

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In recent years, the education industry has become a huge export commodity in many Western nations. Currently, there are an estimated two million students studying overseas and this number is predicted to rise to seven million by the year 2025 (Campbell, 2004). New Zealand (NZ) has become one of the most popular study destinations for English language learning, making the education industry NZ's third largest export earner behind tourism and dairy products.

As part of their English language learning experience, many students choose the accommodation option of living with a local family in a homestay. It is thought that a homestay is a continuous immersion environment which provides the learner with authentic target language input (Rivers, 1998). In fact, many in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) regard the homestay as the '*sine qua non*' of language study abroad (Brecht, Frank & Rivers, 1998a cited in Rivers, 1998; Davidson, 1995). In addition to being a setting in which to maximise the opportunities for language learning (Fryer & Lukasevich, 1998; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2004; Richardson, 2003), it is believed that the homestay is an environment in which students can experience and learn the host culture (Campbell, 2004; Ronson, 1998; Welsh, 2001).

However, despite having experienced a boom in international student numbers in NZ, English Language Providers, part of Statistics NZ (2004), recently reported that expenditure by international students enrolled in English language institutions had fallen by NZ \$90 million in 2004 and the accommodation sector had declined 20% to NZ \$50 million. There have been numerous reports in NZ (Welsh, 2001; Campbell, 2004) claiming that students are unhappy with the homestay sector. Their dissatisfaction stems from a variety of sources, such as mean hosts who become involved in hosting not for the well-being and pastoral care of the student but rather to boost their family income, and homestay families who are too busy to spend time interacting with the students.

All of these factors can impact on the homestay and can lead to feelings of frustration and isolation for the students which in turn can lead to a negative homestay environment. In such cases, students may avoid interaction with the homestay family, and thus potential language learning opportunities may be lost. In effect, the student's objective in choosing a homestay, to improve their linguistic competence, is defeated.

1.2 STUDY AIMS

The first aim of this study is to investigate the expectations students have regarding homestays and whether these expectations are met. If students are dissatisfied with the homestay service, they are likely to spend time alone in their rooms. Alternatively, they may mix with students of their own ethnicity and abandon English in favour of their mother tongue. In doing so, one can presume that valuable interaction time with the homestay family (i.e. engaged in using English) will be lost.

Secondly, recent international research has suggested that the perceptions of the homestay families themselves need to be examined. Although research has been conducted in this area, it has been mainly carried out overseas (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002; Radhakrishna and Ingram, 2004; Richardson, 2003). Research into the homestay is conspicuously absent from the literature. According to Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002), in failing to acknowledge this perspective, the most authentic source of information regarding the homestay experience is being ignored. My study will look at the perceptions homestay families have of their role in the homestay and in particular in the language learning process of the students.

Thirdly, some of the literature (Beaver & Tuck, 1998; Eng & Manthei, 1984; Klepinger, 1995) has suggested that students are ill prepared for their overseas experience and as a result experience difficulties adjusting and suffer from culture shock. Although some studies have examined these two issues, there are no studies to-date in NZ which have examined culture shock and adjustment together with students' expectations and homestay families' perceptions.

My belief is that in order for language learning opportunities to arise, certain prerequisites need to be met. Firstly, students need to be happy in their homestays and their expectations need to be fulfilled. Secondly, homestay families' perceptions of

their roles as homestay hosts need to be realistic and closely match those of the students. Thirdly, students need to feel settled and problems of adjustment and culture shock need to be minimalised. As a result of addressing and meeting the requirements of these objectives, it would be reasonable to assume that opportunities for language learning within the homestay context would occur. This study will examine the types of opportunities which occur and when.

Despite the fact that numerous studies examining the language learning experiences of learners abroad have been carried out, (Carroll, 1967; Dyson, 1988; Lafford, 1995; Milleret, 1991; Milton & Meara 1995), these have focused more on the language learning opportunities which arise in the overseas community or as a result of overseas study. Little research has examined the second language (L2) learning opportunities which arise purely in the homestay setting. This is particularly surprising, given that the homestay is regarded by many as the optimal language learning environment (Fryer & Lukasevich, 1998; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2004).

This study needs to be conducted for a variety of reasons. Firstly, in order to meet the demands of overseas students, it is essential that both students and homestay hosts have a positive relationship. Both parties should be aware of their responsibilities. Most of all, students need to feel they are being provided with a setting in which opportunities for language learning exist. Secondly, between March 2003 and March 2004, Isana (International Student Advisors Network of Australia)¹ reports show that student numbers enrolled in English language courses in NZ fell from 72,000 to 51,000 and as a major revenue earner for NZ, it is in the country's interest to increase student numbers. Thirdly, NZ needs to do everything possible to remain competitive in today's market because students have alternative study options.

This study will lead to a further understanding of the types of language learning opportunities in the homestay and when such opportunities arise. Furthermore, as a result of this study being conducted, both homestay families and students will be provided with suggestions about strategies they can use to enhance language learning in the homestay.

¹ NZ is a part of ISANA, but this acronym is still used because it is already well known in Australia.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THESIS

Chapter Two, the Literature Review (Part One), will provide a theoretical background to the research on SLA which is relevant to the homestay setting. Chapter Three, the Literature Review (Part Two) will provide an extensive overview of previous research on homestays, both overseas and in NZ. A rationale for the study and the four research questions will be presented at the end of this chapter. In Chapter Four, the methodology of the study will be described. Chapter Five will present the study results in relation to the research questions and a discussion of the results with reference to previous research findings and theoretical issues. In the final chapter, Chapter Six, conclusions will be drawn from the findings. These will be discussed in relation to both the theoretical and pedagogical implications and limitations of the study. Recommendations for future research will also be suggested.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Given that the main focus of my research is on exploring which types of language learning opportunities occur in the homestay and when they occur, it is essential that second language learning theories relevant to the homestay setting are examined, in order to understand why such opportunities may arise. In the first part of the literature review, I define what is meant by SLA; then go on to examine the Behaviourist View and its implications for the homestay. The role of input and how the Input Hypothesis can be applied to language learning in the homestay context is then considered, and part of this section also discusses how homestay families use foreigner talk (FT) and how this may benefit the learner. This is followed by a brief examination of the effects of the Affective Filter on a learner's progress, before the role of output is discussed. I examine the Interactionist Theory and consider the contribution of negotiation of meaning and feedback provided by homestay hosts, as well as examining the role of noticing. The output which learners need and the way in which reduced distance between the student and the family may enable the learner to 'acculturate' more easily into NZ society, and how this may in turn facilitate the learning process are then considered. Finally, I consider Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and its components, including the activities which facilitate engagement between homestay families and students (activity); how families help learners through interaction (mediation); the assistance provided by families (scaffolding); and the zone of proximity (ZPD) in which this takes place.

2.2 WHAT IS SLA AND WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF SLA?

The term SLA refers to the acquisition of any language which is learned after one's mother tongue. This could be the second, third or any subsequent language. This language learning could take place in a formal setting such as in the classroom or in a natural surrounding such as a homestay context abroad. Ellis (1997) describes SLA as the way in which people learn a language other than their first, either inside or outside the classroom. For the purpose of this study, SLA is the learning of the second language by international students in the natural environment of the homestay within NZ.

The goals of SLA are to provide an explanation of how languages are learnt. This means identifying both external and internal factors which may explain why learners acquire an L2 in the way they do. Firstly, external factors relate to the social milieu in which learners learn the language; in this study, this is the homestay. It is the social conditions which influence the opportunities that learners have to hear and speak the language, as well as the attitudes they have towards it. For instance, a learner whose expectations have been met and who is, therefore, happy in a homestay is likely to have a very different experience to a learner whose expectations have been left unfulfilled. Secondly, in order for learning to occur, learners need to have exposure to target language input. In the homestay setting, providing expectations are met, students should have opportunities to listen to authentic language provided by their homestay families, as well as having opportunities to engage in meaningful interaction with them. It is this interaction which enables students to practise what they have learned or heard. I now turn to the role of input and how this may affect the language learning process of the learner.

2.3 BEHAVIOURIST VIEW

One of the earlier views of how second languages were learned was the Behaviourist View. This theory was dominant in the 1950s and 1960s (Skinner, 1957) and may have implications for the role of the homestay setting in language learning. It is based on the idea of habit formation and as Brooks (1960, p. 49) put it “The single paramount fact about language learning is that it concerns, not problem solving, but the formation and performance of habits.” Learners, according to this theory, learn by being presented with examples of language rather than analysing it. If students live in a homestay for an extended period of time and interact with the homestay hosts on a regular basis, we may reasonably assume that they will be exposed to language input (stimuli). Through constant interaction with the family the stimuli that they are surrounded by are reinforced. This repeated reinforcement will elicit the same response over and over again and will eventually become habit. If students respond correctly homestay families will provide positive reinforcement in the form of correct repetitions or imitations. They may provide learners with feedback about their progression and the conversation will continue. If learners give an incorrect response homestay families may provide negative reinforcement by indicating that something in the response is deviant from the target language norm. In such cases, learners may abandon their initial response in

favour of one, which is grammatically correct. Applying this theory to the homestay context, homestay families need to provide students with the right amount of input, as well as reinforcing their attempts to produce output.

However, this theory came under attack, particularly from Chomsky (1959), who argued that learners do not always 'copy' the language they hear. He provided examples of childrens' errors which could not have been produced by exposure to the speech of their more linguistically competent parents. Similarly, second language learners often continue to make mistakes despite having their errors pointed out to them. Chomsky (1959) further supported his theory by stating that children are able to master complex linguistic rules, such as those governing question formation, even though they have access to limited input.

