches,[5] there are many affluent families who attend World School. This is important to know because ELs at World School have plenty of language models with whom they interact and also with whom they must compete to contribute to classroom discussions. World School is racially and linguistically diverse. Of the 630 students 1.6% identify as Native American, 40.5% identify as African or African American, 2.9% identify as Asian American, 30.2% identify as Hispanic, and 24.9% identify as White. For the 2015-2016 school year, we served 18 different home languages. In my three years at World School, I have taught speakers of Somali, Spanish, Arabic, Tibetan, Oromo, Portuguese, French, English Creoles, Hebrew and some indigenous languages spoken by small populations.

World School is in a city with a large number of immigrants due to the non-profits and many programs that host and support refugees. About 40% of the students at World School are identified as LEP and receive ELL services. Most of these students are second-generation immigrants, were born in the U.S. and have been attending American schools since kindergarten. ELL services at World School are dynamic. There is a high-density population of ELL students so there is an EL teacher at every grade level. The programming framework at World School aligns with content-based instruction (CBI) theory where language is taught through grade level subjects and curriculum. Students who are new to country, or score below a three

[5] Free and reduced lunch is often used to indicate poverty. This is determined by household size and income. Students in a household below a certain income can qualify for free or reduced priced lunches and breakfast.

(intermediate level) on the ACCESS proficiency exam,[6] receive 30 minutes of English Language Development (ELD) services daily outside of their mainstream classroom which consists of mainly basic vocabulary instruction and language needed to survive in school. Students who are above the intermediate level of ELP receive co-teaching instruction.

Co-teaching is implemented in a variety of ways. Teachers use station-teaching, parallel teaching, two lead teachers, one teach – one observe, push-in and small group work to meet the needs of the diverse learners. Relationships between co-teachers vary. Some teams implement it better than others. My experience with co-teaching has been very successful and I have been able to incorporate language instruction alongside content by working well and cooperating with my grade level team. Fourth grade is comprised of four homerooms. Every year, I have felt that I have been able to teach and assess language in order to meet the needs of the diverse learners through a variety of instructional strategies in almost all the classrooms.

The study takes place in a fourth grade classroom. The teacher whose classroom where the treatment will take place is a veteran teacher with over thirty years of experience working with diverse classrooms. This is the third year I have been co-teaching with the teacher. Last year in this classroom I implemented the EL Shadowing Protocol where I observed the quantity and quality student interactions. I also

[6] The ACCESS test is a state standardized test that determines English Language Proficiency of four language modalities: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Overall scores determine the level of language proficiency: entering, emerging, developing, expanding, bridging, and reaching. All students enrolled in the ELL program are required to take this test.

introduced RISA Oral Interactions in order to increase student interactions. She found the strategies to be effective and was therefore willing to expand and validate the process.

Background of the Researcher

I grew up in suburb outside of a major metropolitan area. I saw little diversity in my neighborhood and K-12 education. Most of my peers resembled myself: white, middle-class, and Christian. Despite this homogeneity, I was curious and open to different cultures, races, religions, and languages. Social justice had always been a core value of mine. Therefore, I always knew I wanted to become a teacher, but the subject of study was uncertain to me. Through volunteer experiences, I misunderstood ELL teaching to be basic phonics and spelling. In college, I originally pursued my ESL license as a supplement to my Spanish license. It wasn't until my senior year in college that I fully embraced ESL. After a month long practicum with recently arrived high school students, I learned of the expansiveness of ESL. Additionally, I felt excited about the opportunity to experience the world in my classroom. At this point, it was my interest in the students I taught rather than the content that attracted me to the career. For these reasons, I decided that a career in ESL would be a great fit.

Since the beginning of my teaching career, I always emphasized the speaking modality over and above reading, listening, and writing. Although oral language is a value that varies among the many cultures I teach, I believe that speaking proficiency is an important tool for self-advocacy. As I further my education, the emphasis I place in

fluent and extensive speech has increased due to the student-centered learning of the IB framework. Throughout my graduate work I have expanded my understanding of the vast research on social constructivist teaching and learning.

This research will be conducted in my fourth year teaching. Teaching is my first and only career and I have remained at the same school throughout my career. As a young teacher, I am consistently learning. Although I felt successful my first year, I look back now and know that I am far more effective than I was when I began. Nevertheless, my philosophy of teaching remains the same: I have always believed my role as an ESL teacher to be threefold: 1) language acquisition, 2) access to content, and 3) advocacy. Through my experience and furthering my education, I believe that my skills and knowledge to carry out these three roles have greatly strengthened.

It is the advocacy purpose where the EL Shadowing protocol emerged. In my first year, I immediately noticed the lack of opportunity in EL students' experience. Rarely were they the students chosen to share their ideas, participate or be models for the class. While working in small groups with me, it was evident that the student's had a strong desire to speak, participate, and be heard. A new personality, loud and confident, would be exposed in more intimate settings. I did everything I could to get the students involved in the learning, but I lacked strategies. Perhaps the best strategy I brought to my co-teachers was simple and different ways to get students engaged in academic discussions from Kagan Cooperative Grouping Strategies (1989). This was effective, but it was inconsistent and sporadic.

In my second year, I was much stronger in carrying out my role both as language and co-teacher. Although speaking and participation of the ESL students was in my mind, I did not formally bring this to the attention of my co-teachers until my third year. During my third year, the whole school seemed to be engaged in student-led learning. As an IB school, this has always been valued but this year we were really working hard to carry it out. My ELL team attended and led professional development workshops to bring strategies to encourage complex thinking and academic speech to the classrooms.

In a Professional Learning Community (PLC), my ELL team implemented the EL Shadowing Protocol (Soto, 2012) and shared the results with the school. We always knew that the EL students were quiet, but were shocked to see they were far beyond quiet – they were silent. My team leader also wanted to implement a strategy she learned from Jill Watson's presentation for SLIFE students at a state EL conference (2015). Jill Watson called her strategy RISA Oral Interactions. We successfully implemented these routine, integrated, structured, and academic oral interactions in various classrooms. The success of the RISA Oral Interaction groups is a pilot for my study. These organized cooperative learning groups were occurring frequently and even without the EL teacher present. Everyone seemed to believe in these structures and the power of student speech. Teachers felt that it was an effective strategy and students were engaged in the learning. I, too, was impressed to see the quality of language produced by low-proficient speakers and the learning that resulted. However, we lacked the empirical data to support what we have put into place. For this reason, and to strengthen advocacy for student speech and

participation in the classroom, I wish to provide empirical evidence for RISA oral interactions.

Guiding Question

The question that provides the basis for this research is: how do RISA Oral Interactions increase student engagement, participation, and academic language?

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the silent experience of LTEL students and how the lack of interaction with peers is problematic under social constructivist theories. I explained the unique setting of the students and teachers who participated in this study. The positive experiences of teachers in informal research and implementation of RISA Oral Interaction groups and the need for empirical data to support the claim that RISA Oral Interactions support academic language and engagement among students is the motivation behind the study. In this study, I am focusing on the academic oral interactions of three fourth grade LTELs in their mainstream classroom because I want to see how RISA Oral Interactions may increase the students' participation, engagement, and academic language use in order to create an awareness of the LTEL academic experience and encourage mainstream teachers to create more structured speaking opportunities.

Chapter Overviews

In Chapter One I introduced my research by establishing the purpose, significance and need for the study. The context of the study was briefly introduced as was the role,

assumptions and biases of the researcher. The background of the researcher was provided. In Chapter Two, I will provide a review of the literature relevant to the study. Areas to be reviewed are Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories that are involved in student-to-student interactions (social constructivism, interactionist hypothesis, comprehensible input, and focus on form), how language output leads to cognitive development, participation and engagement of LTELs, and recommendations for setting up cooperative learning groups in the classroom.

Chapter Three will outline the methodology and research design after which the experiment will be modeled. Chapter Four will present the data and results of this study. In Chapter Five, I will discuss and comment on the data collected. I will also reflect on the limitations of the study, implications for further research and recommendations for applications to the classroom.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to determine how RISA Oral Interaction groups increase participation, engagement, and academic language for the case of three Long-Term English Learners (LTELs). I wish to provide concrete evidence in my own research and in the review of the literature that these students would benefit from RISA Oral Interaction groups. This chapter provides an overview of several theories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) that are involved when students are interacting. Next, it analyzes previous studies on the connection between oral interactions and cognitive development. It includes a description of LTELs and their classroom experiences.

Research-based recommendations for setting up cooperative groups or structured oral interactions are addressed. Finally, the limits of current research is explained while the present study is justified.

Theories of Second Language Acquisitions

Although I have already indicated that this research has been developed with a social constructivist approach, it is important to give credit to other theories that may be positively contributing to linguistic development in the setting that has been created by RISA Oral Interactions. Other factors may be contributing to linguistic development and yield positive results. For example, when students interact, not only are they producing language but also receiving language. Another example in the present study is students were given sentence frames and vocabulary items to use. Finally, the language used is not in isolation; the goal is that students learn academic vocabulary through the content. The theories that support language learning from these described scenarios are comprehensible input (Krashen, 1980), focus on form (Long, 1998), and content-based instruction (Brinton, Snow, and Wesche, 1989).

Input Hypothesis

A very well known Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory is Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1980). This hypothesis encompasses five theories. I will focus on two of these theories that one could argue may be influencing SLA in student oral interactions. First is Krashen's theory of comprehensible input or i+1. Comprehensible input is a level of reading or listening that is slightly above the learner's current language proficiency (Krashen, 1980). Any input too simple or too complex will not result in

learning. For Krashen, there is no need for language output in the process of language learning. Krashen argues that what the learner can produce, output, is not the process of learning but it is evidence of the learning that has occurred. Language learning happens solely through comprehensible input.

Another component of the comprehensible input theory is the silent period. Many agree that students of a foreign language will not be able to produce language for a certain period of time. It can be up to six months before a student is able to produce oral language (Krashen, 1980). It is important to note that the theory of the silent period is very different from the silence of LTELs I mention earlier in the introduction. The "silent period" is a trait described for beginning language learners. Because one defining trait of LTELs is they have been learning English for five years, they should be far beyond a six month "silent period". The fact that many students who remain silent after a year of English services or, in the case of LTELs, five years of English services, reveals a shortcoming in these students' acquisition of a second language.

Other researchers have added to Krashen's theories. While Long (1996) agrees that comprehensible input is the primary means through which language is learned, he adds the interaction component to Krashen's comprehensible input theory. According to Long, through student interactions the participants must negotiate meaning to be understood. This process, known as negotiated meaning, results in language acquisition.

The next theory that may be involved in student interactions is the affective filter theory. This theory states that students learn language best when they are comfortable and

calm. Language learning cannot happen easily in a pressured, nervous environment (Krashen, 1980).

It is possible that what is claimed by these theories indeed contribute to language acquisition in cooperative learning groups or RISA Oral Interactions. First, when students are working together not only are they producing language but they are also hearing language. While some learners may have more advanced language than others, it is very likely that students are working with another student whose language level is slightly above, facilitating language learning. In order to be understood the speaker must adapt his or her language to the listener's level of comprehension, thus Krashen's comprehensible input theory naturally exists in peer interactions. Next, cooperative groups when they are routine, structured, and well taught create a safe and comfortable learning environment for students. It is in this environment, according to Krashen (1980), that language learning is best. These arguments do not prescribe oral interaction as the primary means of SLA; however, they do provide a rationale for the use of RISA Oral Interactions because RISA gives way to lowering the affective filter in small groups, encouraging students to negotiate meaning, and allowing for comprehensible input when interacting with peers.

Social Constructivism

In addition to Vygotsky's landmark contributions to the social constructivist approach, other researchers have contributed to this theory of learning. Vygotsky (1978) claims that learning occurs through interaction:

> Sociocultural [social constructivism] theory, then, puts language production in a "star role," so to speak. Speaking (and writing) are conceived of as cognitive tools—tools that mediate internalization; and that externalize internal psychological activity, resocializing, and recognizing it for the individual; tools that construct and deconstruct knowledge; and tools that regulate and are regulated by human agency. (p. 480)

While Vygotsky describes interactions not as evidence for learning but rather the means through which learning occurs, Swain terms this phenomenon as the "Output Hypothesis" (2005). The Output Hypothesis is a direct disagreement to Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1980). Unlike Krashen, Swain believes that language production facilitates second language learning (2005). Swain emphasizes that comprehensible output has been misunderstood as a product of what has been learned (2005). It is not a product, but rather an essential piece of the language learning process.

Swain reached her hypothesis through the results of her study of French speaking English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Swain observed 35 pairs of students performing an information gap activity. Each individual had different pictures of their story. Together, the pictures completed the story. Without sharing the pictures, the partners had to create the whole story together. Both the low- and high-proficiency students made statistically significant growth from the pre-test to the post-test on two specific grammar features of French. Swain found that the more often students spoke about the language they were attempting to acquire with their partner, the higher their post-test score were (1995).

Language Output and Cognitive Development

The arguments described in the above section support student oral interactions, yet they are highly theoretical. Based on these theories, various studies have been completed analyzing student interactions to the theoretical claim that there is a positive relationship between oral language development and Second Language Acquisition (Aria, 2011; National Literacy Panel, 2006; Babayigit, 2014; Jacobs et. al, 1996; Saunders and Goldenberg, 2007; Swain, 1995). However, more quantitative research is needed to strengthen the claim that oral language not only supplements SLA but also is necessary to learning language.

First, oral language development has been proven to be an essential link to literacy for ELLs (Babayigit, 2014; National Literacy Panel, 2006). In a comprehensive review of research on oral language development and literacy, the National Literacy Panel concludes that there is a positive correlation between literacy and oral language development (2006). The more proficient oral language a second language learner has, the more the learner can benefit from various literacy instructional strategies (National Literacy Panel, 2006, p.436). One study was identified as contributing oral language development to reading fluency (Jackson and Lu, 2002 through National Literacy Panel, 2006). More studies attribute better second language (L2) writing skills to developed oral language. Still, more research is needed to strengthen the claim that oral language development is a key factor in learning to read in a second language.

Perhaps the most thoroughly researched literacy skill in the L2 and oral language is comprehension. These studies repeatedly find that having strong L2 oral skills is

positively correlated with strong reading comprehension (Babayigit, 2014; Goldenberg and Saunders, 2013; National Literacy Panel, 2006). A recent study by Babayigit not only came to these conclusions, but also found that oral language, even more than word reading, is the strongest predictor of reading comprehension levels (2014). When comparing across proficiency levels, Saunders and Goldenberg (2013) also found that academic conversations aided in reading comprehension for high and mid level language learners. Lacking in oral language development puts ELLs at a deficit for reading: "The findings provided further support for previous results that the weaknesses in English oral language skills underlie the L2 disadvantage in reading comprehension" (Babayigit, 2014, p.539). This is alarming because it is widely agreed that by the time students reach middle school, reading is the primary means through which students access content.

Most research on oral language and learning analyze the correlation between literacy and oral language proficiency. There is significant and vast, yet outdated research that attributes oral interactions from cooperative learning efforts to cognitive growth among students (Allen and Feldman, 1973; Durling and Schick, 1976; Johnson, 1971; Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson, and Skon, 1981; Johnson, Johnson, Roy and Zaidman, 1986; Yager, Johnson and Johnson, 1985). Consistent with the recent research reviewed below, Johnson et. al's 1981 meta analysis of 286 studies found that cooperation, students working together toward a common goal, led to more academic achievement than competition, students competing against one another. Competition among students led to more academic achievement than individualistic effort, students

working alone not cooperating or competing (pp. 50 - 51). Johnson and Johnson (1989) explains this phenomenon being a result of oral interactions for both speaker and listener:

> The giver benefits from the cognitive organizing and processing, higher level reasoning insights and personal commitment to achieving the group's goals derived from an oral explanation, elaboration, and summarizing information and teachings one's knowledge to others. The receiver benefits from the opportunity to utilize others resources in their goal accomplishment efforts. (p. 65)

The result for both students is better retention of the learned material.