Assuming there is interaction between homestay members and students, the Behaviourist model may indeed help us to understand how language learning occurs in the homestay. However, in light of the development of other, newer theories, we should consider other possibilities of how language learning occurs. For this reason, I now turn to the role of input, which became influential in the 1980s.

2.4 INPUT

The literature has shown that one of the main reasons students choose to live in homestays is that they expect to have exposure to the target language and they will be able to practise it (Campbell, 2004; Fryer & Lukasevich, 1998; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2004; McFredries, 2002; Welsh, 2001). This exposure is known as input, and may be in a written or spoken form. In the homestay, students may have access to spoken input by engaging in conversations with their homestay families. Futhermore, they may receive input from listening to the radio or watching television. The role of input is often discussed in terms of the Input Hypothesis, which I now address.

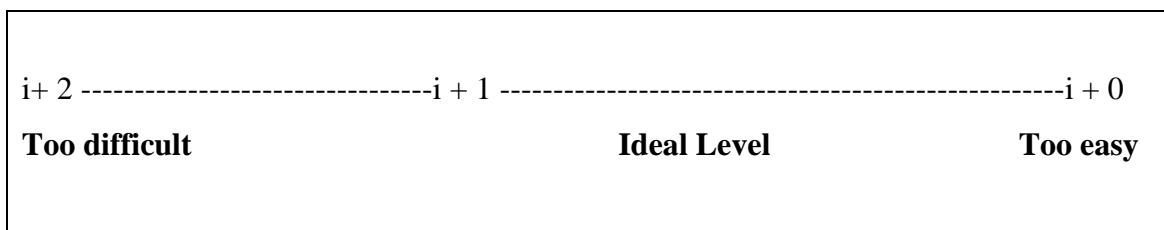
2.4.1 The Input Hypothesis

According to Krashen (1981) exposure to comprehensible input is necessary and sufficient for SLA to occur. Krashen claims (1981, p. 2) "Humans acquire language only in one way – by understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input."

Krashen (1981) proposed the Input Hypothesis to explain that the input which best facilitates a learner's needs is at the 'i + 1' level. This means learners understand input which is a little bit beyond their current level of competence. He claims that, at this level, learners can understand most of the message being conveyed but not the complete message. In the case of the homestay, the family could provide the student with input that they could comprehend for the main part. However, the student would not understand the complete message because some of the input would be slightly beyond their current level of competence.

In providing input, it is also possible that a homestay family may oversimplify the target language, by using simpler structures and forms, to the extent that the learner receives 'i + 0.' In such cases, although learners can understand the whole message, they will be left unchallenged and are unlikely to improve their target language competence. At the other extreme, homestay hosts may provide input which is at the 'i + 2' stage. This is when native speakers (NSs) use structures which are too difficult for learners. In such cases, learners are likely to be overwhelmed with the information presented and progress is again unlikely. Krashen (1981) maintains that the ideal exposure (i + 1) provides the learner with structures and forms beyond their present level of capability. This can be seen in Figure One below.

Figure One *The Input Hypothesis*



Krashen (1981) regards the Input Hypothesis as the single most important concept in SLA in that it attempts to answer the critical question of *how* learners acquire a language. He maintained that the ability to communicate in a second language cannot be taught directly, but emerges on its own as a result of building competence through comprehensible input. Krashen (1981) contends that communicative competence arises from exposure to language in meaningful settings (i.e. Homestay). Rules, patterns, and vocabulary are gradually established in the learner's repertoire on the basis of exposure to comprehensible input. In applying this theory to the homestay, homestay families

would not need to teach their learners features of the target language. Rather, this would be provided automatically if enough input was understood. The challenge facing families is in providing the learner with the right level of input, which should be neither too easy, nor too difficult.

However, it must be acknowledged that not all researchers share Krashen's (1981) view, in believing that input alone is sufficient for acquisition. For instance, Long (1996) provides the example of comprehension problems. In such cases, the input is often made comprehensible by means of conversational adjustments and it is this very input which Long (1996) stresses is necessary for acquisition. Swain (1995) contends that pushed output is needed for a learner to develop certain grammatical features that would not appear to be acquired purely by comprehensible input alone. Furthermore, others, such as Sharwood Smith (1986) claim that the processes of comprehension and acquisition are not the same thing. It is therefore not surprising that the role of input in L2 acquisition remains a controversial issue, even today.

2.4.2 Foreigner Talk

In considering the input which learners may be exposed to, we must also consider the type of input. In addressing non native speakers (NNSs), NSs may modify their speech in order to aid comprehension and communication. This type of modified speech is often referred to as FT. In modifying their speech, Lightbown and Spada (1996) believe that most NSs are able to sense what adjustments are needed. Often, they overlook errors which do not interfere with meaning, and indeed it would not be feasible to correct learners all of the time.

The type of FT provided in the homestay may vary depending on the family and the language level of the student. In some cases, the FT may be *grammatically* correct but simplified linguistically, including shorter utterances, a narrower range of vocabulary and less complex grammar (Long, 1996). However, in other cases, if families modify their speech too drastically, learners may be presented with input which is *ungrammatical*. Ferguson (1971) revealed that ungrammatical input often includes omitting copulas, articles, conjunctions, and subject pronouns. She also found that there was a tendency by NSs to use expansion (insertion of 'You' in imperative forms) and replacement or rearrangement (post verbal negations were replaced by pre-verbal

negations e.g. No want play). Discourse, including FT, may also extend to pronunciation whereby NSs use exaggerated intonation or epenthesis. Reduced vowels may be replaced by full vowels. In terms of lexis, FT may use names instead of pronouns, special lexicon of quantifiers, intensifiers and modal participles.

Ferguson's (1971) findings are supported by other studies. Hatch, Shapira and Wagner-Gough (1978) compared the speech of an adult learner (Zoila) and a NS friend (Rita). Although Rita's speech was not an exact replica of Zoila's, it did contain evidence of ungrammatical forms such as the deletion of the pronoun 'it' and the auxiliary 'do'. The researchers concluded that the NS was unable to stop herself from producing ungrammatical forms.

According to Long (1996) a number of factors may induce ungrammatical FT. These include the learner's proficiency level; if NSs perceive themselves to be of a higher status than NNSs; whether or not the NS is used to using FT; and if the conversation is spontaneous or planned. Given such factors, the implications on the learner with respect to the homestay context need to be considered.

On the whole, research on FT has discovered that most input modifications produced by NSs are of a target-like nature. For example, Arthur, Culver, Thomas, Young, and Weinter (1980) in recording 60 telephone conversations between NNSs and English NSs (ticket agents), found no instances of ungrammatical input modifications. Other researchers (Gaies, 1977; Hakansson, 1986; Henzl, 1973) in examining teacher talk, also reported an absence of ungrammatical modifications.

Assuming that the FT presented to learners *is* of a grammatical nature, this can facilitate the learning process in three ways. Firstly, FT can promote communication by making the input easier to understand, process or clarify (Hatch, 1992). Secondly, FT can signal a speaker's attitudes towards their interlocutors. For example, as Hatch (1992) points out, if the relationship between both parties (homestay hosts and students) is a positive one, FT can create an affective bond between the speakers. Finally, FT can be used to implicitly teach the target language by providing the learner with input at the 'i + 1' level, encouraging the learner to progress. The challenge facing families is to provide language which is simplified, but not oversimplified, to aid comprehension and communication.

2.4.3 Affective Filter

In considering the role of input, it is also useful to consider the Affective Filter, an imaginary barrier which prevents learners from using input which is available in the environment. According to Krashen (1981), if learners are to effectively process the input made available to them their Affective Filter must be down. The filter was first proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977) and is defined as that part of the internal processing system that subconsciously screens incoming language based on what psychologists call 'affect'. It has four functions: firstly, it determines which language models learners will select; secondly, which part of the language a learner will attend to first; thirdly, when the learner's efforts should cease; and fourthly, it affects how quickly a learner can acquire a language.

If a homestay student's expectations are met, it could be assumed that they are happy, relaxed and motivated in their environment. Their state of being could lead to their Affective Filter being 'down' and in such instances they may be more likely to process the input to which they are exposed. On the other hand, if learners are unhappy the filter may be up and input may not be processed. Rather, the student may avoid contact with their family by staying in their room or by socialising with their own ethnic group.

2.4.4 Output

Krashen (1981) claims that input alone is sufficient for SLA to occur. Applying his view to the homestay context, Krashen (1981) would contend that purely by listening to the input provided by homestays, students would learn to speak the target language. However, other researchers (Hatch, 1992; Long, 1996; Pica, 1994; Swain, 1995) have strongly refuted such claims. They believe that in order for acquisition to occur, learners must have opportunities to practise and produce the target language. This is known as output. Learners need to be able to experiment with the language so that they can receive feedback to analyse the target language form and structure. Filmore sums up this idea (1982, p. 9):

Unless the speakers use the language in ways that permit the learners to figure out what is being talked about, the learners will not be able to perform the necessary analyses on

the language. Unless the learners try to sort things out and provide feedback to the speakers to aid them in making the necessary adjustments, learning will not occur.

Swain (1995) proposed the 'Output Hypothesis' based on a study of immersion students studying French in Canada. Swain's (1995) research revealed that input alone did not lead to acquisition. Even though the students achieved native-like skills in their comprehension of French, they weren't as strong in their production. She attributed this to the fact that the classroom mainly involved reading and listening. Swain (1995) proposes three functions for learner output which have to do with the development of the interlanguage system. Firstly, by producing the target language, learners are made aware of gaps and problems in their L2 system. Secondly, output enables learners to produce and experiment with new structures and forms. Thirdly, output provides learners with opportunities to reflect on, discuss, and analyse the problems explicitly.

In applying the Output Hypothesis to the homestay, learners can receive input from NSs and can put what they have learned into practice (Output). In producing this output, students are pushed to produce speech which is grammatically correct and is an appropriate use of the L2. They can reflect on their production of the target language, discuss the language learning process and analyse problems when they arise. Output does not create new knowledge, but rather is a way for learners to practise using existing knowledge. Swain (1995) argues against Krashen's (1981) claim that grammatical competence is achieved automatically, provided there is enough input. She contends that learners need opportunities for meaningful use of their linguistic resources. In the homestay, the learners would need to interact with the family members and produce output for learning to occur.

2.5 INTERACTIONIST VIEW

Like Krashen (1981), Long (1996) believes that for SLA to be successful a learner has to have exposure to comprehensible input. Although Long (1996) states that comprehensible input is necessary he is more concerned with *how* this input becomes comprehensible. Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996) contends that modified interaction is vital in this process. In order for SLA to occur, learners need to interact with NSs. This would be the NNS (learner) and the NS (homestay). During interaction, NSs constantly modify their speech to aid comprehension for NNSs. Long (1996) states

that it is this interactional modification that is necessary for making language input comprehensible. This, in turn, promotes acquisition. Therefore, it could be said that interactional modification promotes acquisition.

To test his Interaction Hypothesis, Long (1996) carried out an examination of oral tasks between NSs and between NSs and NNSs. In terms of grammatical accuracy there was very little difference in the language they produced. However, in attempting to solve communication difficulties, NSs and NNSs were more likely to use conversational tactics such as repetitions, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, and clarifications. It seems that NSs resort to such tactics, not in an effort to teach grammar, but due to experiencing communication problems. Long (1996) believes such interaction tactics are useful for language learning. As learners negotiate their way through problems, the L2 input becomes more fine-tuned making it more comprehensible. Through negotiation of meaning the input is questioned, re-cycled and paraphrased thereby increasing comprehensibility.

In further support of Long's Interaction Hypothesis, Pica (1994) found that interactional modifications of input do lead to increased comprehension. She carried out a study involving two groups who listened to a script in order to complete a task. One group listened to a linguistically modified version of the script but were not allowed to ask questions as they carried out the instructions. The second group listened to the original script but could ask for clarifications. This latter group outperformed the former group, who listened to the simplified script, indicating that using clarification does indeed assist learners in their comprehension.

If we apply the Interaction Hypothesis to the homestay setting, we could expect the family to provide modified input to aid communication and comprehension. In addition to linguistic simplification, they may assist learners in the communication process by speaking at a slower rate, adopting gestures or using contextual clues. Homestay students should be in a position, due to their input being modified, to increase their understanding.

2.5.1 Negotiation of Meaning

I have already established that if students engage in meaningful dialogue with their homestay hosts, they will have opportunities to produce and practise their target language output. As part of the communication process, students, using a language other than their mother tongue, are sometimes likely to encounter difficulties of miscommunication. Ellis (1994, p. 260) describes the latter as arising “when some message other than that intended by the speaker is understood.” This miscommunication can take the form of a misunderstanding whereby the family and student are unlikely to proceed with the conversation. If the miscommunication results in ‘incomplete understanding’ a repair, in the form of negotiation of meaning, can be initiated.

Through negotiation learners can be made aware of the hypothesis that they are entertaining as they produce language. Learners also test hypotheses through self-correction. For example, negotiation sequences between NSs and NNSs may provide NNSs with instances of corrective feedback. Gass and Varonis (1994) carried out a study of a Japanese student, Hiroko, learning English and discovered that she willingly accepted correction from her peer, indicating that learners do test hypotheses through self-correction in interacting with other speakers. These findings are further supported by a study conducted by Pica, Holliday, Lewis and Morgenthaler (1989). Their study showed that clarification requests yielded modifications in learner output, again suggesting that learners do test hypotheses about L2.

Negotiation of meaning may occur in a variety of forms (See Figure Two below). Homestay families may assist the conversation by using confirmation checks which entail the use of rising intonation, or repetition to clarify the previous utterance. Alternatively, they may use comprehension checks, by asking questions, to ascertain whether or not the student has understood the message. Students may make homestay hosts aware that they have not understood the message by using clarification requests, such as asking for repetition or simply saying ‘I don’t understand’. The homestay hosts may also use recasts to indicate a non-target like form. A recast enables the NS to use a target-like form without losing the learner’s original meaning. All of these strategies may enable both parties to successfully resume the conversation and in doing so provide

the learner with further opportunities to practise the target language and to improve their linguistic competence.

Figure Two***Negotiation of Meaning***

(1) Confirmation Check	<p>S1: One kind is hokey pokey ice-cream S2: Hokey pokey? S1: Yes, hokey pokey ice-cream and the other is. Actually I don't re-// S2: //I see. You don't remember</p>
(2) Comprehension Check	<p>S1: Where shall we meet? S2: We'll meet at 8.00pm at the town hall. Where shall we meet? S1: At the town hall. S2: Good. Now, what time did I say? S1: At 8.00pm S2: Yes, that's right.</p>
(3) Recast	<p>S1: I go yesterday to park and play football. S2: Ah, I went to the park yesterday and I played football. S1: Ah, I went to the park yesterday and I played football.</p>

2.5.2 Feedback

As part of the negotiation of meaning process, homestay students, who are pushed to produce the target language frequently, will inevitably have exposure to feedback. Feedback refers to information given to the learner which they can use to revise their interlanguage (Ellis, 1994) and may be either positive or negative. Positive feedback comes from exposure to speech of NSs (homestay families). Negative feedback is when the learner is provided with information that their utterance is, in some respect, deviant from the target language norm.

Some research has shown (Birdsong; 1989; Gass, 1988a; Schacter, 1988;) that it is *negative evidence* (incorrect forms), not *positive evidence* which is the essential ingredient in the goal of learning an L2. Via negative feedback, a learner is provided with a means of focusing on those areas of a language that do not match the target language. Applied to the homestay context, families may point out such errors to their students, enabling them to become aware that they have produced a form which in some way differs from the target language structure. Negotiation between the homestay families and students thus enables the latter to search for additional information which either confirms or defies this evidence.

White (1991) conducted a study in order to learn ‘how learners learn not to do something in their L2 which is permitted in their first language (L1).’ He studied the development of adverb placement by French students learning English. His research involved five classes of NNSs learning English and a control group of monolingual English NSs. Some classes were provided with explicit instruction on adverb placement plus exercises and corrective feedback. The other groups were given instruction on questions using the same type of exercises but no explicit instruction on adverbs. The classes lasted two weeks. Pre and post-tests were administered in addition to a second post-test five weeks later and a follow-up test a year later. The results showed that negative evidence did promote the learning of adverb placement. However, there was no difference when the learners were tested one year later. These results may be explained by the fact that the subjects did not receive further focused evidence. If we are to assume negotiation in the form of negative evidence initiates change, which restructures linguistic knowledge, then reinforcement is needed if the restructuring is to

have a long-term effect. In the case of the homestay setting, students who stay with a family long-term are more likely to be in a position to receive reinforcement.

The effects of positive evidence in negotiation of meaning have also been examined. Trahey and White (1993) tested the influence of positive evidence using a study which resembled the one above. The main differences were that the post-test was administered three weeks later and there was no follow up test. They discovered that positive evidence could make learners aware of features in the L2 which are different to the L1. However, it is negative evidence that shows what is not possible in the L2 when it is possible in the L1.

The advantages of living in a homestay are that learners are made aware, through interaction and negotiation with NSs, of the differences between their L1 and L2. By working together, families and students can achieve mutual understanding. What's more, these negotiations involve linguistic and interactional modifications, which combined can offer the learner repeated opportunities to notice aspects of target language forms. Through negotiation of meaning NNSs can attend to, take up and use language systems made available to them by NSs. However, in accepting the benefits that negotiation of meaning has to offer there are several limitations. Firstly, it would not be possible for hosts to correct their learners all the time. Secondly, learners do not always realise that an error has actually occurred. Sometimes, error acknowledgement (E.g. Huh?) does not equip the learner with specific information about the error type and it doesn't inform the learner of what action needs to be taken to correct the error. Thirdly, the learner may not always admit that they don't understand and the conversation may continue regardless.

2.5.3 Noticing

A further aspect of the Interactionist Theory is 'noticing'. Krashen (1981) believes that all that is necessary for a learner's input to become intake (incorporated into the learner's developing L2 system) is for the learner to pay attention to the meaning embedded in the input. As a result, acquisition of the language form takes place. However, others such as Schmidt (1994) contend that in order for acquisition to occur, some degree of attention to language forms is necessary. Schmidt (1994) uses the term 'noticing' to refer to the process of bringing some stimulus into focal attention. He

refers to the evidence of his own diary of learning Portuguese. He had heard certain language forms from the commencement of his stay and had been processing the forms for meaning. However, it was not until he later ‘noticed’ the forms that he was able to use them.