While Johnson et. al (1981) contributed greatly to our understanding of the positive connection between oral interaction and cognitive development, there is very little up-to-date research that oral language proficiency attributes to cognitive development. In the qualitative study that was the basis the Output Hypothesis, Swain found that the more often students spoke about the language they were attempting to acquire with a partner the better they acquired language. Thirty-five pairs of students participated in a cooperative grouping structure. Each individual had different pictures of a story. Together, the pictures completed the story. Without sharing the pictures visually the partners had to create the whole story together. Both low and high students made statistically significant growth from the pre-test to the post-test on two specific grammar features of French (Swain, 1995).

Learning in cooperative groups attributes to not only language but also academic learning (Aria, 2011; Jacobs et. al, 1996). In addition to vocabulary and grammar, Jacobs et. al found students working in cooperative groups also gained content knowledge

through interactions with peers on a task (1996). Aria (2011) specifically observed the impact of "challenges," a technique used to encourage discussion among students. Aria found challenges to be a positive learning experience for the students that resulted in complex academic conversations. Both researchers found that cooperative groups facilitate complex language.

The claim that interactions contribute to learning is weak because both studies use recordings of the conversations as evidence for learning. For example, Aria's data is merely the utterances students produce (2011) and Jacobs et. al tracked the number of language or content learning interactions. Quantitative studies using empirical methods would strengthen these findings

Many of the researchers identify a need for more research. Swain emphasizes the importance in continuing the studies and adding to the research. She even calls for more empirical research to deepen our understanding of what is occurring during interactions and the processes behind internalization of what is being externalized: "Within a sociocultural theory of mind framework, ethnographic and case study approaches would seem to be more valuable at this point in time, although there is certainly a place for experimental work" (2005, p. 481).

The Silence of LTELs

The experience of LTELs in schools is characterized by silence, disengagement, and passivity (Gibbons, 2002; Kim, 2014; Soto, 2012; Olsen, 2010; Owen-Tittsworth, 2013). Soto (2012) created an observation scheme to draw awareness of the LTEL experience. Teachers follow or "shadow" LTELs throughout their school day keeping

tally of their academic speech and interactions. In the case of a secondary student, Soto's (2012) EL Shadowing Protocol revealed that the LTEL was silent throughout four hours of Biology and Algebra instruction: he never spoke a word. In a study that involved 16 highly qualified teachers, the teachers agreed that EL students were "passively silent." Forty percent of those teachers were unaware of this silence until completing the EL Shadowing protocol (Owen Tittsworth, 2013). Additionally, Olsen (2010) notes that common characteristics of these students are "passivity", "non-engagement", and "invisibility". In fact, in several interviews Olsen illustrated the following descriptions of LTELs:

> "They are well-behaved, but they don't do the work."
>
> "They come in with their hoods over their head and put their head down on the desk — not causing trouble, trying to not call attention to themselves."
>
> "They try to stay under the radar."
>
> "They never talk; they don't do their work."
>
> "I have trouble getting them to be active in class." (Olsen, 2010, p.24)

As a result of these undisruptive yet passive behaviors, these students continue to move through the system unnoticed without reaching grade level expectations or academic language proficiency. They fall further and further behind, but the issue is not addressed.

All but one of the studies analyzing LTEL experiences involve secondary students. The studies are primarily qualitative and lack empirical evidence on practical tools to maintain language and academic growth for these students. Therefore, it is

necessary not only to add to the research on this particular group of students in different settings but also to expand the area of research to younger learners.

While many instructional strategies need to change to respond to the educational gaps experienced by LTELs, preventative measures are also needed at the elementary levels. According to Olsen, students at risk at becoming LTELs can be identified as early as fourth grade (2010). Among several recommendations for LTEL prevention is a program that develops oral academic language in students is the most prevalent (Gibbons, 2002; Olsen 2010; Soto, 2012).

Student to Student Interactions Compared to Teacher to Whole Group Interactions

There are two major parties involved in the teaching and learning process: students and teachers. When it comes to lesson delivery, I have found that classrooms can be set up in two ways: one that allows the teacher to be the primary speaker, or one where the teacher plays the role of facilitator and students are frequently interacting orally to make sense of the learning. Teaching that encourages student interaction and academic oral language is the recommendable style, especially for LTELs (Olsen, 2010). In theory, most educators believe that learning should be student centered. This does not show in practice.

An Argument Against Teacher to Whole Group

Gibbons (2002), Kagan (1989), and Long and Porter (1985) observed classrooms that are characterized by the teacher dominating the interactions. This style of teaching will be referred to as "teacher to whole group" throughout this paper. Long and Porter (1985) describe teacher to whole group as "lockstep" teaching:

> We know that the predominant mode of instruction is what might be termed the lockstep, in which one person (the teacher) sets the same instructional pace and content for everyone, by lecturing, explaining a grammar point, leading drill work, or asking questions of the whole class. (p. 208)

When the teacher is instructing the class on new learning, he or she narrates the process or lectures the students. Sometimes, the teacher may stop to ask a question. These questions tend to be close-ended and require little depth and elicit linguistically simple responses (Gibbons, 2002). Students are expected to respond by raising their hands and waiting their turn to speak. This format is high-risk and rewards the quickest and most confident students (Gibbons, 2002; Kagan, 1989). This style of teaching is termed differently by various researchers. For instance, Kagan calls it "Whole Class Question Answer" (1989). Likewise, Gibbons names such teacher and student interactions Initiation Response Evaluation or Initiation Response Feedback (IRE/IRF). Most of the time, this format does not allow the learner to deepen their understanding of the learning by justify and working out their thinking. It only pulls out simple, memorized facts and limits the extent of speech (Gibbons, 2002). Although there may be a place for this in the classroom, the majority of the learning should not be teacher focused. The alternative, cooperative learning groups in the form of RISA Oral Interaction groups, holds students accountable for learning and requires a higher linguistic load on its participants.

An Argument for Cooperative Groups

RISA Oral Interaction groups meet a majority of the recommendations Olsen makes to address the linguistic and academic gap developed among LTELs. In the

secondary setting, Olsen puts emphasis on the fact that literacy instruction is not equivalent to language instruction. LTELs need practice in all areas (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) of language modality (Olsen, 2010). Even oral language positively influences one's literacy development. In a recent publication, Olson (2014) identifies developing a strong oral language foundation throughout all subject areas in the elementary setting as a LTEL prevention strategy (p. 30).

Speaking and listening is practiced frequently in cooperative groups. Cooperative groups are defined as students working together to achieve a common goal or complete a task. In order for cooperative groups to be effective, all learners must be participating. It is essential to work together to reach the goal (Johnson and Johnson, 1989). It is well proven that learners talk more when working in cooperative groups compared to the traditional teacher to whole group instructional method described above (Gibbons, 2002; Kagan, 1989, Long and Porter, 1985; Swain, 2005). Swain (2005) and Long (1985) state several arguments for creating space for cooperative oral interactions. Both make note that the opportunity to practice speech and language greatly increases. In fact, Long (1985) calculates that in a traditional "lockstep" setting, students only receive 15 minutes of time to speak during a 50-minute period. In a class of 30 students, this would allow for 30 seconds per student, meaning one hour per year of student speech. If students were to work in cooperative groups or pairs for just half of the 15 minutes, individual student speech could increase to five and a half hours a year (Long, 1985, p.208). More space for talking allows for language growth.

Another need that cooperative grouping meets for LTELs is academic and linguistic rigor (Olsen, 2010). Not only does language output increase, but so does the quality of language when students are working together (Long, 1985; Gibbons, 2002). Gibbons also notes that most of the time, IRF or IRE does not allow the learner to deepen their understanding of the learning by justify and working out their thinking. It only pulls out simple, memorized facts and limits the extent of speech (2002). With teacher prompted questions through lockstep, students respond with single words. In groups or pairs, students produce complex sentence and rationalize their thinking (Long, 1985). Additionally, some student interactions may result in gains in metalinguistic functions. Swain has observed that, "using language to reflect on language produced by others or the self, mediates second language learning" (2005, p. 478). The more students talk, the more language they practice and internalize.

Motivation is another benefit of cooperative groups (Long, 1985; Swain, 2005). For Long and Swain, having to communicate orally to complete a task draws a learner's awareness to the language function and forms the student may be lacking to fully communicate his or her message. When a learner notices what he or she is lacking, he or she is more likely to work to learn it.

Another advantage of cooperative groups is that they give way to differentiation (Long, 1985). Different groups can be assigned tasks appropriate for the learners, or even within groups students can take on learner appropriate roles. Cooperative groups can be heterogeneous, allowing learners to work with others outside of their first language

groups. Native speakers play an important role in modeling academic language for non-native peers (Olsen, 2010).

Finally, cooperative groups also create a positive environment where participants feel comfortable to speak (Long, 1985). As a result, the affective filter of the classroom is lowered (Krashen, 1980). Positive school wide culture is yet another factor that contributes to achievement for LTELs (Olsen, 2010; Olsen, 2014). For the reasons described above, RISA Oral Interactions seem to encourage all students to participate and engage whereas teacher to whole group rewards very few learners and allows for most students to disengage and go unnoticed. RISA Oral Interaction groups initiate many of the changes needed in traditional classrooms to reduce the academic and linguistic gap of LTELs.

Beyond language development, the studies reviewed above indicate that there are many benefits to cooperative learning. In the present study, RISA Oral Interactions take on cooperation through conversation. While students work together to share and communicate learning RISA does not always include a cooperative task beyond conversation. Nevertheless, this information is valuable to support the rationale for any work that incorporates the interactions of peers.

A Rationale for Routine Integrated Structured Academic Oral Interaction Groups

There are many different ways to implement cooperative grouping in the classroom. RISA Oral Interactions, because it involves students working together to reach a common goal, can be considered a cooperative group. In this research, RISA Oral

Interactions will be the cooperative grouping strategy tested to encourage oral interactions in the classroom.

RISA Oral Interactions were originally created as an instructional strategy for SLIFE students. A common trait among SLIFE is that they come to the Western Education eystem with strong oral tradition as a means to their learning (Watson, 2016). This is opposed to literacy based learning to which they must now adapt in the United States. In order to bridge the gap between orality based education and literacy based education, Watson developed RISA Oral Interactions.

Legally, SLIFE students are identified after grade six. Nevertheless, many students come to US Schools prior to grade six and share all identifying features of SLIFE students with the exception of age. These characteristics include speaking a home language other than English, being two years behind in reading and math, and having limited schooling or less schooling than non-immigrant peers, pre-literate family background, and refugee experience (Watson, 2016). SLIFE and LTEL students share many characteristics and would benefit from similar instructional strategies like RISA Oral Interactions.

RISA Oral Interactions is a prescribed framework that is adaptable to any environment. RISA Oral Interactions should be used to process or practice information to which students have been exposed (Watson, 2016). It is not used to introduce new material. These interactions can occur as social conversations, as lesson reflections, in the perspective of mathematicians, scientists, or characters in literature.

Routine

Although adaptable, RISA Oral Interactions include essential elements. The first element of RISA Oral Interactions is the "R" for "routine". Watson requires RISA to be implemented at least three times a week lasting at least seven minutes (2016). Having routines, like RISA, is recommended best practice not only for ELLs but also for all students (Goldenberg, 2013). August and Shanahan in the National Literacy Panel (2006) explain that routinization of instructional strategies is one less factor for ELs to think about. After practicing a routine several time, students no longer need to focus on the implementation of the routine and can focus on the learning.

Integrated

The next element of RISA Oral Interactions is they are "integrated" (I) with the content objectives: "The information that your students are interacting about comes from the content of your lesson or unit" (Watson, 2016). The content should be appropriate for the academic and development levels of the students. Negative interactions have been observed between students in cooperative groups when the task was perceived to be too difficult (Jacobs et. al, 1996). For this reason, it is crucial that the task student interactions are age and developmentally appropriate or else the students become frustrated and disengage (Gibbons, 2002).

The content integration element of RISA fits well into ESL programs that use the CBI approach. Rather than teaching language in isolation, CBI contextualizes the language learning within the subject area. The language skills taught aids access to academic subject knowledge (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989). CBI is said to be effective because the language forms and functions are those that the learner will be

expected to use in the academic world of English, content-learning is interesting for the learners, it builds on both prior language and academic knowledge of the student, language serves the purpose of use not just to be studied, and finally, the language skills taught ensures comprehensible input of the content (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989, p. 3). For these reasons, many ESL programs use the CBI approach and RISA Oral Interactions is a good fit in the CBI classroom.

Structure

Simply giving students the time and space for oral interactions will not yield positive results. These interactions must also be structured (the S in RISA), and properly introduced and led by the teacher. While teachers dominate the conversation in teacher to whole group structures, teachers control the conversation in cooperative groups (Gibbons, 2002). In contrast to teacher to whole group instructional strategy, RISA Oral Interactions give way to equal participation, develop speaking and listening skills, hold students accountable, and lower learner affect. This is done through scripting cloze conversations with which the students will engage. The teacher must plan for the conversations and provide copies for each group (see Appendix F). Engaging LTELs as active participants is a major catalyst for language and academic growth (Olsen, 2010).

Structure is a crucial element to successfully implementing cooperative learning groups (Gibbons, 2002; Kagan 1989; Jacobs et. al., 1996; Soto, 2010). After observing and recording Cooperative Grouping in a sixth grade Social Studies class, Jacobs et. al. found 71 interactions nearly nine hours positively contributing to linguistic or academic development. Researchers believed linguistic development took place when the students

would give and receive help on difficult vocabulary and grammar in addition to academic aid (1996, p.264). Despite these positive results, Jacobs. et. al claim that the case under investigation could have been more effective, allowing for more linguistic growth and speech among the students, if the instructor had provided more structure.

Additionally, negative student interactions or missed opportunities occurred when students did not follow the roles assigned by the teacher (Jacobs et. al, 1996). Therefore, it is crucial that the instructor teaches group work, creates norms, models the group roles and provides frequent feedback (Gibbons, 2002; Soto, 2011). Other suggestions Gibbons (2002) makes include providing clear and explicit directions, creating tasks that require interaction and speech, urging participation by everyone, and finally giving students the right amount of time. Keeping in mind these suggestions, teachers can maximize the learning that takes place in RISA Oral Interaction groups.

Academic

The last essential element of RISA Oral Interactions is A for "academic". The interactions must use academic language and feature the language objective the instructor desires the students to acquire (Watson, 2016). Both Jacobs et. al (1996) and Gibbons (2002) emphasize the need for clear language and content objectives in cooperative groups. Jacobs et. al commented on the fact that the teacher in the classroom under observation did not set SLA as a clear goal for herself nor her classroom (1996, p. 275). Students in the experiment believed the main role in the cooperative grouping activities was simply to finish the task, not to learn the material. As a result, students did not benefit as much from the process of the conversation. Making sure to communicate oral

academic language proficiency as a goal to students may lead to more desirable outcomes.

RISA is effective for academic language learning because of its focus on form. The instructor can design the script so the learner can practice using the desired language skills. According to Long (1998), one way language forms are acquired is when the learner becomes aware of the repetitive use of vocabulary and grammar features of the language input (p. 24). Watson also has found this to be true among students who use the RISA strategy. Through repetition and practice, students will acquire academic forms and phrases in natural language (Watson, 2016).

The Gap

The reviewed literature reveals that it is widely agreed that student interaction is an important element for language and academic learning in the classroom. First, there are well-developed theoretical arguments to support student interaction in the classroom from significant linguistic experts like Vygotsky (1978), Swain (2005), and Long (1996). To expand on these arguments, a small number of researchers contributed with mainly qualitative studies (Aria, 2011; National Literacy Panel, 2006; Jacobs et. al, 1996). These studies describe the experience of students partaking in academic oral interactions. My investigation thus far has revealed that only one study (Swain, 1995) used empirical evidence to reveal that the more often students talked about a linguistic feature, the higher they scored on a post-test of that feature.While Johnson et. al's meta analysis includes vast research on positive academic outcomes from cooperative groups, this focus of this study is not ELs and it was completed nearly 40 years ago (1981).