In further support of this theory, Schmidt and Frota (1986) examined a learner’s diary to ascertain which features the learner had consciously attended to. They also examined the learner’s output to see to what extent the noticed forms were used in his speech. They discovered that the learner tended to use the forms that he had noticed others saying to him. If students live in a homestay over an extended period of time, they may begin to notice forms provided by NS input and, in time, incorporate such forms into their own speech. Schmidt and Frota (1986) believe that for input to turn to intake learners have to compare what they have heard in the input and what they are currently producing in their own interlanguage system. By ‘noticing the gap’, they will be able to produce the form. The Interactionist Hypothesis allows NSs and NNSs to work collaboratively. In doing so, mutual understanding can be achieved. Within the homestay, negotiation of meaning, which involves linguistic and interactional modifications combined, offers the learner repeated opportunities to notice the significant aspects of the target language norm.

2.6 ACCULTURATION THEORY

In considering the amount and type of input a learner has access to, it is necessary to also consider the amount of social distance between NSs and the NNSs. It would be reasonable to assume that learners living in a homestay should have regular contact with that family. Schumann’s (1978) acculturation theory may be applicable to the homestay setting as it is based on the principle of distance between the learner’s own social group and that of the target language. For learning to be successful (i.e. learners have access to input) learners need to acculturate to the target language group, in this case the homestay. Schumann (1978, p. 34) claims that, “SLA is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language.”

According to Schumann (1978), two types of acculturation exist. One is where learners are both socially integrated into the target language group and psychologically open to

the target language. This means they have enough contact with the speakers of that group to acquire the L2 (Type One). Type-two acculturation is when learners are not just socially integrated and psychologically open, but also desire to, either consciously or sub-consciously, adapt to the lifestyle and values of the target language group (Type Two). As Schumann (1978, p. 29) explains, “The learner regards the target language speakers as a reference group whose lifestyles he consciously or unconsciously desires to adopt.” So the more social and psychological distance there is between the two groups, the lower the learner’s acculturation will be. Both factors determine the amount of contact which a learner has with the target language group and the extent to which they are open to the input they receive.

In support of this theory, Cancino, Cazden, Rosansky and Schumann (1978) studied six learners of English over a ten-month period in America. While five of the learners showed significant progress, one of these learners, Alberto, a 33 year-old Costa Rican, showed little evidence of any linguistic development. As Alberto’s fossilisation could not be explained in terms of his age or cognitive development, this lack of progress was explained on the grounds of his social and psychological distance from the target language speakers. Alberto chose to socialise with Spanish speaking friends. He did not own a television as he claimed that he would not be able to understand the English. Furthermore, he chose to work at night, instead of attending English classes. The distance between Alberto’s ethnic group and the target language group was greater than that of the other learners.

This theory can be applied to the homestay setting because by having regular contact with the homestay, students may at least experience type-one acculturation. This means that learners are provided with opportunities to become immersed in the target language culture and society. This immersion provides learners with target language input, as well as opportunities to produce output and receive feedback. By spending time with the homestay family and learning about the target language culture and society the distance between the student and family may be reduced. Furthermore, if a student wishes to adapt to the lifestyle and values of New Zealanders (Example – they may wish to remain in NZ permanently) they may experience type-two acculturation. In applying Schumann’s (1978) theory to the homestay, one would need to consider the learner’s attitudes towards New Zealanders, their state of mind (Is their Affective Filter down?) their intended length of residence in NZ, as well as the amount of contact they have with NSs and indeed any time they spend with their own ethnic group.

2.7 SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY (SCT)

Some view target language interaction as a source of input for autonomous and internal learning mechanisms. A more recent view is that the interaction which constitutes the learning process is not so much individual as social in nature. Vygotsky (1978), a Soviet psychologist, believed that SLA was influenced by both social and cultural factors. He proposed the SCT which comprises three principle components: Activity Theory; the role of mediation in learning; and the role of scaffolding and regulation in the ZPD. SCT could be relevant to the homestay setting as researchers (Donato, 1994; Lantolf, 2000) claim it involves interaction, which constitutes a significant part of the learning process. This is seen as being more social than individual in nature. Communication between the student and homestay host is seen as being central to the joint construction of knowledge. This knowledge is developed inter-mentally before being taken over (Appropriated by the NNSs) and internalised. I now discuss each individual component of SCT and its relevance to the homestay setting.

2.7.1 Activity Theory

Leontiev (1981) developed Activity Theory, which according to Mitchell and Myles (1998, p. 148) “comprises a series of proposals for conceptualising the social context within which individual learning takes place.” For example, the homestay would be the social context and learning would occur as the result of the student being engaged in communicative interaction with the family. Via communication with students and through doing activities with them, homestay hosts may be presenting the learners with opportunities to engage in real, goal orientated activities. The interaction between the two parties could be described as ‘social conversation’ (Talking without a specific purpose in mind) but it is likely that some interaction could be described as constituting meaningful language learning encounters. For instance, in playing a board game, learners need the language in order to successfully complete the task.

Leontiev (1981) conceived of Activity Theory as containing four elements: a subject, an object, actions, and operations. As an example, the subject could be the student who possesses a goal, such as learning English to communicate with a NS. In order to achieve this goal the student has to take certain actions, which are goal orientated. In the case of communicating with a NS, the goal may be the ability to respond to and ask

questions. The operational level refers to the way the action is executed. This will depend upon the conditions under which the activity is carried out. If the student is living in a homestay and has plenty of opportunities to hear and speak English, and the homestay family are happy to interact with him, it could be said that the conditions encourage learning to take place (the Affective Filter is down). The family may assist the learner by employing strategies such as repetition, simplification, and correction to ensure that the action (speaking) actually occurs. Once the student no longer attends to the conscious goal, the action becomes routine and automatic. However, the model of human activity which is depicted in activity theory is not static and is subject to change. For instance, the student may become unhappy in the homestay and learning may cease.

2.7.2 The Role of Mediation in Learning

The second component of SCT is mediation. Lantolf (2000) describes this as the process through which a learner interacts between mental and social activity. Through interaction and communication, there is the possibility that learning will take place. Lantolf (2000) claims that it is the higher forms of mental activity which are mediated. In the homestay, exchanges may occur between the experts (homestay hosts) and the novices (students), and it is this relationship which can lead to improved competence in L2 proficiency. Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) claim that as the novice becomes more competent they rely less on the expert. If interaction is successful, language acquisition will result. The homestay host could assist the students in acquiring a language by mediating the conversation, that is, helping the learner to acquire new language or knowledge through interaction.

2.7.3 The Role of Scaffolding and Regulation in the Zone of Proximal Development

The third component of SCT is scaffolding, which is the process of assisting learners to achieve their goal. Sometimes a learner may be able to function on their own. Such learning is known as 'self-regulation.' On the other hand, learners sometimes need assistance from those more experienced. This is referred to as the 'other regulation'. Children, for instance, rely on their parents or caregivers. It is the homestay hosts who may offer this assistance (scaffolding) to learners in the context of the homestay environment. The homestay family, being a knowledgeable participant, can create, by

means of speech, supportive conditions in which the novice (student) can participate and extend their current skills and knowledge to a higher level of competence. Scaffolding enables learners to engage in supportive dialogues, which culminate in successful problem solving. The homestay family can provide the necessary tools (input/feedback) to the student in order to complete the task. It is only with this assistance that students can achieve success.

The domain where such learning occurs is called the ZPD. This is described by Vygotsky (1978, p. 85) as “The difference between the child’s developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.” Should the learner not possess the knowledge or skills to function independently but have the assistance of an expert (homestay host) who can provide scaffolding, the learner can achieve the desired outcome, provided that they are in the ZPD. Given scaffolding, the learner can appropriate the necessary concepts and should, given a similar task, be able to regulate their performance.

Swain and Lapkin (1998) demonstrated that such cognitive learning arises from collaborative dialogue as learners jointly solve problems. Scaffolding allows the learner to interact successfully, acquire the necessary information to solve the problem at hand and, ultimately to provide solutions to the problem with which they are faced. Ohta (2000) studied the discourse of two Japanese learners to establish how they used regulation to enable them to successfully complete the task. Her findings show that learners are aware of the various moves which occur in a conversation. She also discovered that assistance is provided to the learner when indicated through discrete interactional clues. Such clues included pauses and asking for assistance directly. If students spend time studying alone they are often required to recognise and correct their own errors (self-regulation). However, if families assist them in their learning, this ‘other regulation’ may enable students to achieve a level of communication that might not have been possible without assistance. However, for acquisition to occur, learners must be at the appropriate stage of development (ZPD). Students sometimes do not take up the language learning opportunities available to them and this can be explained in terms of their ZPD.

2.8 SUMMARY

If expectations in the homestay are met, and students experience minimal problems of adjustment and culture shock, language learning opportunities should arise from the input provided by the homestay. Input may be authentic or may be modified in some way (FT) to assist the communication process. A low Affective Filter will ensure learners are receptive to the stimuli surrounding them. Being able to actively practise what they have been exposed to is generally agreed to be an essential element of the SLA process (output). During the interaction process, learners, are likely to encounter difficulties and will have to work through these with the aid of their homestay families to achieve mutual understanding (Negotiation of Meaning). Feedback (negative evidence) given to the learners can highlight forms which are deviant from the target language norm. Indeed, it has been said that negative evidence, not positive, is vital in the language learning process. For input to become intake, it may be said that learners have to pay attention to language forms. Positive reinforcement of stimuli may enable learners to incorporate new structures into their interlanguage system. These may eventually become automatic and routine (Behaviourist View). Furthermore, if the social distance between the learner and homestay family is reduced, it could be said that the learner has more opportunities, due to being acculturated, to perfect the target language. Finally, homestay families may as experts assist the novices by providing the necessary tools (scaffolding) provided that a learner is in the domain of the ZPD.

As is evident from the discussion of the literature, numerous theories have been put forward in an attempt to explain the various aspects of the SLA process. The theories discussed have highlighted that the nature of SLA is complex. Therefore it would be unwise to believe that there is just one model which could explain the entire SLA process. However, by considering a variety of viewpoints and by not claiming that one theory alone can explain the language learning process, we are allowing ourselves to increase our knowledge and to further understand the linguistic opportunities the homestay has to offer and how students take advantage of such opportunities.

This chapter has examined some of the SLA theories which may be influential to those learners living in a homestay environment. However, in order to understand more clearly the types of language learning opportunities which occur in the homestay and when such opportunities arise, it is also necessary to consider the homestay environment

itself. Firstly, it is necessary to examine students' expectations of the homestay and whether these expectations are fulfilled. Secondly, the homestay families' perceptions need to be considered to determine if there are any major discrepancies between their perceptions and the students'. Thirdly, it is also necessary to determine if homestay students have difficulty adjusting and if they suffer from culture shock in NZ. All of these issues will impact on the learning environment and for this it is not sufficient just to consider SLA theories on their own. The next chapter, Chapter Three, examines the above issues in light of the literature, both overseas and in NZ. It would seem, that if students' expectations are met, the homestay families' perceptions are also considered, and there are minimal disruptions of adjustment and culture shock, students should be able to concentrate on and take advantage of the linguistic opportunities presented to them. On the other hand, if these conditions are not met, language learning is unlikely to occur, even if opportunities do arise.

CHAPTER THREE - LITERATURE REVIEW

RESEARCH ON HOMESTAYS OVERSEAS AND IN NEW ZEALAND

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the research carried out which focuses on the homestay context, both overseas and in NZ. Firstly, I will explain how students first came to NZ and outline current trends in the market. Then I consider why NZ is seen as a popular choice of study destination for international students and examine the problems of adjustment and culture shock which they face. I will then define the word 'homestay' and explain its origins. This will be followed by a consideration of the benefits of living in a homestay and students' expectations regarding homestays as well as the perceptions homestay families have of their role. In the final part of this chapter, the studies which have looked specifically at language learning opportunities in the homestay context will be examined.

3.2 THE HISTORY AND DECLINE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN NEW ZEALAND

NZ has been a melting pot of many different nationalities for over a hundred years. The first migrants to arrive in significant numbers were predominantly of Chinese and Indian origin. Since the 1990s the Asian population has continued to expand and is predicted to rise to over 600,000 by the year 2021 (Statistics New Zealand, 2004). With this increase, NZ has also experienced a rise in the number of international students. According to a NZ press release (cited in an Isana newsletter, 2004), there were 118,684 international students in July 2003. The biggest student market was China (54,837), followed by Korea (21,198) and Japan (16,376) respectively.

However, since July 2003, trends in the market have been changing with a sharp decline in the number of international students enrolled in English language schools, particularly those from China. Furthermore, the accommodation sector has experienced decreased student numbers. This decline was prompted partly by bad press surrounding the closure of some prominent education providers such as Modern Age and Carich (The China Daily, 2003) and the lack of pastoral care of students. In addition, the

outbreak of SARS in Asia forced many students to stay at home, and the strong NZ dollar meant that NZ was no longer regarded as a 'cheaper' study option (Clarke, 2003).

As a result of these factors, it is being acknowledged more than ever before that international students are important to NZ's economy (Butcher & McGrath, 2004). As one of the country's largest export earners, it is vital that NZ does everything possible in order to remain competitive in today's increasing market. In addressing this very issue the Ministry of Education (2004, p. 1) recently announced the Government's plan to inject 40 million dollars into the education industry to raise NZ's overseas profile and strengthen the education sector, in particular, international education.

It is critically important to have a strong international dimension to our education system. The exposure that our education sector gets to overseas thinking raises education standards here, and the people-to-people connections are also important as our young people learn to operate in what is now a global marketplace.

From this message, it is clear that the Government now realises that measures need to be taken if NZ is to move forward as a strong contender in the overseas education market.

3.3 THE VALUE OF NEW ZEALAND AS A STUDY DESTINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Despite the current downturn of students in the market, there are numerous reasons students were initially attracted to NZ (Verbitsky, 1998). Firstly, as an English-speaking nation, NZ offers a quality education, with its qualifications being recognised worldwide. Many students come here to enrol in English Language schools to prepare for IELTS (International English Language Testing System), which helps them gain entry into institutions of higher education. Some wish to obtain an English qualification as an adjunct to their university studies at home. Others desire English for their careers, or in order to travel. Secondly, compared to other English-speaking countries, NZ is relatively cost effective. On average, Cumming (2002) estimates that students spend just \$30,000 a year on tuition fees, accommodation, and living expenses. Thirdly, NZ is perceived as having good race relationships. Fourthly, due to NZ's proximity to Asia,

many students are never too far from home. Finally, it is believed to be a safe place, is scenically beautiful, and offers a mild climate and outdoor lifestyle. These factors are what entice many international students to our shores, often with high expectations. To meet these expectations, NZ needs to provide a quality service. As part of this quality service, those in the homestay industry need to be equipped to deal with students and offer assistance when difficulties arise.

3.4 THE PROBLEMS OF ADJUSTMENT AND CULTURE SHOCK

The experience of studying and living abroad can be exciting and rewarding, as well as challenging. The literature has shown (Beaver & Tuck, 1998; Eng & Manthei, 1984; Klepinger, 1995) that two of the major problems impacting on the overseas experience are those of adjustment and culture shock. These problems stem from the fact that students often arrive with unrealistic expectations or are ill prepared for their overseas experience. If students' expectations are not met, language learning will be neglected in their attempts to try to simply comprehend what is happening around them. However, by recognising and dealing with these two issues, families may ease the transition period and enable students to settle more quickly into their homestay environment. In doing so, happier students and a more conducive language learning environment may result.

In NZ, difficulties in adjusting often occur because overseas students have limited contact with locals. As early as 1972, Dalley cited in James and Watts (1992) carried out a survey at the University of Otago, and reported cases of overseas students socialising in their own ethnic groups. He claimed that this was due to students experiencing communication problems and having different interests to the locals. He identified the lack of interaction as being an identity conflict that overseas students experience as newcomers in unfamiliar surroundings. However, Balasupramanian (1982) cited in James and Watts (1992) explains this behaviour from a different angle, suggesting that overseas students talk to their own compatriots because sharing the same language and cultural heritage means that they have something in common.

Other researchers, Everts and Sodjakusumah (1996), indicated that adjustment difficulties stem from the fact that students are often unprepared for their overseas trip. They carried out a survey of Indonesian government servants between the ages of

twenty-five and forty-one studying in NZ. Their study was both qualitative and quantitative, using open-ended questions in the students' own language. NZ was criticised for its lack of language training, and students found dealing with slang and colloquialisms hard. More timely and adequate orientation programmes to assist with such adjustment problems were suggested. The results of this study support previous findings. A number of researchers, such as Tan (1969), Furneaux (1973) cited in James & Watts (1992) and Kong (1975) also found that a lack of English proficiency was a major factor in the students' adjustment to the new society. Such problems led to feelings of anxiety, inadequacy, frustration, withdrawal and alienation. These, in turn, caused students to avoid social contacts or activities for fear of not being able to communicate sufficiently.

Everts and Sodjakusumah (1996) suggest that one of the ways to help students adjust could be by living in a homestay. In addition to being a place to practise English on a daily basis, the homestay could also be a useful tool for intercultural understanding, and for providing companionship. It could be that a homestay can equip students with the knowledge and skills to assist them in adjusting to unfamiliar cultural and social norms and may also allow students and homestay hosts to exchange ideas about their cultural origins. Leo (1983) reached similar conclusions. In a study of 244 Malaysian students in NZ he discovered that those who had managed to make Kiwi friends were better adjusted academically, socially, culturally, physically and generally to NZ life, particularly those who shared accommodation with New Zealanders. It could be that homestay students adjust more easily because they have opportunities to interact.

Part of the adjustment process may involve culture shock (Klepinger, 1995; Richardson, 2003) which can manifest itself in many forms. Culture shock can evoke an array of emotions which may be exciting, exhilarating, personally rewarding, and intellectually stimulating. However, it can also cause feelings of anxiety, worry, nervousness, and frustration. Oberg (1960), a social anthropologist, describes culture shock as comprising four stages: fascination, flight, fight, and fit, which, if drawn, resembles a U-curve. Fascination describes the stage in which students, either consciously or sub-consciously, develop expectations of the host culture. They have a 'romantic' notion of life overseas, expecting to receive a warm welcome and to make friends easily. This stage lasts from a few days to six months, depending on the individual. The second stage, flight, involves students coming to terms with their surroundings. They realise the demands of living overseas, and may experience conflicts with the host culture, as

well as difficulties with language barriers, study, and financial pressures. They often feel lonely and isolated. This stage is crucial because students begin to form opinions and attitudes. A negative experience can cause them to experience feelings of hostility or to totally reject their new surroundings. As a result they stay in their own ethnic groups or struggle on their own with feelings of depression or homesickness, thus avoiding contact with NSs. The next stage, fight, is the slow transition to acceptance. Courage and determination is needed by the students to overcome feelings of inertia. By now students should have enough English to get by and can learn to laugh at their mistakes. This stage is the recovery stage of culture shock as students learn to cope with the stresses of cross-cultural living. Few students actually arrive at the final stage, fit. Oberg (1960) describes this as a healthy sense of integration into a host culture. At this final stage, students have made important friendships within the host culture and are experiencing genuine intercultural contacts. If they return home at this point, they may experience reverse culture shock.