The literature review presented above also draws attention to a growing and underserved group of learners within the ELL category: LTELs. It also well documented that these students are often defined by silence and disengagement and tend to go unnoticed throughout their K-12 schooling allowing them to reach graduation underprepared and underdeveloped in academic English (Gibbons, 2002; Kim, 2014; Olsen, 2010; Soto, 2012). LTELs have very little opportunity to produce and practice oral language (Owen-Tittsworth, 2013; Soto, 2012).

Many may agree that oral interaction is important. Personal experiences and much research have led many in the field of education to believe that cooperative grouping leads to high engagement and content mastery. The description and argument in favor of RISA Oral Interactions in the literature review could lead one to assume that many of the academic and linguistic gaps LTELs face can be addressed and prevented with social constructivist strategies. Nevertheless, there is no empirical evidence that directly connects structured speaking opportunities to increased language and content learning for LTELs. In fact, nearly all the research test the effects on structured speaking opportunities on mainstream students, not ELs. For this reason, the present study has been completed in order to address the need for research of practices that are successful for LTELs. To strengthen the theoretical and qualitative claims in support of social constructivist approach, a mixed methods approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods was implemented.

Research Questions

The question that provides the basis for this research is: how do RISA Oral Interactions increase student engagement, participation, and academic language?

In order to apply the previous findings to my own context, I will investigate the following:

- oral interactions and their effect on student engagement and participation
- students' perceptions of the traditional teacher to whole group style of reviewing content
- students' perceptions of RISA Oral Interaction groups groups and the effect on their learning
- teachers' perceptions of the traditional teacher to whole group style of reviewing content
- teachers' perceptions of RISA Oral Interaction groups and the effect on their learning

The findings of the present study can improve teaching and learning practices for ELLs at my school. Above all, I want to know if RISA Oral Interactions is an effective strategy to increase engagement and learning for those at risk of becoming LTELs.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature that provided background information that is key to understanding the present study. It also analyzed previous studies that influenced the research questions and methods for the present study. First, some of the second language acquisition theories that could be influencing language learning in RISA Oral Interactions were described. Next, I analyzed and summarized the previous research that

attributed student interaction to linguistic and cognitive development. After that, I included an illustration of the silent and passive experience of LTELs. Then, I described RISA Oral interactions and provided a rationale for its use. RISA Oral Interaction groups were proposed as a strategy to address the academic and linguistic gaps that LTELs experience. Finally, I discussed the gap that exists in current research of structured groups and student learning and I proposed research questions that will fill this gap.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This study is designed to reveal the classroom experiences and perceptions of students who are at risk of becoming LTELs, a trajectory of stagnant linguistic development and academic underachievement. The study will compare RISA Oral Interactions to teacher to whole group instruction cognitive development, as measured by field observations, student participation and engagement and interviews of participants. In this study I want to know: how do RISA Oral Interactions increase student engagement, participation, and academic language proficiency; and how do students and teachers perceive RISA Oral Interactions compared to teacher to whole group instructional style.

To answer the above question, I will use an observation scheme called "Shadowing Protocol" created by Soto (2012) and further adapted by a leader in the district's Multilingual Department, Lynn Harper (2014) (See Appendix A for the observation scheme template). "Shadowing Protocol" tracks student and teacher interactions over two class periods. The protocol will reveal how often students participate and the level of engagement in a lesson with and without the RISA Oral Interaction groups. The observation scheme provides both quantitative and qualitative

data. Next, semi-structured interviews asking participants to reflect on the treatment as compared to traditional teacher to whole group lesson will be conducted. The interviews will reveal teacher and student perception of academic language usage and student learning with and without the RISA Oral Interaction groups. Participants will also speak to the perceived levels of student engagement and participation with and without the RISA Oral Interaction groups.

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter describes the methodologies used in this study. First, a justification and description of the mixed methods design is presented. Both qualitative and quantitative paradigms are defined. Next, the research question is presented as a case study. Under this study, two different data collection protocols are described: pre and post observation scheme and simulated recall semi-structured interviews.

After that, I describe the procedure used to carry out the study with detailed information about participants, materials, pre-test, treatment, and post-test. Finally, the data analysis protocol is described with an explanation of how I will keep the experiment valid and ethical.

Mixed Methods Research Paradigm

The type of research paradigm that will be used in the present study is a Mixed Methods approach of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Using a mixed methods approach is essential to the present study because it validates the data and provides an accurate representation of the phenomenon occurring in the classroom (Mackey and

Gass, 2016). Both quantitative and qualitative methods are essential to answering the research questions, ultimately creating a holistic understanding of the results.

Qualitative information will be gathered through observations and interviews to illustrate the experiences and perceptions of the participants. The results provide a rich description of the students' learning experiences that cannot be achieved with quantitative results (Mackey and Gass, 2016). Additionally, gathering information in this way is preferred because the results should not be interpreted outside of the context as it has influence on the performance and behaviors of the participants (Mackey and Gass, 2016).

Next, because previous research on social constructivism is highly qualitative I wanted to add quantitative data to strengthen the social constructivist theory. The quantitative part of the study is also the observations. To determine the effect of RISA Oral Interactions I will use a pre/post-test design. In this design, I will conduct student observations prior to introducing the treatment: RISA Oral Interaction groups. After the treatment is introduced, I will conduct the same observations. The effect of the treatment will be revealed by the change of student participation and engagement with the treatment in place.

A mixed method approach is the best way to respond to the research questions of the present study. Triangulation of the data increases validity and generalizability (Mackey and Gass, 2016): two goals of the present study.

Methodology

Although, a mixed methods paradigm will be used with qualitative and quantitative measures, the research was carried out in the form of a case study. The context of the case is important to consider when interpreting the results. The quantitative and qualitative data collected provides a detailed description of the learner's experiences within their specific learning setting (Mackey and Gass, 2016).

Data Collection

Participants

World School is in a urban midwestern city with a large number of immigrants due to the non-profits and many programs that host and support refugees. About forty percent of the students at World School are identified as LEP and receive ELL services. Most of these students are second-generation immigrants, were born in the U.S. and have been attending American schools since kindergarten. ELL services at World School are dynamic. There is a high-density population of ELL students so there is an EL teacher at every grade level. Services reflect CBI theory where language is taught through grade level content and curriculum. Students who are new to country, or score below a three (intermediate level) on the ACCESS proficiency exam, receive 30 minutes of English Language Development (ELD) services daily outside of their mainstream classroom. Students who are above the intermediate level of ELP receive co-teaching services.

Co-teaching is implemented in a variety of ways. Teachers use station-teaching, parallel teaching, two lead teachers, one teach – one observe, push-in and small group work to meet the needs of the diverse learners. Relationships between co-teachers vary.

Some teams implement it better than others. My experience with co-teaching has been very successful and I have been able to incorporate language instruction alongside content by working well and cooperating with my grade level team. Fourth grade is comprised of four homerooms. Every year, I have felt that I have been able to teach and assess language in order to meet the needs of the diverse learners through a variety of instructional strategies in almost all the classrooms.

The teacher whose classroom where the treatment will take place is a veteran teacher with over thirty years of experience in a diverse setting. This is the second year I have been co-teaching with the teacher. The previous year in this classroom I implemented the EL Shadowing Protocol and routine, structured oral interaction groups. These interaction groups were modeled after RISA Oral Interaction strategy (Watson, 2016). We both found the strategies to be effective and were therefore willing to expand and validate the process. In the classroom, the students are accustomed to my presence. I frequently lead teach, observe students, and issue formative assessments. As a result, I am confident that my presence will not be obtrusive nor alter their behaviors or language interactions in the responses.. My presence and actions in the classrooms will be nothing out of the ordinary for the students.

The participants in this study are three fourth grade students at risk at becoming LTELs and one fourth grade classroom teacher. The students are chosen based on criteria that would put them at risk at becoming LTELs according to the definitions explained in the Literature Review (Kim, 2014; Olsen, 2010; Owen-Tittsworth, 2013 Soto, 2012). The characteristics these students share with LTELs is they are two to three

grade levels behind as indicated by state test scores, reading levels, and teacher experience; they are at the intermediate level of ELP as determined by ACCESS testing and teacher progress monitoring; their parents immigrated to the United States but the students are natural-born citizens, they have been enrolled in U.S. schools since kindergarten; and finally, they participate little to none in classroom activities and discussion. The students will be chosen based on this criteria and willingness to participate.

The first student participant is Maria. Maria has been attending World School since Kindergarten. Her home language is Spanish and her family comes from Guatemala. She is shy, kind and respectful. She is always on task and takes a long time to complete her work. Because of her work habits and social maturity most teachers would not be concerned about Maria. Nevertheless, Maria is three grade levels behind in reading and math. Maria never raises her hand. She has shown very little to no academic English language growth between grade levels. Like most LTELs Maria spends her days going unnoticed.

Henry, a Spanish speaker, is similar to Maria because he is shy, kind and respectful. Henry never draws negative attention or any attention at all. While teachers are spending time responding to disruptive behaviors or other students asking for help, Henry is quietly sitting at his desk contemplating his work. Unlike Maria, Henry struggles more with his work assignments. He is often confused or unsure where to begin. As Henry gets older his academic language growth has significantly decreased. Henry's

uncertainty in the lessons has led a capable and interested student to fall behind grade level.

Aden is the final student participant. Unlike Henry and Maria, Aden gets more attention for his energetic behavior. Aden is friendly which contributes to his off-task tendencies. Although Aden is more easily noticed than Maria or Henry, Aden struggles to track the lessons. Many times, he needs redirection and he needs it in a small group. If Aden knows the expectation, he will produce high quality work. Most of the time class will go by and Aden will not have begun or completed the task. Aden is several grade levels behind in reading. Historically, he has shown very little academic English growth.

Ms. Mike is the teacher who agreed to participate in this study. Ms. Mike has carried out co-teaching well and is open to learning about and using strategies that are effective for ELLs. It is in her classroom where the student observations and interviews take place. Ms. Mike is a veteran teacher. Ms. Mike and I co-taught for three years. In our second year together, we used RISA Oral Interactions and found them to be an effective strategy to increase student engagement. Ms. Mike was asked to participate because of her willingness and interest in implementing shadowing and RISA Oral Interactions in her classrooms.

Ms. Honey is another teacher who has been using RISA Oral Interactions for the past two years. Ms. Honey is a young and effective teacher, who is passionate about language development. At the time of the interview, Ms. Honey had completed her second year teaching. Ms. Honey and I co-taught for two years. Ms. Honey's class did not participate in the study, but her class does use RISA Oral Interactions as a learning

strategy. Some field observations will take place in Ms. Honey's room. Ms. Honey was asked to participate to deepen the data and add another teacher perspective. Her interview questions compares RISA Oral Interactions with teacher to whole group instruction throughout the two years she had been using this strategy. Her responses offer a more general perspective.

Location/Setting

World School is a public school in an urban district in the Midwest. It is considered a "focus school" under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It is also a Magnet School in the district because it is an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme. As a result of these characteristics, the school has attracted a wide variety of students, families, and staff. While 71% of the students receive Free and Reduced Price Lunches, there are many affluent families who attend World School. World School is racially and linguistically diverse. Of the 630 students 1.6% identify as Native American, 40.5% identify as African or African American, 2.9% identify as Asian American, 30.2% identify as Hispanic, and 24.9% identify as White. For the 2015-2016 school year, we served 18 different home languages. In my three years at World School, I have taught speakers of Somali, Spanish, Tibet, French, Arabic, English Creoles, Hebrew, Portuguese, and some indigenous languages spoken by small populations.

About 40% of the students at World School are identified as LEP and receive ELL services. Most of these students are second-generation immigrants, were born in the U.S. and have been attending American schools since Kindergarten. Co-teaching is the

type of English instruction the students in this study receive. Both Ms. Honey and Ms. Mike are open to collaboration in order to teach academic language to the students. We have used station-teaching, parallel teaching, two lead teachers, one teach – one observe, push-in and small group work to meet the needs of the diverse learners.

Data Collection Method 1: EL Shadowing Protocol

First, an observation scheme, EL Shadowing Protocol created by Ivana Soto (2012) and further adapted by Lynn Harper (2014) will be used to capture student engagement and participation (See Appendix A). Over two lessons, interactions of the students observed in the classroom will be tracked. Beginning on minutes one, two, and three a different students will be observed. Every minute after the students are observed. For example, student A's interactions will be tracked on minutes one, three, seven, ten, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28 and 31. Using the protocol, student interactions are recorded as speaking, listening reading, writing, or off-task. The interactions are categorized as student speaking/listening to student/small group/whole class/teacher or teacher speaking to student/small group/whole class. Anecdotal notes are recorded and described what was happening in the classroom between intervals. The observation will be completed prior to and following the treatment. The results will reveal how RISA Oral Interactions increase student engagement and participation and decrease off-task behaviors.

Because I am a frequent presence in the class, observations will not interfere with instruction or impact student behavior. We have used one teach, one observe as a style of co-teaching before. This is also common in other classrooms at World School. Observations will help illustrate the unique experiences of the participants. The purpose

of the observation scheme is to provide unbiased quantitative data to reveal the number of instances students or teachers are speaking in a lesson (participation) and how student or teacher speech is related to off-task behavior (engagement). Off-task behaviors differ from disruptive behaviors because they go unnoticed. These behaviors include playing with clothing, picking at the carpet, and looking around the room. Although they do not interrupt the teaching, such behaviors are often paired with disengagement. Following a well-designed and previously used protocol is also beneficial because it allows generalization of the data and can be compared easily with other research that has used this method (Mackey and Gass, 2016).

Data Collection Method 2: Semi-Structured Interview

The next source of data is a simulated recall semi-structured interview. The students and the teacher's participating in the study will respond to interview questions in a stimulated recall. In a stimulated recall interview the participants watch videos of themselves and will be prompted to respond to questions about the videos (Mackey and Gass, 2016, p. 88). Traditional teacher to whole group lessons and structured oral interactions will be filmed. After viewing the videos participants will be asked to reflect on their experience as a learner or teacher in both types of instruction and compare the types of instruction. The interview will be semi-structured allowing for participants to expand upon their responses (See Appendix B). Participants will be asked to comment on perceptions of academic language use and student learning. The interviews will provide more evidence for student engagement and participation in the classroom with and

without the RISA Oral Interactions. It will also provide evidence for how RISA Oral Interactions increase academic language use and student learning.

Data Collection Method 3: Field Experience

The third and final data collection method is my personal experience and observations using RISA Oral Interaction groups to encourage academic conversation during lessons as opposed to the traditional style of lecturing with teacher to whole group to engage students in learning. This will include anecdotes and general noticings of the past two years of consistently implementing RISA Oral Interaction groups in five different fourth grade classrooms. I will highlight student growth, engagement, behaviors and teacher's use, feedback, and reflections. Each data collection method strengthens the present research with triangulation.

Procedure

Materials

The classroom will have a word wall with the academic vocabulary that students use in the both teacher to whole group instruction and RISA Oral Interaction lessons. When the treatment is introduced, visuals will be displayed with the rules and expectations for working in cooperative groups and sentence frames to guide the conversations. Some academic forms and functions may also be displayed to aid students in academic language growth. A camera will be used record the classroom. Blank copies of the observation scheme and materials (pen, pencil, paper) will be available to record the observations and interviews.