Like Oberg (1960), Lysgaard (1955) believes an adjustment period can be represented by a U-curve progression in which the adaptation period has three stages. The student arrives with initial elation. This is followed by a drop in satisfaction and usually ends in recovery. Both models of the experience of culture shock follow a similar pattern. However, not all researchers agree with this view. Church (1982) and Furnham and Bochner (1982) claim that the U-curve progression is over-generalised. Others, such as Pedersen (1995) and Holmes (2000), found results which were also inconsistent with these views. They claimed that most students commence their stays with a negative start, which is characterised by homesickness, anxiety, helplessness, and inadequacy.

If expectations are to be met, the first prerequisite is that students must feel happy in their surroundings. One of the roles of the homestay family should be to recognise and deal with the symptoms of culture shock. In responding to these symptoms, they may assist students in easing the adjustment period and help them make the most of homestay life.

3.5 THE DEFINITION OF HOMESTAY AND ITS ORIGINS

Before examining the homestay context in more depth it is important to define the term 'homestay' and to trace its origins. According to the Merriam-Websters (2005) online dictionary, a homestay is "*a period during which a visitor in a foreign country lives with a local family.*" Surprisingly the word 'homestay' is not included in many of the major dictionaries and, in Richardson's (2003) view, is still evolving. For instance, the word homestay has been associated with bed and breakfast style accommodation or international student accommodation. Despite this fact, Klepinger (1995) believes that homestay is not a new concept. He says that for centuries wealthy families have been sending their children overseas, hoping that the total immersion in a homestay environment will provide them with a wider range of ideas, experiences, and problem solving techniques to assist them in their lives. Another view, held by Campbell and Guyton (2003), is that the concept of homestays began in America with youth exchange programmes. In the education industry it is generally assumed to mean accommodation with a local family, which provides the student with full board and lodging. The student's stay may be short or long term and is one in which the student is likely to be exposed to the language, culture and customs of that country. In NZ many families offer their homes to students in return for payment. The homestay may comprise individuals or couples, who may or may not have children. Students are generally provided with their own room, breakfast, and dinner throughout the week, with three meals on the weekend.

3.5.1 The Benefits of Living in a Homestay

It is thought that students choose to live in homestays for a variety of reasons. Predominantly, they expect to have opportunities to practise the target language and experience the NZ culture (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2004; McFedries, 2002; Welsh, 2001). In fact, Fryer and Lukasevich (1998) believe that most English language programmes provide 'homestays' as a means of fulfilling their mandate to provide language training and cultural learning for those students who seek immersion. Crealock, Derwing and Gibson (1999) found that students enjoy the recreational and cultural opportunities a homestay has to offer. Being in a homestay can give students an immediate entry into a cultural and linguistic environment as well as a safe haven in which to reside.

Despite the objectives students have in choosing a homestay, some of the literature in NZ (Campbell, 2004; Taylor, 2002; Welsh, 2001) suggests that they are far from satisfied with the homestay service. Taylor (2002) even goes as far as depicting NZ homestays as a 'source of friction', despite the fact that they are being promoted as an integral part of international education, allowing students to practise their English while experiencing the host customs and culture. Further research needs to determine the expectations of international students and homestays in NZ, and if these expectations are met, as well as the kinds of language learning opportunities which occur, and how. This study addresses these aims.

3.6 OVERSEAS RESEARCH ON STUDENTS IN HOMESTAYS

Most of the previous research concerning homestays has been conducted overseas and has mainly focused on students' expectations, perceptions, and levels of satisfaction within the homestay (Fryer & Lukasevich, 1998; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2004; Marriott & Enomoto, 1995; Richardson, 2003;). From the research several key areas have been identified as being important factors contributing to a positive homestay experience: pre-departure preparation and representation of the homestay; the composition of the homestay environment; and children in the homestay. I will now discuss each area in turn.

3.6.1 Pre-departure Preparation and Accurate Representation of the Homestay

Research has identified that students are often not prepared for their overseas experience and that the reality of the homestay is not what they were expecting. Crealock, et al, (1999) explored, by means of semi-structured interviews, the experiences of nineteen Japanese students living in Canadian homestays. The students comprised 16 females and three males, between the ages of 15 and 18. They were interviewed on three occasions in Canada and thirteen of them were interviewed four months after returning to Japan. They were asked questions about the homestays; their attitudes to English and English language learning; English speaking people; Canadian lifestyle and culture; and their language learning experiences. An interpreter was present at the interview to assist them with language difficulties.

These students were positive about the Canadian lifestyle and enjoyed more time being devoted to family, recreational, and cultural activities. Nevertheless, they felt that the organisation of the homestay was far from satisfactory. A major criticism was the lack of pre-departure information. Students did not have enough knowledge about Canada and had little or no information about their families. One student even believed that an imaginary family had been invented because no family had been found prior to her departure. All students would have liked the opportunity to communicate with their homestay families beforehand.

Another problem was that the students felt that the exchange programme organisation had not provided them with sufficient details about the locations of their homestays and, in some cases, had actually given inaccurate information. As many students came from large cities, they found rural life difficult to adjust to, claiming it was too quiet. In addition, there were not enough conveniences and a severe lack of entertainment and transport. According to these Japanese students, some of the homestays themselves had unrealistic expectations. For instance, the students thought that they shouldn't have to do household chores or babysitting.

Another study, carried out by Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2004) over a two-year period in Spain and Mexico, echoed many of the problems mentioned above. Their subjects included sixty-two females and twenty-eight males with an average age of 20.5 years. The researchers administered questionnaires. Most students stressed the need to have pre-trip knowledge and felt that knowing some of the history, culture and customs of the country would have made their transition easier. They also wanted information about their families prior to departure and some even expressed the desire to correspond beforehand and establish a rapport. These results could have been influenced by the fact that many students had never travelled overseas before, or had only had limited travel experiences. Altbach & Kelly (1985) recognise that previous travel experience can be a variable influencing the homestay experience. For many students, it seemed, this was their first time away from home.

These studies revealed that students were not prepared for their year abroad and they believed it would have been beneficial to have had more accurate and timely information about their homestay families prior to their departures. In this way, students would have been more informed and possibly would have had more realistic

expectations. By being more prepared, students may be able to take more advantage of potential language learning opportunities in the homestay.

3.6.2 The Composition of the Homestay in Terms of Language Learning Opportunities

Another key area identified by the research is the homestay composition (Fryer & Lukasevich, 1998; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002). Some studies have examined what may be the 'ideal' number of students in a homestay, in order for language learning to be successful. The results of Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart's study (2002) showed that this ideal number tended to range from one to four students per household. Some of the schools believed that having more than one student helped the students to adjust more easily. Students themselves revealed that they liked having more than one student.

Fryer & Lukasevich (1998) also explored the preferred number of students per homestay. They interviewed eight students, all of whom were Japanese. Their analysis identified clearly mixed results depending on the linguistic ability and personality of the students. For example, students with lower language proficiency or those who were shy, preferred to live in homestays with just two students. These students felt that there would be too much pressure to speak and answer questions in a single student homestay. Intermediate level students liked the idea of a homestay with two or three students, based on the ease of communication when functioning in a group. Their reasoning was that they wished to be a part of the group but not the *entire focus* of the group. Interestingly, the more advanced speakers in this study preferred one or two students in the homestay, providing that the other student was not Japanese. They felt that this gave them plenty of opportunity to talk with NSs. Cholakian (1992) comments that language programmes aim to keep students of the same nationality apart because compatriot association is viewed as being both lazy and counterproductive behaviour. Wilkinson (1998), on the other hand, believes that associating with one's own ethnic group could benefit students by allowing them to discuss the cultural barriers and target language itself, as well as confirming the students' native identity.

These findings seem to depend on the level of the student and on the context of the research. For this reason, further analysis is needed to explore the composition of

homestay families in NZ, in order to determine whether or not an ideal number of students per household, in terms of potential language learning opportunities, does exist.

3.6.3 Children in the Homestay

Some of the literature (Farthing, 1997; Hashimoto, 1993) advocates that homestay families with children offer the most suitable setting for language learning due to students being able to interact with the children. Indeed, Hashimoto's (1993) study reveals the linguistic benefits gained from the presence of children in the homestay. His case study involved a female, 16 year-old Australian student of Japanese. Although she had not studied Japanese in high school, she did complete a short course, comprising fifteen hours tuition, before her departure to Japan. During her year abroad, she stayed with four homestay families, each for a period of three months, and attended a co-educational public high school. In addition to regular classes, she also had two hours per week of Japanese instruction and attended a Japanese school on Saturdays. Hashimoto (1993) used audio-recordings to collect his data. The findings revealed that the student was able to benefit from being an observer of corrective feedback given to the younger children by the host parents.

But children, it seems, do not always contribute positively to the homestay experience. Wilkinson (1998) conducted a longitudinal study over eight months. Her subjects comprised seven undergraduate women who were studying French at a summer programme in Valcourt, all of whom were living in homestays. She discovered that when one student, Ashley, interacted with the ten-year-old child, Gilbert, in her homestay, she became extremely frustrated. Ashley had expected Gilbert, being the NS, to lead the conversation. Gilbert, on the other hand, had expected Ashley, as the adult, to assume this responsibility. This indicates that the success of language learning does not entirely lie with the NS but also depends on the role the student assumes.

Despite the mixed outcomes of these research studies, several key areas have been identified as having a possible impact on language learning opportunities in the homestay. Firstly, students are not always well prepared for their homestay experience. Secondly, students do not always receive accurate information about their homestays. Thirdly, the composition of the family may impact on language learning opportunities, as may the presence of children. All of these areas are worthy of more research to

further establish the benefits of the homestay in terms of linguistic interaction. Having examined the research of homestays overseas, I now turn to the limited research in NZ.

3.7 RESEARCH ON STUDENTS IN NEW ZEALAND HOMESTAYS

Many of the students who choose to study in NZ also choose to reside in a homestay. However, despite this fact, relatively little research has been carried out examining the homestay environment from a NZ perspective. It is vital that this limited body of knowledge is added to, so that students can make informed choices about whether or not a homestay can fulfil their expectations and provide them with opportunities to practise the target language. This section examines the findings of homestay research in NZ so far.

Using semi-structured interviews and snowballing techniques, Campbell (2004) researched the expectations of forty Chinese students in NZ. 19 males and 21 females between the ages of 19 and 30 participated in her study. The time the students had spent in NZ ranged from one month to three years. 21 of the participants had lived with only one family. 19 had lived with two to four families. She found that they considered the following four aspects of the homestay to be important: language practice and improvement; cultural learning; food; and emotional support.

In terms of language practice and improvement, only four of the students in this study reported that their English language had progressed to any significant degree. This lack of progress appeared to be closely related to the level of engagement held between the students and the homestay hosts. Students perceived that the lack of contact time was due to their hosts being too busy, either at work or with children, or in some cases with both. It could be, as Noor (1968) perceived, that students' expectations were too high or simply that the demands of daily life meant that families had little time to spare to talk to the students. When time was available for interaction, some students complained that it was difficult to find a common topic of discussion. Campbell (2004) suggests that the lack of interaction could have been due to the fact that students perceived their relationship with their hosts to be a business one, whereby the main incentive to host was money. If students believe their homestay family is a friend rather than a business partner, it could be expected that the relationship will be of a more personal nature.

Leading from this, it is possible that a closer relationship may foster more interaction, in turn promoting more language learning opportunities.

Campbell (2004) also discovered that students expected the homestay to be a place where they could learn about and experience NZ culture, yet only eight students said that their expectations had been met or partially met by engaging in activities with their families. Those students who hadn't learnt anything said that they hadn't participated in any homestay activities. Interestingly, for the families, learning a culture had a different meaning. Their interpretation was that it meant accepting the food and food habits of NZ, observing house rules and assisting with chores. By examining the homestay families' perceptions and not just the expectations of the students, it may be possible to provide suggestions for making the homestay relationship work more successfully. If students and homestay families are happy, they are likely to interact more and one would expect more language learning opportunities to arise as a result of more frequent interaction.

The third finding was that food provided in the homestay often did not meet the students' expectations and left them feeling dissatisfied and unhappy. Often, they felt that there wasn't enough food, some even describing their hosts as mean. Some even ate different meals from the family. Ideally, mealtimes should be a time for interaction, and yet they were often a source of friction. Feeling unhappy or uncomfortable in one's surroundings does not ensure an optimum environment for language practice because students often retreat to their own rooms or socialise within their own ethnic groups. To improve the homestay experience Campbell (2004) suggested strategies such as providing enough food, providing a variety of foods, allowing students to cook for the family, sometimes buying take-outs and also encouraging the homestay family to learn how to cook some of the student's dishes. It is vital that issues concerning food are not ignored because in extreme cases students' dissatisfaction in this area is a reason why they leave homestays (Welsh, 2001).

Campbell's (2004) fourth finding was that the Chinese students in her study had a certain expectation regarding emotional warmth in the homestay. Despite many of the students expecting to be treated the same as the homestay's children or grandchildren, only four said that they had experienced this and, in fact, the homestay families revealed that they did not know that this was expected of them. Many Chinese are raised as an only child and it could be that their position, status, and expectations are somewhat

different to a child who has grown up with siblings. However, this study did not include other ethnicities, which would have undoubtedly influenced the findings.

Earlier research by Welsh (2001) found results similar to Campbell's (2004). Welsh (2001) undertook research investigating the homestay in NZ from the students' perspectives. His group comprised thirty-seven subjects from a variety of ethnicities. Using a mixture of interviews and questionnaires, he found that the two main reasons students selected a homestay were to learn English and to learn about NZ culture. However, students were often disappointed with the lack of interaction they had with their families. Unlike Campbell (2004), Welsh (2001) did include a range of nationalities in his study, although his study did not consider the families' perceptions. This aspect of the homestay experience is particularly pertinent if we are to make suggestions for an optimal language learning setting. No matter how enthusiastic a student is about learning the target language, if all the conditions for learning are not in place (i.e. homestay family is too busy at work, homestay host doesn't have enough patience) then learning is unlikely to occur.

Not all studies agree with the above results, however. For instance, Tanaka's study (1997) revealed contrasting findings. He used questionnaires and interviews, conducted in Japanese, to explore the homestay environment of Japanese learners in NZ. The subjects in this study were ten females and five males of an average age of 21.4 years. All the students, with the exception of one, had studied English for a minimum of six years. The participants asserted strongly that the homestay provided them with a natural setting in which they could practise their English. They learnt new words and phrases and were often corrected by their families. Watching television was an activity which provided students with a topic of conversation because they could ask about unfamiliar words and expressions. In addition, the homestay gave them a network to expand their contact with New Zealanders as the families often introduced them to extended relatives and friends. However, several variables may have influenced Tanaka's (1997) findings. Firstly, his study only considered the perceptions and expectations of Japanese students. Secondly, the sample size was rather small, comprising just 15 students in total.

From reviewing the literature about students' homestay expectations and experiences, both overseas and in NZ, it would seem that the findings are far from consistent. In some cases, students appear to be satisfied with the homestay environment and their expectations appear to have been met. It would seem in having these expectations met,

that students do spend considerable time interacting with the homestay family, and that this interaction provides them with opportunities for language learning. Furthermore, the problems they have encountered are minor ones and are, for the most part, able to be solved. In other instances, by contrast, the review reveals different results, particularly in NZ. In many cases, students are unhappy in their homestays, and many expectations remain unfulfilled. These include a lack of language learning opportunities, cultural learning, problems with food, and emotional warmth. Students lament that hosts are often too busy and that, as a result, they spend very little time interacting. Having very little contact with the family, it would appear, does impact negatively on the amount of language learning opportunities available. Thus, the role of the homestay needs to be investigated to see if it actually serves its purpose of providing students with language practice. Having examined the most common expectations held by students in the homestay, both overseas and in NZ, I will now investigate the perceptions of the homestay families themselves, as reflected in the literature.

3.8 RESEARCH ON HOMESTAY FAMILIES

Despite the fact that the students' perceptions of the homestay have been the focus of much research, the perception and role of the homestay family is conspicuously absent from the literature, especially in NZ. This can no longer be ignored. It is vital that researchers investigate host families' perceptions regarding their role in the homestay and in the language learning process of the student. This next section looks at why families choose to host, overseas research on homestay families' perceptions and research on homestays in NZ.

3.8.1 Reasons Families Choose to Host

There are many motives for choosing to become a host. According to Palmer (2000), many people welcome the idea of opening their homes and sharing their lives and culture. Some enjoy the companionship that hosting has to offer. Others (Campbell, 2004) want company for their own children. Whatever the reasons for hosting, it is generally expected that a homestay should be a safe, caring environment in which the students can practise their language skills with competent NSs and also experience and learn about another culture. As Ronson (1998, p. 1) remarks, "Homestay is a recipe for

a wide range of experiences: culture shock, joyous relationships, miscommunication, and intercultural learning.”

3.8.2 Homestay Families in Australia

One of the major research projects examining the homestay has been conducted in Australia. Richardson (2003) used qualitative methods to examine the families' experiences and perceptions of hosting. One hundred and thirty-three questionnaires were received from families who were either hosting or had hosted. Seventeen of these families also agreed to join in a focus group discussion.

One of the areas this study focused on was cross-cultural contact in the homestay. The homestay families revealed that they expected students to fit in with their cultural norms. This, however, proved to be problematic because the students often suffered from culture shock, which the families did not really know how to cope with. Richardson (2003) also discovered that homestay families disliked having no privacy. This was exacerbated even more by constantly having to answer the students' questions. Homestay families, in this study, had not received any cross-cultural training. Richardson (2003) deemed this to be important to help them recognise and deal with signs of culture shock, and to assist students with their English skills to overcome miscommunication. Again, future research needs to examine training issues. This would be beneficial for the families in that it would provide them the strategies to assist students with their linguistic progress, as well as dealing with day-to-day experiences.

Richardson's (2003) study also highlighted the complex feelings and confusion concerning the roles of homestay family members. For some students, their role was that of a servant. For others they were a pseudo-parent or cross-cultural advisor. Fryer and Lukasevich (1998) also found that some students treated the host mothers as servants or lower class citizens. If students were educated about what to expect from homestays, then perhaps there would be less confusion about family roles. This issue could be addressed in terms of cultural expectations. It is possible that the students came from cultures where the roles in society are gender specific. For instance, in some cultures, it is the norm for women to stay at home and look after the household, while men go out to work and are responsible for providing for their families.