Treatment

The students will be introduced to the treatment by the experimenter and the classroom teacher. The treatment is modeled after Jill Watson's oral language development strategy called RISA Oral Interactions (2016). RISA Oral Interactions are routine, integrated, structured and academic language procedure that occur during a lesson to improve academic language proficiency. You will notice that the treatment follows those components: routine: the treatment is frequent; occurring two to three times per week; integrated: the conversation is incorporated in the content learning; structured: the conversations are planned or even scripted, expectations are modeled, and groups are strategic; and finally, academic: content related language forms and functions are introduced and practiced within the conversation. Under this criteria RISA Oral Interactions are flexible and moldable to reflect different settings and content lessons (Watson, 2016). These interactions can occur at various points of a lesson. They can occur among different age groups, subjects, and throughout the year. This is important because LTELs need to practice the unique academic language of all content areas (Olsen, 2010). I will describe exactly how RISA Oral Interactions will be implemented in this study.

Eight cooperative groups of three students will be created (See Appendix C). Each group has a letter to identify the group: Team A, Team B, Team C, Team D, Team E, Team F, Team G, and Team H. Within each group, every student has a number: one, two, or three. The students are heterogeneously grouped so each group has students representing three English proficiency levels: ELLs, native non-proficient speakers of

academic English, and proficient speakers of academic English. Students labeled number one are ELLs. Students labeled number two are non-proficient native speakers of English. Students labeled number three are proficient speakers of academic English. These groupings change depending on the class dynamic. Usually group one is low proficient non-native speakers of English, group two is high proficient non-native speakers of English, and group 3 is native speakers of English. However, the class under observation has a lower number of non-native speakers of English and a higher number of students who speak African American Vernacular English and are developing their academic English. Heterogeneous grouping is important so that students have models of native language and so that all groups have equal language abilities.

The numbers and letters are also important so I can use the "Numbered Heads" Cooperative Grouping Strategy from Spencer Kagan (1989). It increases the level of engagement and accountable Cooperative Grouping can have for students:

> If any student knows the answer, the ability of each student is increased, Individual accountability is also built in: all the helping is confined to the heads together step; students know that once a number is called each student is on his or her own. The high achievers share answers because they know their number might not be called and they want their team to do well. The lower achievers listen carefully because they know their number might be called. (Kagan, 1989, p. 13)

After students have conversations in small groups, I can ask all students with the number one, two, or three to respond to a question or share out their group's findings. This way,

all students have the opportunity to share whole group, have prepared responses, and I can differentiate the questions. For example, if number one students are middle proficiency level English I may ask them a question that requires justification in the response. If my number one students are very beginning level English, I may just ask a question that requires a simple yes or no response.

At the very least sentence frames or sentence starters and word walls will be available to aid the students in conversation (See Appendix D). Lesson reflections and reviews are completely scripted for the students (See Appendix F). This is to reduce the linguistic demand so that students will be able to direct their cognitive attention to accessing and communicating their content knowledge (National Literacy Panel, 2006; Watson, 2016). It also guarantees that all students are given equal opportunity to speak.

Upon introducing the cooperative groups, teachers will set and model the expectations for working with the group. The three rules are: 1. Take turns speaking. 2. Listen to the speaker. 3. Participate – each student must speak x times. During teacher talk time, or while the teacher introduces new content, students will sit in their groups. Whenever the teacher asks a question, it will be discussed among the small groups with sentence frames. Then the teacher will pose the same question to the class. The teacher can ask a student from each group to respond or can have students participate voluntarily. Another way students interact in RISA Oral Interaction groups will be using a script for lesson reflections lasting no more than ten minutes. Finally, students will participate in RISA Oral Interaction groups once a week for morning meeting. Each student will take turns sharing what they did over the weekend and three details about their weekend.

These conversations will occur in RISA Oral Interaction groups two to three times a week as a way to activate prior knowledge, participate in academic conversations, and reflect and review. The EL Shadowing Protocol observations will be conducted before the treatment and several weeks after the treatment.

Data Analysis

The study will use both qualitative and quantitative data to communicate the results. For the observation scheme, student speaking/listening to student/small group/whole class/teacher or teacher speaking to student/small group/whole class will be tallied and displayed on a graph. Pre-treatment and post-treatment will be collected on separate graphs and compared. Interview responses will be recorded and shared in the appendix. The most relevant responses will be included in Chapter 4. Finally, the researcher's field observations and experiences using RISA Oral Interactions will also be presented.

Limitations

Several limitations are possible throughout the experiment. I will reduce the possibility and effects of the limitations to the best of my ability when setting up the experiment and during the observations. Effects of the limitations will be strongly considered during the data collection and interpretation of the results. First, is considering how the students respond to the researcher's presence. Because I am a frequent presence in the classroom and have implemented many different types of oral interactions prior to this research, the students will be accustomed to my presence in the classroom and having to frequently interact with peers in an academic way. As a result, I am confident

that my presence will not be obtrusive nor alter their behaviors or language interactions in the responses. My presence and actions in the classroom will be nothing out of the ordinary for the students.

To reduce other limitations, it is important that I receive authentic and honest responses from the participants in the stimulated interview. The halo effect is when participants try to respond in a way they believe to be desired by the researcher (Mackey and Gass, 2016, p. 226). To reduce the halo effect, interview questions will remain open ended and prompts such as, "Tell me more," "Why do you say that?" will be used to encourage further explanation. I will also respond and question the participants neutrally.

The participants in the study will be receiving the same instructional techniques. In a whole group setting, each will receive the same type and amount of instruction. All students will be participating in RISA Oral Interaction groups and be grouped purposefully. My prior experience and pilot studies have shown that RISA Oral Interactions positively impact student learning and classroom environment so I am not concerned about negatively impacting the learning of the students. Unfortunately, I can not control what happens beyond the time I am in the room and whether or not it may influence the level of student interactions. I will encourage the teacher to use the groupings throughout the week.

Ethics

The study will employ the following safeguards to protect the participants' rights. Permission will be obtained in written form from the participating teachers and guardians of the students. Permission will also be obtained from the school district through a formal

and thorough appeal process. Observation and testing will occur within the student's homerooms. Instruction, testing, and observations are frequently used in the classroom beyond the research. These tools are used to better the experimenter's practice often and did not change instruction.

Student names will not be used in the data collection and analysis. Observation recordings and testing materials will be kept safely locked in a cabinet in a locked office. Participants and the researcher will be the only viewers of videos and recordings for the stimulated recall interviews. Electronic files will be stored on a computer with passwords to access the files. After analyzing the data, the materials will be properly destroyed and all evidence of student identifications.

Pseudonyms will be used in place of the participant and school names.
In any case that a participant indicates a threat of harm to his or herself it will reported to the social worker who will then report the case to child protection services.

I have considered and eliminated risks for the participants in this experiment. First, learner affect is a potential limitation. My observations will not draw consciousness to students of their infrequent speech. A safe place for speaking with RISA Oral Interaction grouping will reduce reduce learner affect. Essential agreements for working in cooperative groups will keep listeners respectful. Sentence stems and scripts will help initiate speech and ideas.

Some may also question replacing the traditional teacher to whole group style of teaching for the RISA Oral Interactions. However, research reveals that students need to be communicating to be learning. Additionally, our school has been implementing

strategies to increase student speech. It has been identified in the School Improvement Plan that we will be using this strategy to increase academic oral language. With evidence of language growth, more teachers will be willing to implement structured oral interactions that would implemented prior to the experience. I will be sure to utilize best instruction (which may include the structured oral interaction groups) for all students upon the conclusion of the study.

Conclusion

In this study I described the methods that I used. For the particular case of six at risk LTELs, a mixed method paradigm will be used. A definition of and a justification for using both qualitative and quantitative methods was provided. After, I introduced the participations and the setting where the study took place. Three different data collection methods were described. Next, there was a detailed description of the treatment so the experiment can be easily replicable. The data analysis and verification was explained. Finally, I explained how participants will be thoughtfully protected in this study. The next chapter will present the results of this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study took place in an urban elementary school in the Midwest. I shadowed, or closely observed, three fourth grade LTELs during two lessons using the EL Shadowing Protocol (Appendix A). I also gathered my own field experience and anecdotal evidence. Finally, I completed stimulated interviews with students and teachers. In this chapter, I will substantiate evidence to support my findings:

- RISA Oral Interactions increase student participation of LTELs
- RISA Oral Interactions increase student engagement of LTELs
- RISA Oral Interactions increase academic language use of LTELs

The triangulation of data is meant to strengthen my findings. The data gathered revealed that RISA Oral Interactions increase student participation and engagement of LTELs. It also revealed that RISA Oral Interactions may increase academic language use of LTELs. With these results, I hope to add to the research to support social constructivist pedagogical theories and emphasize the importance engaging students in academic conversation in the classroom.

RISA Oral Interactions Increase Student Participation

The field experience, student and teacher interviews, and the observation scheme all revealed that RISA Oral Interaction groups increased student participation in the lesson. Prior to implementing RISA Oral Interaction groups, I conducted observations

and recorded field experiences which include anecdotal and qualitative experiences. In the pre-treatment observation, students were participating in an introductory lesson to a geography unit. At this point the students were very much accustomed to participating in a lesson by using RISA Oral Interaction groups. For this lesson, the students did not use their RISA Oral Interaction groups. To gather interest, the teachers used google maps to zoom in on various landforms around the world (See Appendix E). First, teachers displayed fifteen different satellite maps. Students were asked to guess where in the world the satellite image was located. Students could write a city, province or state, country or continent. Sometimes, student's felt confident enough to record a city. Other times, students felt very uncertain and would only name a continent or the type of environment. Students recorded the location on a piece of paper. The teachers asked the student to remain silent while the satellite images were displayed and students were recording their responses.

After all satellite images were displayed, students were invited to share their predictions. One teacher controlled the computer while the other attempted to guide discussion. I had posted key geography vocabulary and sentence frames to aid the discussion (Appendix D). The vocabulary included words like: city, state, country, continent, body of water, lake, ocean, river, landform, plateau, mountains, forests, agriculture, landmarks, skyscraper, and monument. The sentence frame that encouraged students to speak in complete sentences and justify their thinking was, "I believe this is in _____ because I see _____." The students were excited about the lesson. I felt like participation was high, even without the RISA Oral Interaction groups.

In fact, it seemed as if there was too much participation: students were not waiting their turn to speak, interrupting one another, and shouting out responses. While I perceived that participation was high, this was not the case for the LTELs.

The numbers gathered from the observation scheme reveal that while I may have perceived high student participation, a lesson set up the way it was did not support the LTELs to participate. As described in the previous chapter, the quantitative method to gather evidence was Ivanna Soto's EL Shadowing Protocol. The data collected parallels the experience described above. The pre-treatment lesson, whole class lesson without RISA Oral Interaction groups, was used to gather data and lasted forty-five minutes. The three LTEL students: María, Aden, and Henry were observed during the geography lesson described above. Graph 1 and Table 1 located below shows all collected data. In the introduction lesson, only one instances of academic student speech was recorded over the forty-five minute lesson. This was Aden speaking to the teacher. The teachers spent the majority of the time speaking. Throughout the forty-five minutes seventeen instances of teacher to whole group speaking was recorded. Because the teacher spent the majority of the time speaking, the students spent the majority of the time listening. There were 16 total recorded instances of the three students listening. Three of these instances they were listening to another student sharing to the whole class. The other 14 instances they were listening to the teacher. Although I had perceived a great level of participation in this lesson, the observation scheme objectively contradicts this assumption. Once again, the LTELs lack of participation went unnoticed.

Graph 1: *Pre-Treatment EL Shadowing*

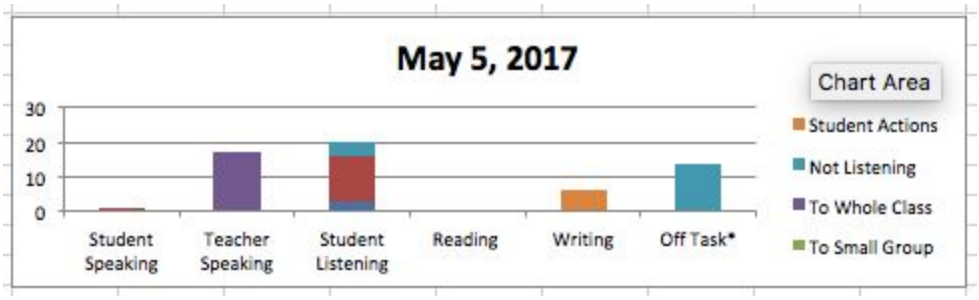

Table 1: *Pre-Treatment EL Shadowing*

	Student Speaking	Teacher Speaking	Student Listening	Reading	Writing	Off Task
To Student		0	3			
To Teacher	1	0	13			
To Small Group						
To Whole Class		17				
Not Listening			4			14
Student Actions				6		
Totals	1	17	20	6	0	14

After implementing the treatment (RISA Oral Interaction groups) for six weeks the EL Shadowing Protocol was implemented again. We concluded the unit with a similar lesson during the last week of school. This time we would be using RISA Oral Interaction groups. The satellite images were limited to the United States. Instead of naming any place (city, state, country or continent) the students were expected to name the region of the United States (West, Southwest, Midwest, Northeast, Southeast). I provided the students with the geography terms from the unit. The sentence frame was similar: "I think this is in the _____ region because I see/there is _____." (Appendix D) First, an image was displayed on the screen. Next, the students were given about 30 seconds to think and prepare their responses. Then, each student in the group shared what region they believed the satellite to show. If the student had a similar answer

to a classmate, it was allowed to merely repeat what their partner had said to encourage academic language output. After sharing, the teachers asked groups to share. Last, the teacher revealed the actual location.

The lesson was very similar, but it only lasted 25 minutes. In a lesson that was 20 minutes shorter, student speech greatly increased. Recorded data on the post-observation can be seen below in Graph 2 and Table 2. During the 25 minutes instances of academic student speech increased to eight. Of these nine instances, seven instances were conversations with a peer in the RISA Oral Interaction group, one instance was sharing whole group, and another instance was talking to the teacher. Aden was observed using academic speech five times, María four times, and Will was never observed using academic speech. The teachers spoke half as much, decreasing teacher speech to only eight instances. The structure of the lesson and using RISA Oral Interaction groups held all students accountable to participating.

Graph 2: *Post-Treatment EL Shadowing Protocol*

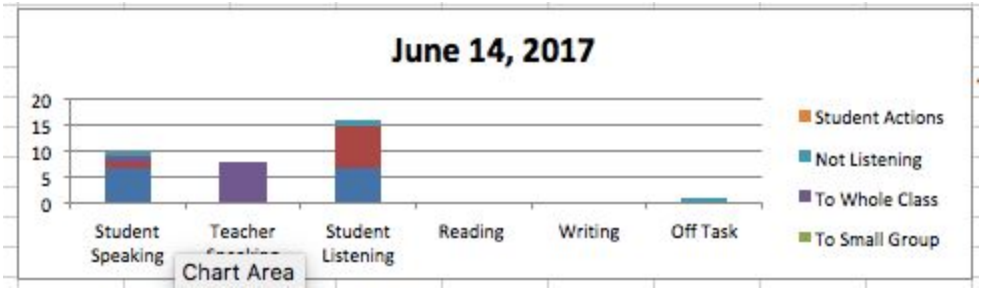

Table 2: *Post-Treatment EL Shadowing Protocol*

	Student Speaking	Teacher Speaking	Student Listening	Reading	Writing	Off Task
To Student	7	0	7			
To Teacher	1	0	8			
To Small Group		0				
To Whole Class	1	8				
Not Listening	1		1			1
Student Actions				0		
Totals	9	8	16	0	0	1

In my field experience, I also found that the same few students participate over and over again in lessons. Another way I frequently use RISA Oral Interaction groups is for lesson introductions. I first used RISA Oral Interaction groups as an introduction to a new unit. Very frequently, this classroom had used an activity called, "See, Think, Wonder" from Ritchhart et. al's *Making Thinking Visible* to get students interested in the upcoming unit. In this activity, engaging pictures are displayed for all to see. For each picture, students are asked in order: "What do you see? What do you think? What do you wonder?" Traditionally, this has either been a silent writing activity where students share out their responses at the end or a whole group activity where the teacher records the student responses. I found that the same students tend to share whole group again and again. The ESL students and especially the LTELs are silent. They rarely speak in front of the whole group.

Initially, I was apprehensive about using this activity with RISA groups. I was worried it would become too loud and students would engage in off-task conversations. This particular group of students especially had high needs when it came to structure and behavior management. Every student was in a group of three. I differentiated the groups just as it has been done in the current experiment. Students had to follow the same expectations: everyone takes turns speakings, everyone must speak at least two times per

round, and you must speak in complete sentences. After each picture was displayed, each student shared what they saw. Students turned, "I see _____." Next, students shared what they thought, "I think _____." Finally, students shared what they wondered, "I wonder _____."

Using this activity in RISA Oral Interaction groups was very successful. All students were speaking and everyone spoke at least twice per round. I was impressed with how much all the students had to say and how detailed their observations and how deep their wonderings became. Some students who never raise their hands to share their answers whole group had endless ideas. Some groups spoke for a whole minute straight! The room was alive with healthy, on-task, academic conversation.

Not only does the qualitative data and my field experiences reveal a significant increase in student participation as a result of implementing RISA Oral Interactions but teachers and students perceived this to be true too. Henry, Aden, and María all believed to be participating more in RISA. In response to the pre-treatment lesson where students were guessing where in the world the satellite image showed, Aden explained, "I don't like that only one person gets to answer the question because other people don't get to share their opinions" (Participant Interview, June 2017). Both María and Henry agreed with Aden. They said teacher to whole group was unfair. Henry added, "I am better off with RISA. I like it because instead of one person saying their perspective we get to say it to each other" (Participant Interview, June 2017). Perhaps the students are explained a sense of disempowerment they feel in the traditional style of teaching because only the most aggressive get their voices heard.

The teachers agreed that using RISA Oral Interactions groups increases student participation. Ms. Honey explained, "The only students who raise their hand are the ones that always respond to the teacher's prompts. There are fewer opportunities for others to speak" (Participant Interview, August 2017). Ms. Mike went even further to say that even those who always participate are limited in a teacher to whole group setting because you have to not call on the regular hand raisers to call on others but RISA Oral Interaction gives everyone the chance to share (Participant Interview, January 2018). Both teachers also alluded to the lack of fairness teacher to whole group creates. When asked if they felt that students are participating Ms. Honey responded, "Only a select few. It always seems to be the same students participating. Unless you cold call student but that generally makes them pretty uncomfortable" (Participant Interview, August 2017). Ms. Mike revealed the same conclusion in her interview: "Only the ones that think they know it all [participate]. The ones that just want to move on and get the answers out or think that they should have the right answers [participate]" (Participant Interview, January 2018). Ms. Mike and Ms. Honey agreed that the same few students participate in most lessons and many students do not participate. This is not beneficial for either type of student.

Where teacher to whole group limits student participation and creates an unfair environment, the teachers noticed that RISA Oral Interactions do the opposite. Both teachers mentioned that there is an equalizing factor when using RISA Oral Interactions. Ms. Honey explained, "It gets everybody the opportunity to speak. Especially students that would not otherwise get that chance in the traditional style. It is empowering because every student has a voice and more ideas are heard" (Participant Interview, August 2017).

Although RISA Oral Interactions may limit some students, both teachers believe that all students still benefit because the frequent responders need to work on their listening skills too.

The teachers interviewed believed that the structure of RISA Oral Interactions is what led to the increase of student participation. Ms. Honey explained:

> I believe students are participating more with the RISA style. I think that they are given a specific time to speak and the support of sentence frames helps them facilitate the expression of their thoughts and ideas. [...] RISA allows everyone to participate where the traditional style only has a select number of students participating a few times. I would add that RISA is more intentional because the groupings are so strategic. With teacher to whole group, it is just one at a time. But in RISA more students get to speak at once. (Participant Interview, August 2017)

Ms. Mike also mentioned that accountability increases with the structure of RISA: "More students participate in the RISA model. The expectations are the same for everyone in RISA. Everyone is expected to participate. That is not the case for whole group" (Participant Interview, January 2018). Having a set time for students to speak, strategic grouping of the students, using sentence frames or scripts, assigning which students are to speak, and teaching students how to take turns are all structural elements that increase student participation.

Ms. Mike noticed that the students who always speak are now more limited by RISA Oral Interactions, but she believed that these students greatly benefit from learning

how to listen to others and evaluate multiple perspectives. Ms. Mike also commented that sometimes a student will refuse to participate in either settings. She suggested that the intervention to increase that student's participation would be behavioral not academic (Participant Interview, January 2018). In both cases, those students who have been limited were not ELs and were not the LTELs in the study.

My own field experiences and anecdotal observations of using RISA Oral Interaction groups as an instructional strategy for the past two years led me to believe that student participation greatly increased. This was confirmed by the gathered data in the observation scheme. Students were found to be using academic speech eight more instances with RISA Oral Interactions groups while the lesson time was cut in half. Finally, all teachers and students interviewed in the present study agreed that RISA Oral Interaction Groups increase student participation.

RISA Oral Interactions Increase Student Engagement

The field experience, student and teacher interviews, and the observation scheme all revealed that RISA Oral Interaction groups increase student engagement in the learning. Repeatedly, it seems as if participation and engagement come together--when students are participating, they are engaged. Conversely, when students are not participating, they are disengaging.

Another way I have used RISA Oral Interaction groups is for lesson reflections. After science experiments, teachers gather the students to reflect on the learning and what concrete information the students should come out with after the experience. Originally, my co-teacher and I would guide a whole group discussion as recommended in our

science curriculum. Students raise their hand to speak and teachers may encourage deeper thinking or reach out to others for more conversation. Teachers record the student responses on an anchor chart. Once again, the same few students would respond to the teacher questions.

It seemed to me like the rest of the class was very disengaged. I speculated that very little learning was happening, especially for ESL students. To informally test the theory, I would ask some student privately some of the same questions that had occurred in the reflection. Although the teacher had already answered these questions in front of the whole group, there was no retention. Rarely could the ESL student repeat what the teacher explained that same day. I found myself reteaching and explaining to students one on one just so they could also retain the information.

To address the lack of learning in science reflections, I implemented RISA Oral Interactions. Ten minutes at the end of every science experiment students were expected to follow a script in their small group discussion the experiment hypothesis, procedure, and results (See Appendix F). Although we did not even provide students with the correct answers initially, now so many more students could accurately describe the learning that was to take place during the experiment.

In already engaging lessons, RISA Oral Interactions seemed to make the lesson even more effective. I found this to be true in the other lessons (pre-treatment and unit introductions) I recall for the field observations. In the pre-treatment observation, students were participating in an introductory lesson to a geography unit that I described

in the previous section. This was an engaging lesson but it was clear that RISA Oral Interaction increased engagement for all students and eliminated disengaged behaviors.

It was clear that the students were very excited with the lesson. Although the teachers stated that the students were to remain silent, every new image would result in an outburst of on and off-task comments. It was hard to get the students to calm down and follow the directions of recording their guesses. I felt that I was reminded the students to remain silent constantly. The constant reminders made me frustrated. The students were frustrated too. Blurting led to disengagement which led to frequent disruptions which led to disrespectful comments and student arguments. The room felt out of control. Only a small number of students were engaged in the learning most of the time.

We completed the lesson after 45 minutes. It was difficult to transition to the next activity. Not many students had understood the objective nor were they excited about the new unit. Having used RISA Oral Interaction groups so often in this classroom, this lesson felt unnatural for the teachers and students. I felt as if I were limiting the students always asking them to be silent. I knew that prohibiting speech was also prohibiting thinking, connections, and ways to comprehend the lesson.

We concluded the unit with a similar lesson during the last week of school. This time we would be using RISA Oral Interaction groups. The satellite images were limited to the United States. Instead of naming any place (city, state, country or continent) the students were expected to name the region of the United States (West, Southwest, Midwest, Northeast, Southeast). I provided the students with the geography terms from

the unit. The sentence frame was similar: “I think this is in the _____ region because I see/there is _____.” First, an image was displayed on the screen. Next, the students were given about 30 seconds to think and prepare their responses. Then, each student in the group shared what region they believed the satellite to show. If the student had a similar answer to a classmate, they were allowed to merely repeat what their partner had said. After sharing, the teachers asked groups to share. Last, the teacher revealed the actual location.

The last week of school is a very difficult time for behavior management. Students are anxious and disengaged. Many classrooms end the school year with games, movies, and art and crafts. It is rare to see lessons continue. Despite all this, I was very impressed with this final lesson the students participated in. Unlike the first lesson of this geography unit, the students followed the directions the first time. They spoke in their groups when they had permission to speak, they spoke in complete sentences, used academic vocabulary and provided evidence for their thinking. When an individual’s turn to share in their RISA Oral Interaction groups were done, those individuals stopped immediately and remained silent to listen to their classmate’s responses. More students participated and there were few, if not any, disruptions. Learning was efficient. We viewed the same amount of places, more students participated, more student used the vocabulary and sentence frames and the lesson was completed in twenty-five minutes.

As engagement is increased, off-task behavior decreased significantly. I first used RISA Oral Interaction groups as an introduction to a new unit in Ms. Honey’s class. I

saw this happen in the "See, Think, Wonder" activity also described in the previous section.

Each student in each group shared more than two times. When we did this activity using RISA Oral Interaction groups, everyone was engaged and all students were speaking. I was impressed with how much all the students had to say and how detailed their observations and how deep their wonderings became. Everyone was on task. There was a noticeable decrease in misbehaviors. The volume of the student's voices was a level of engagement and cooperation rather than a disruptive volume. While both the geography lesson and the "See, Think, Wonder" lesson were engaging alone, the lack of structure led to a power struggle to share ideas which led to frustration and disengagement.

The "See, Think, Wonder" lesson was one of many instances in which engagement greatly increased with this group of students and misbehaviors were reduced. In her interview, Ms. Honey mentioned why she believes RISA Oral Interactions positively engages students:

> I for sure feel like they are paying more attention with the RISA framework. First, they know they have a job to fulfil or a task they need to complete in sharing out their own ideas. They are also getting more information from their peers which is more interesting to them. Especially in fourth grade where their peers and friendships are more important to them [than the lesson]. (Participant Interview, August 2017)

When asked if students were paying attention and learning with RISA Oral Interaction groups, Ms. Mike echoed this sentiment, "Yes, because of what they are asked to show or respond or make sure their classmates are on the right page. More students are held more accountable" (Participant Interview, January 2018).

The results from the observation scheme also confirm what I concluded in field observations. In the pre-observation (see Graph 1 and Table 1), where I observed the actions of Aden, María, and Henry in a teacher to whole group setting I found high numbers of disengagement. There were four instances where the students were not listening and 13 instances of off-task behavior. Aden engaged in five instances of off-task behavior, four of these instances were off-task non-academic conversations. María engaged in three instances of off-task behavior and they were non-disruptive. Henry engaged in five off-task behaviors: one was non-academic conversation with a peer, and the others were non-disruptive. These non-disruptive behaviors include non-academic talk with a peer, playing with shoes, looking at an incorrect page, and looking around the room. Much of the student time was spent waiting for other students to follow directions.

Graph 1: *Pre-Treatment EL Shadowing*

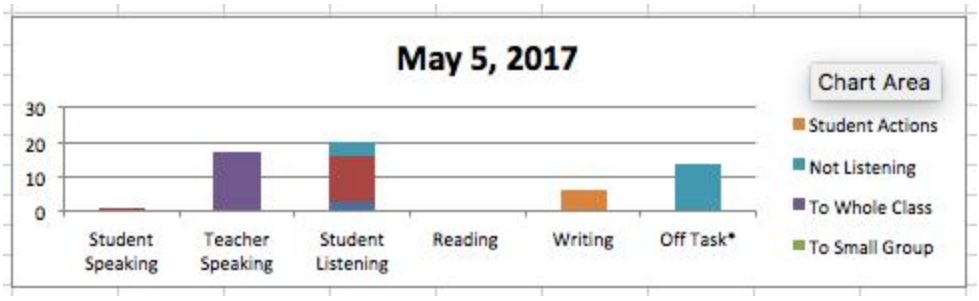

Table 1: *Pre-Treatment EL Shadowing*

	Student Speaking	Teacher Speaking	Student Listening	Reading	Writing	Off Task
To Student		0	3			
To Teacher	1	0	13			
To Small Group						
To Whole Class		17				
Not Listening			4			14
Student Actions				6		
Totals	1	17	20	6	0	14

With RISA Oral Interaction groups (Graph 2 and Table 2), the off task behaviors were nearly eliminated. There were seven recorded instances of the students listening to other students in their RISA Oral Interaction groups and eight recorded instances of the students listening to the teacher for a total of 15 instances of academic listening. Only once was a student not listening to the speaker. Finally, off task behavior took a significant drop with only one instance of off-task behavior being recorded from Aden. Much less waiting was observed in the post-observation lesson.

Graph 2: *Post-Treatment EL Shadowing Protocol*

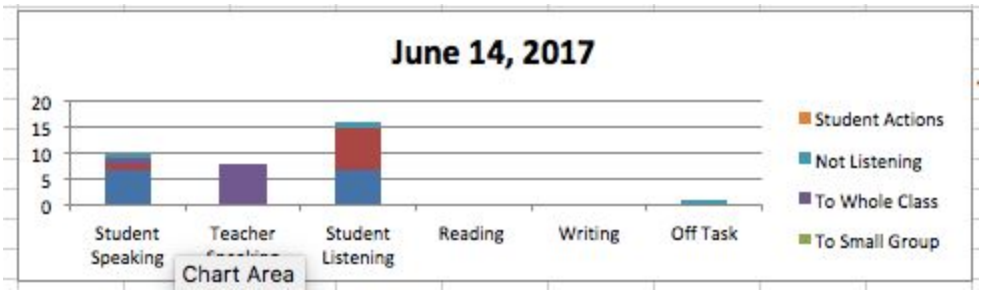

Table 2: *Post-Treatment EL Shadowing Protocol*

	Student Speaking	Teacher Speaking	Student Listening	Reading	Writing	Off Task
To Student	7	0	7			
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To Small Group		0				
To Whole Class	1	8				
Not Listening	1		1			1
Student Actions				0		
Totals	9	8	16	0	0	1

The students participating in the study were also able to admit that it can be more difficult to engage in the teacher to whole group style of instruction. When asked if they felt if they were learning and listening in the whole group geography lesson all students replied no. Henry explained one of his distractions: "No, since most of the girls are whipping their hair. They are like a monster" (Participant Interview, June 2017). María mentioned being distracted too. Contrastly, all three students perceived that they were engaged with RISA Oral Interactions. All students felt that they were paying attention and answering questions in the RISA lesson. When asked if they felt that they were learning and listening, all students agreed that they are all learning (Participant Interview, June 2017).

An important point the students make is that not only are they engaged in the learning when they are using RISA Oral Interactions but they perceived RISA Oral Interactions to be more engaging than teacher to whole group instruction. Both Henry and Aden seemed to notice disengagement among his peers in the teacher to whole group lesson. Henry explained, "One different thing about the whole group version is that people chat when the teacher is explaining the lesson or giving directions. Like Ms. Mike showed us some people were listening and most were not" (Participant Interview, June 2017). Aden added, "RISA groups are not as distracting as whole group" (Participant

Interview, June 2017). All the students interviewed agree using RISA Oral Interactions meant all students were learning more and better than the teacher to whole group style of instruction.

Finally, teachers also believed students were more engaged in RISA Oral Interactions. Like their students, both Ms. Honey and Ms. Mike commented on how distracted students can be in the whole group setting. The result of distractions means that less students are engaged. Ms. Honey explained that while a small number of students are engaged in the conversation, majority of the students are not learning and listening (Participant Interview, August 2017). She was troubled by this idea because she knows how frequent the student to whole group style of instruction is used. In her interview, Ms. Mike noticed the same level of disengagement, "There is a small percent that still benefit but majority can check out" (Participant Interview, January 2018). The result of distractions means that less students are engaged.

Both teachers made an interesting point about the efficiency and deliverance of accurate information to students in the teacher to whole group style of instruction. They seem to prefer teacher to whole group style when it comes to managing student behavior. Ms. Honey explained that some benefits of teacher to whole group instruction is that it takes less preparation and it sees to be more manageable because students are quiet and listening (Participant Interview, August 2017). Nevertheless, closely observing students revealed that even though they were quiet they were not listening. Ms. Mike also mentioned the efficiency of using teacher to whole group instruction and as a way to manage student behaviors. When using the teacher to whole group style of instruction,

Ms. Mike believed that it reminds the students how to behave in a classroom as it sets a tone for expectations moving forward, even if the students are to be using RISA later (Participant Interview, January 2018). While both teachers believe that teacher to whole group has a purpose that cannot be achieved in RISA Oral Interactions, they both realize that more students end up engaged in the learning with RISA Oral Interaction groups. Both Ms. Mike and Ms. Honey preferred the RISA style of teaching to whole group instruction. Ms. Honey captured the link between speaking and social constructivism: "I believe students are learning more with the RISA Oral Interaction structure because they are playing an active role in their own learning and not just being passive receivers of information or not listening at all" (Participant Interview, August 2017). Teacher to whole group instruction appears to be more efficient that RISA Oral Interactions but many students are not reaching the depth of understanding they reach with RISA Oral Interaction groups. Many do not reach any comprehension of the lesson at all.

Teachers feel that the less they are talking in the classroom the less control they have of the classroom. In theory, many agree with the research that says the best learning is student led. This does not seem to be the case in practice. Nevertheless, when purposefully allowing students to speak and reducing teacher talk all the gathered data reveals that RISA Oral Interactions are worth the risk because it increases engagement and decreases distractions compare to teacher to whole group.

RISA Oral Interactions May Increase Academic Language Use

The final area of research was to determine whether or not RISA Oral Interactions increased academic language use. Unlike participation and engagement, it was more

difficult to determine academic language use. I was able to gather the following conclusions, but for further research I would recommend creating a better way to measure academic language use of the students when using RISA Oral Interactions.

From my own field experiences, I saw that RISA Oral Interactions increased academic language of LTELS. A common result of RISA Oral Interactions was speaking in complete sentences. In teacher to whole group, students rarely use complete sentences. Because sentence frames and scripting the conversations is a key part of the RISA Oral Interaction framework, students are automatically speaking in complete sentences. Using RISA in the see, think, wonder activity proved to increase written academic language use of the students. Following the oral interactions, students wrote what they saw, thought, and wondered of the provocative images. Usually I use writing as a brainstorming technique before the activity. I was surprised to see how much writing improved and how many more ideas students were able to record since they had already shared with peers. I, along with the classroom teacher, was very impressed with the results and continued to use RISA to engage students in new units.

I also observed an increase of academic language use in the science reflection lessons. Not only did the content learning increase, but language functions and forms were acquired too. Academic vocabulary production increased among the ESL students after having so much practice using the vocabulary words from the scripted science reflections. I also heard students using complex phrases from the scripts in their natural speech. The more practice the students have using academic sentences, the more easily they could use these forms in natural speech. Once again, RISA Oral Interactions proved

to be essential to student learning and especially to ESL students learning. As a result, RISA Oral Interactions as a science reflection became a routine occurring after every science experiment.

As for the observation scheme and the interviews, little to no data revealed that academic language was increased with Oral Interactions. Ms. Mike did mention that both RISA and teacher to whole group instruction share content objectives but RISA increased language objectives (Participant Interview, January 2018). While there also no data that revealed academic language use was less in teacher to whole group instruction, it can be assumed that the more student participation gives way to more academic language. Ms. Honey made this conclusion too: "...most of the students who are raising their hands are the ones who probably don't need extra language supports and probably already have higher language skills to begin with" (Participant Interview, August 2017). Despite this information, there is not enough data to determine whether or not RISA Oral Interactions increased academic language. The conclusions made on academic language from the field experiences would be much stronger if the observation scheme other could reveal the same detailed and numerical information.

Conclusion

In order to determine how RISA Oral Interactions increase the engagement, participation, and academic language of LTELs, I collected data through field experience, an observation scheme, and student and teacher stimulated interviews. In Chapter Four, I described how each data collection tool supported my findings. It was determined that LTEL participation and engagement increased. The field experience data, the observation

scheme (EL Shadowing Protocol), and student and teacher simulated interviews support this finding. There was not enough evidence to determine how much RISA Oral Interactions increased academic language use. The field experience, while thorough, was the only data collection tool that supports this claim. There was little to no data gathered on academic language use in the other two means of data collection. Those are the ways in which I presented the results of my data collection in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five I will discuss my major findings, their implications, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

In this study, I attempt to answer the question: how do RISA Oral Interactions increase student engagement, participation, and academic language? I used the case of three fourth grade LTELs to gather data to answer this question. In order to validate my findings I triangulated the data with an observation scheme, field experience, and teacher and student simulated interviews. After conducting my study, the findings show:

- RISA Oral Interactions increase student participation of LTELs
- RISA Oral Interactions increase student engagement of LTELs
- RISA Oral Interactions may increase academic language use of LTELs

In this chapter I will interpret the results by analyzing the data presented in Chapter Four. After that, I will review the limitations that were revealed throughout the research and data collection. I will make suggestions to teachers and schools based on the these results and recommend how to best implement RISA Oral Interaction into lessons. Finally, I will make suggestions for further research in order to address the gaps in my own study as well as the need for more research to verify the importance of student interactions and oral language in the academic setting.

Major Findings

From the data I have collected there is substantial evidence that RISA Oral Interactions significantly increases student engagement and participation. The field experience lessons - the introductory activity with "See, Think, Wonder"; the science reflection lessons; and the geography lesson under observation - all revealed higher participation and engagement from LTEL students. This sentiment was backed by quantitative data with the observation schemes. LTEL student participation in the geography lesson increased from one instance of student speech in the teacher to whole group setting to nine instances of student speech using RISA Oral Interactions. Student engagement, as shown through off task behaviors, also increased. In the teacher to whole group setting, the three LTEL students exhibited 14 off task behaviors. With RISA Oral Interactions, only one off task behavior was recorded. Finally, in the simulated interviews all participants (both students and teachers) preferred RISA Oral Interactions to teacher to whole group instruction. All participants agreed that engagement and participation increased not just for LTEL students but for all students when using the RISA Oral Interaction framework.

The findings on academic language were less conclusive. While the field experience data demonstrated an increase in academic language use, it was more difficult to measure academic language use in the observation scheme and interviews. Scripting the conversations allowed students to use more academic vocabulary and sentence structure. It also encouraged students to speak in complete sentences. Finally, more student participation the opportunity to practice more academic language. While the observation scheme and simulated interviews did not confirm an increase in academic

language, there was also no data to contradict the belief that RISA Oral Interactions would also increase academic language use among LTELs. The review of the literature also revealed significant evidence that these student to student interactions give way to greater cognitive development and retention than individualistic settings and teacher to whole group instruction. The following subsections will go into further detail about how RISA Oral Interaction groups increased student engagement, participation, and academic language as well as the student and teacher perceptions of RISA Oral Interactions.

Increase in Participation

Participation, as measured by student speech, is greatly increased when using RISA Oral Interaction groups as an instructional strategy. Teacher to whole group instructional strategy left majority of students, and especially the ELs, silent. When the teacher presents information in this fashion - lecturing and then posing questions for individuals to respond to - I observed the same five to seven students responding to the questions. Both Ms. Mike and Ms. Honey also found that only a small number of students participate in this style of teaching. Ms. Honey explained, "It always seems to be the same students participating" (Participant Interview, August 2017). Additionally, these students are most often white native speakers of English. When the question has a desired response, the conversation ends as soon as a student provides that desired response. Aden, an LTEL in this study agrees, "If you don't know the answer, you don't have to participate" (Participant Interview, June 2017). The conversation ends before many of the others have even been able to process the question. According to Aden, "I don't like that only one person gets to answer the question because other people don't get to share their

opinions" (Participant Interview, June 2017). Teaching and expected learning continues to go on this way and parallels the passiveness, silence, and non-engagement of LTELs experience described by Olsen (2010), Owen Tittsworth (2013) and Soto (2012).

While teacher to whole group instruction allows students to go unnoticed and inhibits participation, RISA Oral Interaction groups greatly increases participation for all students. Over a lesson of 45 minutes, only one instance of academic student speech was observed among three LTEL students. Meanwhile, seventeen instances of teacher speech was recorded. After implemented RISA Oral Interaction groups, nine instances of academic student speech was recorded among the same students in a 25 minutes. Almost all of this instances occurred as student to student interactions, but the set-up of RISA Oral Interactions also allows students to talk about their ideas before sharing whole group. As a result, more students were willing to share their ideas to the whole class. Teacher talk also decreased eight instances of speech over 25 minutes. Simply put, if students are placed into groups of three and asked to share their ideas with their group one-third of the class gets the opportunity to be heard at the same time. Contrastly, teacher to whole group only allows one speaker at a time eliminating the opportunity for many students to speak.

I noticed these same changes in my field observations. When given the structure and opportunity to speak, most students participate in academic conversations. Ms. Mike saw one explanation may be that students are held more accountable when having to interact with peers. Ms. Honey believed that structure was a key element to encourage student participation (Participant Interview, August 2017). Students appeared

comfortable to speak in small groups and competition was eliminated because the expectation was that every student would speak a required amount and take turns. Especially in the See, Think, Wonder activity ideas were endless. The teachers found that the noise level indicated on-task participation and engagement: Although one student found the amount of academic chatter to be distracting. The scripts for science reflections reduces the linguistic load and allows more brain capacity to process and communicate content learning (Watson, 2016). This support does not exist in the traditional teacher to whole group style of instruction.

The interviews also revealed that all three student participants perceive that they participate more when using RISA Oral Interactions as an instructional strategy. According to Ms. Honey, "It gives everyone the opportunity to speak, especially the students that would not otherwise get that chance in the traditional style [teacher to whole group]" (Participant Interview, August 2017). Despite the overwhelming positive results, Ms. Mike noticed that some students just will not participate no matter what instructional strategy used (Participant Interview, January 2018). I also noticed less than one hundred percent participation in my field observations. However, the RISA Oral interactions are still significantly effective in increasing student participation. Ms. Mike explained to me, "The exceptional few that do not [participate] will not [participate] no matter what they do. There may only be one or two per class that refuse to participate but they struggle no matter what. The percentage [of participants] goes way up" (Participant Interview, January 2018). In sum, RISA Oral Interactions groups greatly increases how frequently students participate during instruction.

Increase in Engagement

Even more overwhelming than the increase in participation that resulted from RISA Oral Interaction groups is the increase in the level of engagement as measured by off-task behaviors. Originally, I was concerned about giving student the freedom to speak without the teachers permission and I was fearful of peer distraction. Nevertheless, when monitoring interactions in RISA groups, I have found that students are on task most of the time, and almost always on task when a script is included. Most, if at all, off-task conversation occurs when the conversation concludes. Behavior issues seem to decrease greatly, especially for those who strongly desire attention from their peers because they get many opportunities to discuss their ideas with their peers.

My experience is illustrated by the quantitative data too. In the teacher to whole group lesson, there were 14 instances of off-task behaviors. Five of these instances - all from Aden - were off-task conversations. The remaining were non-disruptive behaviors like looking around the room or playing with one's shoes. The RISA Oral Interaction lesson nearly eliminated the off-task behaviors: only one was observed. What was reduced the most, especially among LTELs, was the non-disruptive behaviors. Ms. Honey noticed this too: "I believe student are learning more with the RISA Oral Interaction structure because they are playing an active role in their own learning and not just being passive receivers of information or not listening at all" (Participant Interview, August 2017). Creating space to talk engages all students. Teacher to whole group only engages those who are responding to the questions. Ms. Mike noticed that the majority of students can "check out" when they are not required to participate (Participant Interview,

January 2018). In the case of María and Henry, RISA Oral Interactions includes students who remain passive and it channels the conversations of those who wish to be heard, like Aden.

Students noticed this too. When asked what is disliked about teacher to whole group instruction Henry explained, "People who are side talking or misbehaving affects our learning and distracts the students" (Participant Interview, June 2017). All three student participants believed they were paying attention when using RISA Oral Interactions but both Henry and Aden agreed that they were not paying attention to instruction in the whole group setting. María said she was paying attention for both styles of instruction, but I also wonder how much "paying attention" means "undisruptive" for these students. She did say she paid attention more with RISA Oral Interaction groups (Participant Interview, June 2017). For these reasons, RISA Oral Interactions greatly increases student engagement by reducing both disruptive and non-disruptive off task behaviors.

Increase in Academic Language Use

It is harder to measure student use of academic language than measuring student participation and engagement. In this study, only academic language was tallied as student speech. Therefore, the increase in speech also indicates an increase in academic speech. Additionally, off-task instances were paired with not listening. When students are not actively participating or engaging in the classroom, they are not learning. Research shows that oral development leads to cognitive growth. Vygotsky believes that learning is not evidence of what has been acquired but rather the process of learning (1978).

Especially for our ELs who come from backgrounds of oral traditions like Hmong and Somali speakers, speaking is how students learn (Watson, 2016).

Another interesting theme that developed was student's engagement while interacting with peers. Ms. Honey believed that students will learn and listen more when talking to their classmates because they are so interested in receiving information from their peers, especially in fourth grade (Participant Interview, August 2017). In my field experience, I found that RISA helped with behavior management. Instead of having to disrupt learning to earn attention from peers, RISA creates the space for peers to interact. Aden, María, and Henry all found peer interaction to be a positive experience resulting from RISA too (Participant Interview, June 2017).

Both teachers emphasized the importance learning through of listening. It seems that students who respond often expect there to always be a single answer and to move on in the conversation. RISA oral interactions is good for all students, not just those who need the structure to speak. Ms. Mike explained, "Frequent responders get to work on their listening. Everyone benefits" (Participant Interview, January 2018). At her interview, Ms. Honey made a similar point. She believed if you can teach active listening, then humility and perspective gaining are skills students gain from listening to their peers (Participant Interview, August 2017).

Finally, student and teacher interviews also revealed the perceived level of learning to occur increased when using RISA Oral Interaction groups as an instructional strategy. Although students believe some learning occurs with teacher to whole group interactions, they did believe that learning was greater with RISA (Participant Interview,

June 2017). María believed that teacher to whole group instruction is beneficial for learning because the teacher gets to talk a lot and all the students hear what the teacher has to say. Aden and Henry felt like they don't learn at all during teacher to whole group instruction. All three students perceived themselves to be learning with RISA Oral Interactions (Participant Interview, June 2017). If oral language and cooperation has been proven to increase cognitive development, then it only makes sense that RISA Oral Interaction groups do the same.

Implications

Teachers talk too much in the classroom and students talk too little. There is vast research that students learn best when they are actively participating in their learning. Above all, some sort of structure or cooperative grouping strategy needs to be in place to encourage learning, especially for LTELs. The results of this experiment certainly suggests that RISA Oral Interactions increases student participation, engagement, and academic language compared to teacher to whole group instructional methods. However, there are other cooperative grouping strategies that may accomplish what RISA Oral Interactions accomplish too. If not using RISA Oral Interactions as an instructional strategy, my research suggests the following aspects of RISA to be used in some sort of cooperative grouping strategy.

First, if students are not actively participating in a lesson, they will disengage. Disengagement can be nondisruptive. Whether a student's disengagement is nondisruptive or not, the student is not learning. LTELs will rarely participate in the lesson unless teachers need to create time for students to speak. This is done in RISA

Oral Interactions by incorporating the routine into lessons two to three times a week. This was done in the research as lesson introductions, lesson reflections, or as a brainstorming activity. It is crucial that students have the opportunity to communicate in the classroom so they can construct meaning of the learning and practice using academic language.

Next, teachers also need to provide structure for the students in their conversations to guarantee that all students have equal opportunity to participate. Once again, if a question is posed to a group, one student can get away with responding. RISA Oral Interactions uses essential agreements like take turns speaking and participation requirements to get all students speaking. Another factor that positively contributes to equitable student participation is scripting the interactions. When the language is provided for the students, it frees up cognitive space allowing students to focus on the content of the conversation rather than the form. It is important that the routine is taught and practice and students are held to the expectations of its' implementation.

As teachers, instructing our classrooms by using teacher to whole group instruction seems to be the most efficient and manageable instructional method. However, the data from this study shows that although students may be compliant and silent they are not accessing content, practicing language, or evening listening to the instruction. While many may be hesitant to give up control and allow students to interact, it has proven to be better for student learning. I highly recommend using RISA Oral Interaction groups, or other cooperative grouping strategies, in the classroom to engage all learners in the learning.

Limitations

I would like to discuss the limitations that occurred throughout the study to further validate the research conducted. First, when reading the interviews it is important to consider interview bias. To avoid this, I remained neutral during the interviews, I kept the questions open-ended, and I used follow up questions to help participants expand on their ideas. Although the interview was created to eliminate interview bias as much as possible, it is probable that the participants, especially the students, attempted to provide responses that were perceived desirable in the experiment. Using RISA over the past two years as a routine instructional strategy may have influenced the student and teacher responses. Previous to the present study, I have discussed the research behind oral interactions and cooperative grouping to emphasis the value in its implementation with the teacher participants. This may be influencing their opinions on RISA and their responses in the interviews.

The timeline of the study may have also impacted results. This study was completed over a six week period over the end of the academic year. Many educators know that disengagement and misbehavior is at its' peak during the last few weeks of school. Some students may be anxiously and nervously anticipating the loss of structure and routine during summer vacations. Others are excited for summer vacation. For all, perceived change impacts learning. Because the post-observation occurred during the last week of school, many may question the commitment to learning students exhibit. I feel like this would negatively impact the observation, resulting in more off-task behaviors and conversations during RISA Oral Interactions. However, the data did suggest great improvements in engagement and participation so even with the end of the year slump,

RISA still proved to be an effective instructional strategy and may have even been proven to be even more effective at a different time of year.

Another limitation was the length of observations. Ideally, I would conduct observations over an hour. This was the original plan but both lessons ended up being shorter. In the future, I recommend conducting multiple observations to gather more evidence and data. Nevertheless, Harper (2014) and Soto (2012) suggest that a single lesson accurately reflects the LTEL student experience. Additionally, the pilot experiment as a PLC was completed across three different grade levels and 12 different LTELs and revealed greater increases in student participation and engagement. The results from the field observations and interviews were not limited in length because they were based on six weeks of completing the study using RISA Oral Interactions two to three times a week. Also, the shortness of the second observation may indicate the reduction of responses to misbehavior and redirection. It also reveals how much more students participate in a much shorter time using RISA Oral Interaction. Again, this limitation may in fact strengthen my claim.

Finally, the present study has no quantitative evidence to confirm that student learning and academic language increased. There are two changes that could address this limitation. First, the observation scheme could be changed to more capture more specific academic language. One could record what students say and analyze their speech or look for the use of specific academic forms and functions in the language production. Another way to address this limitation would be to conduct a similar experiment by having students complete a pre and post test in order to measure cognitive growth and academic

language. Even better, would be a control designed experiment. Comparing a classroom using RISA Oral Interactions and a classroom without RISA Oral Interactions, may reveal the effectiveness on RISA on academic growth as compared to teacher to whole group instruction. In both cases, I could measure a specific academic form or function like vocabulary. Instead of just tallying language use, I could keep tally of the academic vocabulary that has been taught. Despite these limitations, there is still sufficient evidence to suggest that RISA Oral Interactions increase student participation, engagement, and learning.

Further Research

Although there is a plethora of research on social constructivist approaches to teaching that suggest that students working in cooperative groups and oral production increases student learning in general, there is very little research on best practices for LTELs. As the population of LTELs continues to grow, alluding to insufficient teaching approaches for these students, we most continue to expand upon the research to find what works best for these students in their trajectory towards academic language proficiency.

In a classroom, it is difficult to determine what factors are contributing to learning. Research that is more specific would further my findings. In future studies I would recommend for the observation scheme to somehow include academic quality of the spoken word. I also think pre and post-test with controls experiment design to measure the cognitive learning and academic language would greatly strengthen my claim. More quantitative evidence to prove that using RISA Oral Interactions is better for cognitive and language development is necessary. The present research would be

strengthened if it could be expand to measure the long term benefits of RISA Oral Interactions groups on academic language and cognitive development. I also wonder, what impact do RISA Oral Interactions have on the long term development of ELP? Does an instructional strategy like RISA accelerate the language learning process? Now that we know that RISA Oral Interactions is better for student engagement and participation than teacher to whole group styles of teaching, how do RISA Oral Interactions compare to other styles of cooperative grouping?

Final Thoughts

In my personal experiences, most educators are aware the student led learning filled with academic conversations increases cognitive development. This was emphasized in my own personal teacher preperation programs. Teachers are facilitators of learning, not dispensers of knowledge. Professional development in my building and my district emphasizes this idea too. Casual conversations I have with colleagues reveal that teachers do believe that students struggle to learn in a lecture style classroom and thrive in an environment filled with discussion and peer interaction. Nevertheless, it does not seem to be true in practice. When planning time is limited, covering standards is stressed, and managing behaviors is a factor, teachers, including myself, seem to fall back to teacher to whole group style of instruction. Simply explaining students the learning appears to be the most effective. This capstone reveals that this is not the case.

From personal experiences, I always felt in the teacher to whole group style of instruction only seven in a class of 25 were engaged in the learning. When I took the time to observe my students, the data I collected was even more shocking. When few students

engage, everyone else disengages. Given the language demands and general characteristics of LTELs, they are very rarely the ones who engage and participate in teacher to whole group style of instruction. Because their disengagement is nondisruptive, they continue to fall under the radar moving along the education system making very little growth.

Although I knew my students were disengaged, I was hesitant to first implement RISA Oral Interactions in my co-taught classrooms. I was concerned about time, behavior, and covering all of the curriculum. After investing in the framework by taking the time to teach and model the expectations, I found that I was saving time, dealing with less misbehaviors, and significantly more students were understanding all of the curriculum. Those I work with would agree. Ms. Mike explained it so well in her interview: "Sometimes it takes longer – but you go farther. The extra time you can take you get more mileage from it. You have to be intentional and you are teaching kids to do the opposite of what they are inclined to do. You have to be patient with all different types of responders respond different" (Participant Interview, January 2018). While it may more efficiently to lead the conversation making sure that students are hearing the correct information, for me, the truth was the students weren't listening at all. Speaking is not evidence of learning but rather the process of learning.

RISA Oral Interactions provides teachers with a framework to consistently implement best practice intro the classroom. If not RISA Oral Interactions, I hope that teachers use some sort of framework to consistently encourage student speech for all students, not just the most assertive and language proficient students. The literature

review and my own data is so important because it confirms the questions I have always had. I now have concrete data and vast evidence that shows that LTELs, although compliant, are not learning in a lecture style teacher to whole group instructional setting. In future co-teaching classrooms, conversations with colleagues, and PDs I may lead for my building, I now have strong evidence and experience to support my belief that students need to be speaking in the classroom often.

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APPENDIX A

Observation Scheme

Oral Language/Academic Conversation Shadowing Observation Data page ___ of ___

School ______________________ Subject ______________________________ Date ___________

Teacher______________________ Student________________________ Observer______________

Learning Target____

Time	Classroom Activity	Academic Speaking (check one)	Academic Listening (check one)	Student Actions
		Student speaking: ☐ to student ☐ to teacher ☐ to small group ☐ to whole class **Teacher** speaking: ☐ to student ☐ to small group ☐ to whole class	**Student** listening mostly: ☐ to student ☐ to teacher ☐ to small group ☐ to whole class ☐ NOT listening	**Student is:** ☐ Reading silently ☐ Writing silently ☐ Off-task ☐ Other ______________
Qualitative Observations (between 3 minute intervals)				
		Student speaking: ☐ to student ☐ to teacher ☐ to small group ☐ to whole class **Teacher** speaking: ☐ to student ☐ to small group ☐ to whole class	**Student** listening mostly: ☐ to student ☐ to teacher ☐ to small group ☐ to whole class ☐ NOT listening	**Student is:** ☐ Reading silently ☐ Writing silently ☐ Off-task ☐ Other ______________
Qualitative Observations (between 3 minute intervals)				
		Student speaking: ☐ to student ☐ to teacher ☐ to small group ☐ to whole class **Teacher** speaking: ☐ to student ☐ to small group ☐ to whole class	**Student** listening mostly: ☐ to student ☐ to teacher ☐ to small group ☐ to whole class ☐ NOT listening	**Student is:** ☐ Reading silently ☐ Writing silently ☐ Off-task ☐ Other ______________
Qualitative Observations (between 3 minute intervals)				
		Student speaking: ☐ to student ☐ to teacher ☐ to small group ☐ to whole class **Teacher** speaking: ☐ to student ☐ to small group ☐ to whole class	**Student** listening mostly: ☐ to student ☐ to teacher ☐ to small group ☐ to whole class ☐ NOT listening	**Student is:** ☐ Reading silently ☐ Writing silently ☐ Off-task ☐ Other ______________
Qualitative Observations (between 3 minute intervals)				

Soto 2012/Harper 2014/Knight 2015

APPENDIX B

Stimulated Interview Student Questions

After watching short video clips of the traditional call and response classroom, I will ask participants the following questions:

1. What do you like about learning this way?

2. What do you dislike about learning this way?

3. Do you feel that you are paying attention and answer questions?

4. Do you feel that you are learning and listening?

After watching short video clips of the structured, routine oral cooperative groups, I will ask participants the following questions:

1. What do you like about learning this way?

2. What do you dislike about learning this way?

3. Do you feel that you are paying attention and answer questions?

4. Do you feel that you are learning and listening?

5. Do you like when you have to answer questions in your small group or do you like when you have to answer questions to the teacher better? Why?

6. In what video do you believe you are learning more?

7. In what video do you believe you are participating more?

8. In what video do you believe you are paying attention more?

9. What is different? What is the same?

Stimulated Interview Teacher Questions

After watching short video clips of the traditional call and response classroom, I will ask participants the following questions:

1. What do you like about this style of teaching and learning?

2. What do you dislike about this style of teaching and learning?

3. Do you feel that students are participating?

4. Do you feel that students are learning and listening?

After watching short video clips of the structured, routine oral cooperative groups, I will ask participants the following questions:

1. What do you like about this style of teaching and learning?

2. What do you dislike about this style of teaching and learning?

3. Do you feel that students are participating?

4. Do you feel that students are learning and paying attention?

5. What style of teaching and learning do you like better?

6. In what video do you believe students are learning more?

7. In what video do you believe students are participating more?

8. In what video do you believe students paying attention more?

9. What is different? What is the same?

APPENDIX C

Purposeful Grouping with RISA Oral Interaction Groups

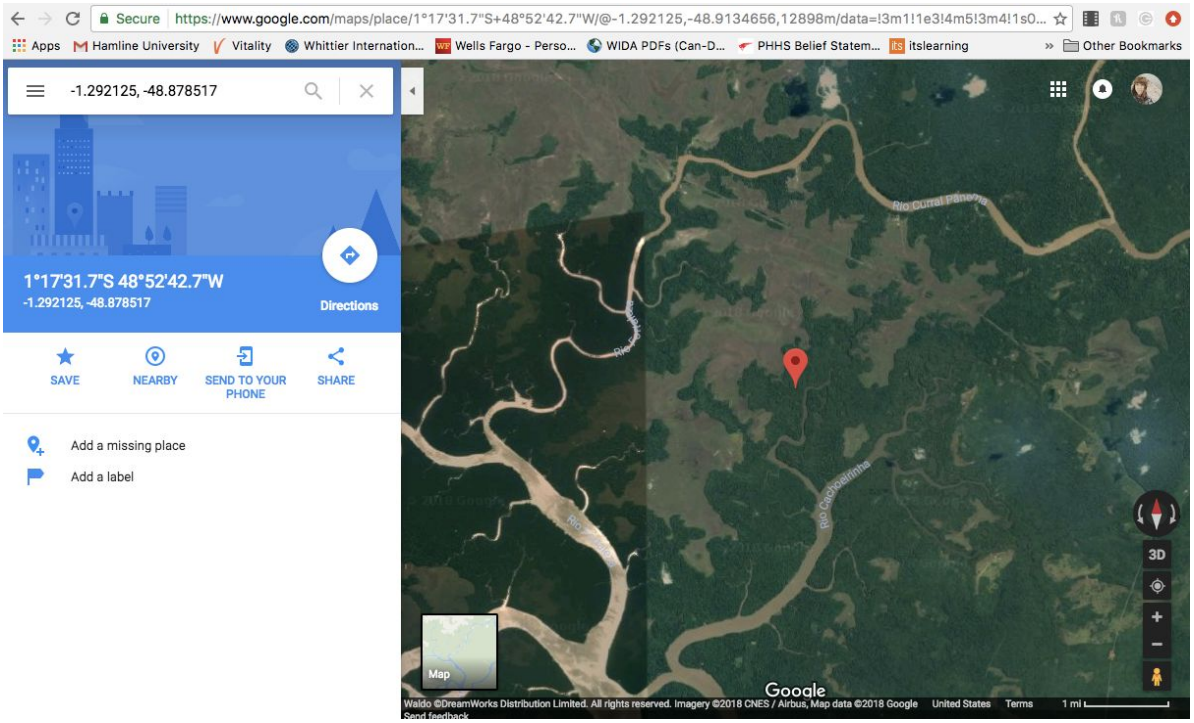
Student	1	2	3
	ELLs	Non-proficient speakers of academic English	proficient speakers of academic English
Team			
A	Aden	Leah	Jacob
B	Muhadin	Alissa	Hope
C	María	Katrina	Elizabeth
D	Daniela	Angel	Adrianna
E	Esperanza	John	Amy
F	Juan	Steven	Natalie
G	Henry	Jayveon	Phillip
H	Osumare	Junior	Chase

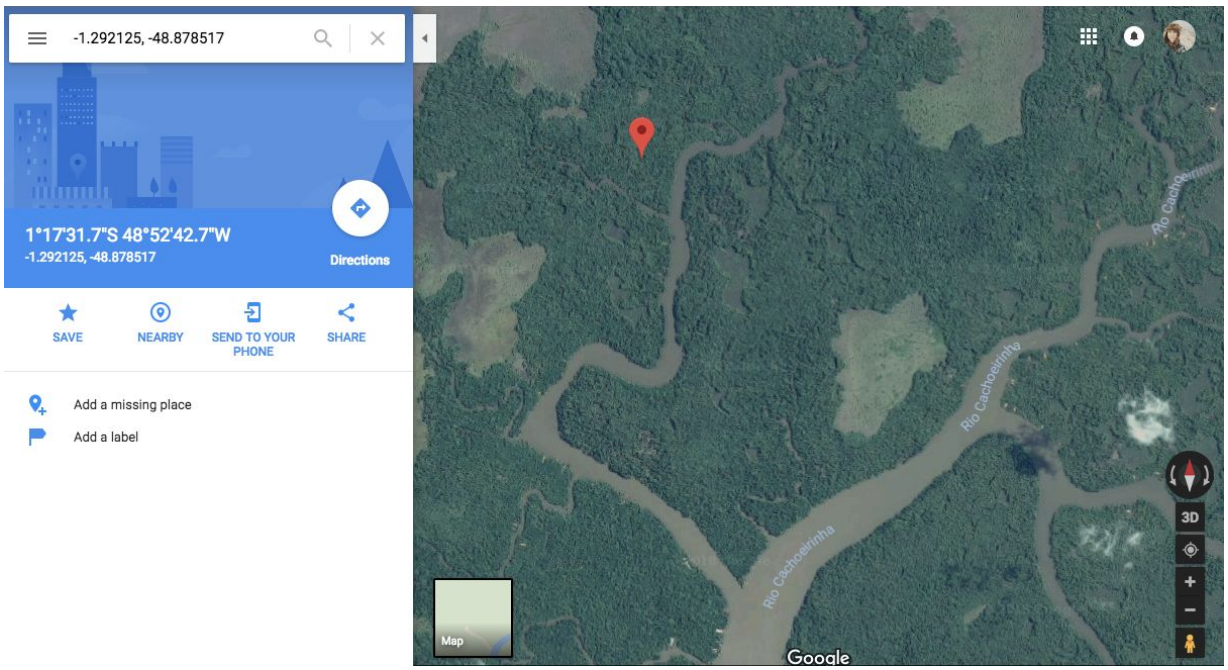
APPENDIX D

Word Wall and Sentence Frames used in RISA Oral Interaction Geography Lesson

APPENDIX E

Satellite Images from RISA Oral Interaction Geography Lesson





APPENDIX F

Scripted RISA Oral Interactions in Science

Investigation 1 Part 2 Reflection

Person 2: What does a light bulb do in an electric circuit?
Person 3: A light bulb _____ in an electric circuit.

Person 1: What were the components you used in your system today?
Person 2: The components we used in our system were _____, _____, _____, and _____.

Person 3: What does the motor do in the system?
Person 1: The motor _____ in the system.

Person 2: What does the switch do in your circuit?
Person 3: The switch _____.

Person 1: What does on mean?
Person 2: On means that the circuit is _____.
Person 3: What does off mean?
Person 1: Off means that the circuit is _____.

Person 2: How did energy transfer from the D-cell to the light bulb?
Person 3: Energy transferred by _____

Person 1: What was the evidence of energy transfer in the light bulb system?
Person 2: _____ was the evidence of energy transfer in the light bulb system.

Person 3: In the motor system, what was the source of energy?
Person 1: In the motor system _____ was the source of energy.
Person 2: What was the evidence of energy transfer in the motor system?
Person 3: _____ was the evidence of energy transfer in the motor system.

Person 1: What did energy do in a circuit with a motor?
Person 2: Energy _____ in a circuit with a motor.

APPENDIX G

Stimulated Student Interview Responses

After watching short video clips of the traditional call and response classroom, I will ask participants the following questions:

What do you like about learning this way?

María: You learn more about what the teacher is saying because the teacher gets to talk a lot.

Aden: You can learn what other people think.

María: Everyone gets to share together. Everyone will listen to me.

Aden: If you don't know the answer, you don't have to participate.

Henry: Everyone gets to hear everyone's perspective.

What do you dislike about learning this way?

Henry: People who are sidetalking or misbehaving affects our learning and distracts the students.

María: I agree.

Aden: I don't like that only one person gets to answer the question because other people don't get to share their opinions.

Henry: It's not fair.

María: Yea, it's not fair!

Do you feel that you are paying attention and answering questions?

María: Yes.

Aden: No, I like RISA because we get to discuss with each other.

Henry: No, I am better off with RISA. I like it because instead of one person saying their perspective we get to say it to each other.

Do you feel that you are learning and listening?

Henry: Not quite. No, since most of the girls are whipping their hair. They are like a monster.

María: I feel like it's better in RISA. I get distracted.

Aden: No.

After watching short video clips of the structured, routine oral cooperative groups, I will ask participants the following questions:

What do you like about learning this way?

Henry: One thing I like about learning this way is that I can hear what other people are saying instead of raising their hands and just picking one.

María: I agree.

Aden: Me too.

María: Everybody gets to think about what they want to say.

Aden: Once you and your partner share, you get a bigger idea.

What do you dislike about learning this way?

Henry: One thing I don't like is that people are talking at the same time as me.

María: Nothing.

Aden: There is nothing we don't like.

Do you feel that you are paying attention and answering questions?

Henry: Yes!

María: Yes!

Aden: Yes!

Do you feel that you are learning and listening?

Henry: Yes, because normally in our room spots people are not paying attention when the teacher is giving directions.

María: Especially Ellen. She always talks to Amayah.

Aden: Yes, because we are not sitting with are friends.

Henry: We are all learning.

María: I think so too.

Aden: Yes, we are all learning.

To finish the interview, I asked student to compare and contrast the RISA Oral Interactions as an instructional strategy and teacher to whole group as an instructional strategy.

Do you like when you have to answer questions in your RISA group or do you like when you have to answer questions to the teacher better? Why?

Everyone: RISA!

Henry: I don't like when people comment, like in Socratic Seminar.

María: People are like, "No, you got everything wrong."

Aden: They are being sassy.

María: I like the structure. People have to listen to what we say. If you make a mistake, you can correct it.

In what video do you believe you are learning more?

Everyone: RISA!

María: Because you get to learn more.

Aden: Yea!

Henry: People are a lot more quieter without their friends near them.

Aden: Yea!

María: I agree with them.

In what video do you believe you are participating more?

Everyone: RISA!

What is different?

Henry: One different thing about the whole group version is that people chat when the teacher is explaining the lesson or giving directions. Like Ms. Mike showed us some people were listening and most were not. Instead of being in rows, we are in circles.

Aden: RISA groups are not as distracting as whole group.

María: I agree. We like RISA better. You get to learn more and better than whole groups.

Aden: I agree.

Henry: I agree.

What is the same?

María: There is really nothing the same. It is completely different.

Aden: They have the same amount of learning.

María: No. I disagree.

Henry: I disagree.

Henry: People explain and talkers talk.

APPENDIX H

Stimulated Teacher Interview Responses

After watching short video clips of the traditional call and response classroom, I asked the participants the following questions in separate interviews:

What do you like about teacher to whole group style of teaching and learning?

Ms. Honey: It is easier to teach this way. It requires less preparation. It feels more manageable, at least in the way we are taught to think about classroom management. Students are quiet and listening.

Ms. Mike: Sometimes it can be used as a re-centering and refocusing of the whole group. It has its purpose when it is not used often. It can pull a group together. It can be used as a point to get everyone back listening. More as a review of essential agreements – call to learning. It sets a tone and expectations for how we proceed. It is also quick and dirty. It serves its purpose in a very short time.

What do you dislike about this style of teaching and learning?

Ms. Honey: Students often daydream and get distracted while the teacher is speaking. The only students who raise their hand are the ones that always respond to the teacher's prompts. There are fewer opportunities for others to speak. I know from working with you but most of the students who are raising their hands are the ones who probably don't extra language supports and probably already have higher language skills to begin with.

Ms. Mike: Fewer students are responding. You have to not call on those students to call on other kids. It can be frustrating for everybody.

Do you feel that students are participating?

Ms. Honey: Only a select few. It always seems to be the same students participating. Unless you cold call student but that generally makes them pretty uncomfortable.

Ms. Mike: Only the ones that think they know it all. The ones that just want to move on and get the answers out or think that they should have the right answers.

Do you feel that students are learning and listening?

Ms. Honey: Again, I feel like a small handful are learning and listening but the vast majority are not. Which is unfortunate because this is general the style that is used.

Ms. Mike: There is a small percent that still benefit but majority can check out.

After watching short video clips of a lesson using RISA Oral Interactions, I asked the participants the following questions in separate interviews:

What do you like about using RISA Oral Interactions for teaching and learning?

Ms. Honey: It gets everybody the opportunity to speak. Especially students that would not otherwise get that chance in the traditional style. It is empowering because every student has a voice and more ideas are heard. It is also good for students who are the ones who are speaking because it is humbling and it gives them the chance to hear other student's perspective. They can feel that they always have the answers and it is good for them to hear other people's perspectives.

Ms. Mike: I like the sharing of voices. Frequent responders get to work on their listening. Everyone benefits.

What do you dislike about this style of teaching and learning?

Ms. Honey: Sometimes it can be tricky to get students into their assigned groups, especially if students are missing and you have to rearrange groups. Fortunately, that doesn't happen too often.Teaching students that when it is not their turn to speak they should be listening to their partners. You have to practice active listening skills.

Ms. Mike: Sometimes it takes longer – but you go farther. The extra time you can take you get more mileage from it. You have to be intentional and you are teaching kids to do the opposite of what they are inclined to do. You have to be patient with all different types of responders respond different.

Do you feel that students are participating?

Ms. Honey: Yes. I feel like all students are participating because there is such a structure to it.

Ms. Mike: Yes, the exceptional few that do not participate won't no matter what they do. There may only be one or two per class that refuse to participate but struggle no matter what. The percentage goes way up.

Do you feel that students are learning and paying attention?

Ms. Honey: For sure, Yea I do.

Ms. Mike: Yes, because of what they are asked to show or respond or make sure their classmates are on the right page. More students are held more accountable.

What style of teaching and learning do you like better?

Ms. Honey: I prefer the RISA style of teaching and learning because it gets more students involved in their learning. It has more structure to it.

Ms. Mike: I prefer RISA. I think with RISA I would like to get them good at their roles and then switch up the groups more often. After switching groups, I would recommend switching the roles. So, that students get to practice asking questions and responding. Switch partners more often with the same structure. Then over time, switch the structures.

In what video do you believe students are learning more?

Ms. Honey: I believe student are learning more with the RISA structure because they are playing an active role in their own learning and not just being passive receivers of information or not listening at all.

Ms. Mike: The RISA. It may take the frequent responders awhile to realize that.

In what video do you believe students are participating more?

Ms. Honey: I believe students are participating more with the RISA style. I think that they are given a specific time to speak and the support of sentence frames helps them facilitate the expression of their thoughts and ideas.

Ms. Mike: The RISA. More students participate in the RISA model. A few students are required to participate less.

In what video do you believe students paying attention more?

Ms. Honey: For sure feel like they are paying more attention with the RISA framework. First, they know they have a job to fulfil or a task they need to complete in sharing out their own ideas. They are also getting more information from their peers which is more interesting to them. Especially in fourth grade where their peers/friendships are more important to them.

Ms. Mike: The second one – RISA. It takes more effort to not participate.

What is different?

Ms. Honey: RISA allows everyone to participate where the traditional style only has a select number of students participating a few times. I would add that RISA is more intentional because the groupings are so strategic. With teacher to whole group, it is just one at a time. But in RISA more students get to speak at once.

Ms. Mike: The expectations are the same for everyone in RISA. Everyone is expected to participate. That is not the case for whole group. The teacher becomes a facilitator. He or she does not dispense the knowledge necessary. The teacher is more of a guide on the side. I am thinking students would be more focused in RISA and the time goes faster for them. I would say there are times where the other style is appropriate the move things along.

What is the same?

Ms. Honey: Not much. I guess student voices are heard in both but that is where the similarities end. You may still provide sentence starters in both, but it is more intentional in RISA.

Ms. Mike: The objectives are the same as far as the content learning.

APPENDIX I

Informed Consent Requesting Permission of Student to Take Part in Research

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am your child's English teacher and a graduate student working on an advanced degree in education at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota. As part of my graduate work, I plan to conduct research in your child's classroom from April 2017 – May 2017. The purpose of this letter is to ask your permission for your child to take part in my research. This research is public scholarship the abstract and final product will be cataloged in Hamline's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository and that it may be published or used in other ways.

I want to study how routine, structured oral interactions influences student participation and academic language proficiency. I have used these cooperative groups for 2 years in 3 different classrooms. I believe it to have a very positive effect on student engagement and learning. Now, I would like to measure the effects by observing students and conducting interviews.

I plan to observe student interactions in the classroom in April 2017. Following the first observation, I will introduce to students their structured, routine cooperative groups. After the first observation, students will complete lessons communicating with their structured, routine groups. After 4 weeks of using this strategy, I will observe student interaction in their groups. Following the second observation, I will interview your son or daughter about their experiences working in these cooperative groups versus

their experiences with out these structures. The interviews will only last 15 minutes and I will be sure to conduct them when they are not missing out on important assignments and learning.

There is little to no risk for your child to participate. As a school, we have found these cooperative speaking groups to benefit student learning. Therefore, teachers are already being encouraged to implement these groups in their classrooms. I am taking these a step further by formally studying their effects on academic language and learning. All results will be confidential and anonymous. I will not record information about individual students, such as their names, nor report identifying information or characteristics in the capstone. Participation is voluntary and you may decide at any time and without negative consequences that information about your child will not be included in the capstone. The capstone will be catalogued in Hamline's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository. My results might also be included in an article for publication in a professional journal or in a report at a professional conference. In all cases, your child's identity and participation in this study will be confidential.

If you agree that your child may participate, keep this page. Fill out the duplicate agreement to participate on page two and return to me by mail or no later than _____.

If you have any questions, please email or call me at school.

Sincerely,

Emily King

– –

Informed Consent to Participate in Observation and Qualitative Interview

Keep this full page for your records.

I have received your letter about the study you plan to conduct in which you will be observing students' oral interactions in groups and conducting interviews. I understand there is little to no risk involved for my child, that his/her confidentiality will be protected, and that I may withdraw or my child may withdraw from the project at any time.

__________________________________ ____________

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Participant copy

Revised November 2016

APPENDIX J

Informed Consent Requesting Permission of Adults to Take Part in Research

Dear _____,

I am graduate student working on an advanced degree in education at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota. As part of my graduate work, I plan to conduct research in your classroom from April 2017 – May 2017. The purpose of this letter is to ask your permission to take part in my research. This research is public scholarship the abstract and final product will be cataloged in Hamline's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository and that it may be published or used in other ways.

I want to study how routine, structured oral interactions influences student participation and academic language proficiency. I have used these cooperative groups for 2 years in 3 different classrooms. I believe it to have a very positive effect on student engagement and learning. Now, I would like to measure the effects by observing students and conducting interviews.

I plan to observe student interactions in the classroom in April 2017. Following the first observation, I will introduce to students their structured, routine cooperative groups. After the first observation, students will complete lessons communicating with their structured, routine groups. After 4 weeks of using this strategy, I will observe student interaction in their groups. Following the second observation, I will interview you about your experiences using cooperative groups in your classroom compared to your

experiences with out these structures. The interview will only last 15 minutes and I will be sure to conduct them a time that is convenient for you.

There is little to no risk for you to participate. As a school, we have found these cooperative speaking groups to benefit student learning. Therefore, teachers are already being encouraged to implement these groups in their classrooms. I am taking these a step further by formally studying their effects on academic language and learning. All results will be confidential and anonymous. I will not record information about you, such as your name, nor report identifying information or characteristics in the capstone. Participation is voluntary and you may decide at any time and without negative consequences that information about you will not be included in the capstone.

The capstone will be catalogued in Hamline's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository. My results might also be included in an article for publication in a professional journal or in a report at a professional conference. In all cases, your identity and participation in this study will be confidential. If you agree to participate, keep this page. Fill out the duplicate agreement to participate on page two and return to me by mail or no later than _____.

If you have any questions, please email or call me at school.

Sincerely,

Emily King

– –

Informed Consent to Participate in Qualitative Interview

Keep this full page for your records.

I have received your letter about the study you plan to conduct in which you will be interviewing me on my experiences using the routine, structured cooperative groups. I understand there is little to no risk involved for me, that my confidentiality will be protected, and that I may withdraw myself from the project at any time.

__________________________________ __________________

Participant Signature Date

Participant copy

Revised November 2016

APPENDIX K

IRB Approval

HAMLINE
UNIVERSITY

TO: EMILY D. KING

FROM: HAMLINE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

RE: IRB APPROVAL (12/20/16)

Your proposal is approved and requires no further modification or review.
Good Luck with the project.

www.hamline.edu 1536 Hewitt Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104-1284 p: 651-523-2800