As a solution to these issues, Richardson (2003) suggests that families should be trained in certain areas of hosting to ensure that they are better equipped to deal with potential homestay problems. If families feel that there is not enough support and clear guidelines, they may reject the idea of hosting. Students would then need to look for alternative means of accommodation and these may offer fewer language learning opportunities.

3.8.3 Homestay Families in Mexico and Spain

Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) have also added to the research, examining the homestay perspective. They interviewed twenty-four homestay families in Mexico and Spain. Some families had hosted for many years, whilst others were new to the industry. They conducted semi-structured interviews lasting between one and two hours in the families' homes. The interviews were audio-taped and the NUD*IST computer programme was used to determine salient recurring themes. Two of the major findings in this study concerned adjustment and problems in the homestay.

Contrary to the findings of much of the literature (Crealock, et al, 1999; Dalley, 1972 cited in James & Watts, 1992; Everts & Sodjakusumah, 1996), the host mothers in this study did not report any major issues with adjustment, although they did comment that the first few days were always the most difficult for the students. If students initially stayed in their rooms, the host mothers encouraged them to come out and interact with the family. Similarly, at first, the families spent a lot of time explaining things and assisting the students to settle into their lifestyle. Most of the families interviewed agreed that the students who stayed longer did benefit more linguistically. These students tended to spend more time with their families and less time travelling. Referring to the work of Grove and Hansel (1982), they contend that the ease of adjusting into a new lifestyle has more to do with personality than cultural differences. The view held by Altbach and Kelly (1985) is that the learner's language proficiency, previous travel experience, and absence of discriminatory attitudes are major factors which influence the adjustment period. The host mothers, did not feel that language ability was a significant adjustment factor. Rather, they felt that pre-trip such as knowledge, knowing about the family and customs, would allow students to adjust more easily. Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) also identified other problematic areas such as the homestay diet, the use of the phone and the custom of introducing a date to

the family. They also discovered that children did not always impact positively on the homestay environment. This, it seems, was because some children resented the presence of a stranger in the family.

However, on the whole, Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) concluded that most problems were minor and were mainly due to cultural differences and expectations. The host mothers believed that many problems could be resolved by communicating with the students. It could also be argued that certain factors influenced these findings. Firstly, many of these families had been hosting for a long time and were used to dealing with international students. Secondly, the hosts had strong bonds with other families and could discuss their problems, resolving any issues easily. A network of support was readily available. Thirdly, due to advances in technology, it is feasible that societies now have more in common than before, so the differences they experienced were minimal. Finally, it is possible that the questionnaires were not answered truthfully; possibly admitting problems had occurred equated to admitting failure.

Overall, these families believed that they offered a safe, warm, and supportive environment. They saw their roles as those of teacher and counsellor. The researchers themselves thought that incorporating the homestay component into the academic programme and recognising its potential as a resource for linguistic development and cultural adjustment could improve the homestay. They felt that schools needed to involve the homestays in on-going discussions regarding their roles and offer students advice on how to successfully interact with their families. However, the study does not give unconditional support to all homestays in all circumstances. Adjustment and communication were powerful factors which benefited the homestay students linguistically and socially.

3.9 RESEARCH ON HOMESTAYS FAMILIES IN NEW ZEALAND

There is plenty of anecdotal evidence indicating that homestays in NZ are not what they claim to be. Often newspaper headlines have portrayed homestays in a negative light (Mean Host Jeopardise Billion-Dollar Industry, Cumming, 2002; Homestay is where the Heartache is – Laugesen, 2002; Foreign Students Shortchanged – Scanlon, 2002). Although overseas research has, in part, considered the homestay's perception, studies in NZ have, predominantly, only dealt with students' perceptions, ignoring those of the

families. Yet, the above headlines suggest that research into the homestay role is vital, if the homestay industry is to be improved.

However, one researcher Campbell (2004) has explored the homestay perspective in NZ. Using semi-structured interviews, Campbell (2004) studied thirty-three homestay families, half of whom were one-parent households. Eleven of the participants were male and twenty-two were female. The families had been hosting for between one and 25 years, with an average of six and a half years' experience. The average number of students hosted per family was six, but one family had hosted over 200 students in 20 years. Most of those interviewed had hosted students from three or more cultures. I will now consider the findings of her study.

One of the areas identified by Campbell (2004) for examination was language proficiency and cultural learning. In order for any learner to be able to have a chance to improve their linguistic competence, they need to be exposed to language input (Krashen, 1981). In response to Krashen's (1981) view, some researchers (Hatch, 1992; Long, 1996; Swain, 1995) argue that input alone is not enough to improve one's competency in a foreign language. Learners also need to be provided with opportunities to interact and to produce output. The families in Campbell's (2004) study revealed that they were not aware of how they could assist students with their language proficiency. Only a few families realised that practising English was the students' main concern. Interaction time (i.e. communicating) not only provides learners with opportunities to practise the target language, but, according to Hammer (1992), also facilitates cultural learning. Engaging with students meaningfully and assisting them linguistically and culturally will allow them to operate more effectively in a new society. In order to make the students feel welcome, homestay hosts need to actively include the students in their daily activities. Sadly, Campbell's (2004) findings revealed that the students felt the relationship was more of a business arrangement.

A second finding concerned the issue of family roles, which held different meanings for the Chinese students and their NZ families. This was prompted in large part by the fact that many of these students had been raised as an only child, due to China's one child policy, which has been in effect since 1978. The Chinese students expected to be looked after by their hosts. In NZ, families usually have more than one child. As such, children are treated as part of the family, not the 'focus' of it. The NZ hosts expected

the students to assist with household chores and a lack of co-operation led them to describe their guests as impatient, unhelpful, and lazy. On this premise, if future research were to examine the issue of cross-cultural expectations, it may be, through education and raising awareness, that both international students and homestays develop a greater understanding of cultural differences and thus have more realistic expectations of their responsibilities in the homestay.

The final aspect of the homestay experience in which expectations were not met was that of food. Chinese foods are symbolic and great care is paid to preparation and presentation. This is not necessarily the case in NZ. Campbell (2004) found that some families simply didn't have the time to cook such food. Other families were reluctant to cook Chinese food saying it made the kitchen too dirty with oil and smoke.

It is clear from Campbell's (2004) study that, in many cases, the expectations were not met and often hosts were not aware of students' expectations. The consequences of an unhappy homestay environment meant that students avoided contact with their hosts by retreating to their rooms, or by socialising outside of the family. If students are to be in an environment where language learning opportunities occur and they are to take advantage of such opportunities, certain guidelines need to be adhered to. Firstly, homestay families need to have realistic expectations and to have some understanding of basic cultural differences. If families and students had contact prior to arrival then they would not meet as strangers. Secondly, families need to be informed of their roles and responsibilities. Some hosts, it seems, need to re-examine their motives for hosting and their commitment to meeting expectations. Training could raise a homestay host's awareness of cultural differences, and better prepare them for potential miscommunication and misunderstandings. Thirdly, they need to have the time to spend with students and have strategies at their disposal to assist with improving their linguistic competence. Meeting the above guidelines may foster more interaction between both parties.

3.10 LANGUAGE LEARNING RESEARCH IN THE HOMESTAY

Having examined the expectations of students and homestay families' perceptions, I now turn to the studies which have examined language learning in the homestay and discuss their findings. Despite the fact that students predominantly choose homestays to

practise their target language (Welsh, 2001; McFedries, 2002), only a few studies have explored this issue in any depth (Hashimoto, 1993; Marriott & Enomoto, 1995; Woodall & Takeuchi, 1999). Keating (1994; p. 61) in exploring language learning states that “Interaction with competent speakers provides the opportunities to discover one’s language gaps, and the negative feedback inherent in social response to one’s failure to communicate increases motivation to be more attentive to native speakers.” He contends that the most important factor in the SLA process is the social setting. The homestay milieu offers the advantage of interaction with competent speakers. He believes that one of the major ways to assist students in the homestay is linguistically.

Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart’s study (2002) supports Keating’s beliefs. In terms of linguistic expectations, the host mothers in their study expected the students to speak Spanish only and would often stress the importance of this. Some host mothers even hung signs around the house in Spanish. Others expanded the Spanish only rule by imposing fines if English was spoken. Some families deliberately hosted only one student, so that they were forced to speak the target language. Those interviewed said that students welcomed correction and they often helped with homework, explaining idioms and drilling new vocabulary. A major complaint made by the hosts concerned the amount of time students spent interacting with them. Some families felt that students were too busy with friends or going on school trips to accept the homestay’s invitations. This led to students using their mother tongue and neglecting the L2.

Marriott and Enomoto (1995) also strongly advocate the linguistic benefits homestays have to offer. They conducted a large national survey of 566 secondary exchange students learning Japanese. In addition, they interviewed 19 former exchange students in Japanese with background interviews in English with a few of these students. They found that those in homestays made rapid progress in terms of speaking and listening to Japanese. Students reported daily contact of an intense nature with at least one member of their homestay. They did various activities with the families, including shopping with the homestay mother and attending school with the children. One reason for the significant amount of progress could be that their English was severely restricted (no-one in the family spoke English) and yet their need to communicate was high. Unlike the subject of other studies, these students were younger and this also could have impacted on their progress. For instance, it may have been the case that these families felt more responsible for the students and kept stricter controls on their whereabouts, as well as including them more in their everyday activities.

Marriott & Enomoto (1995) also found that students had a tendency to use too many informal forms, in particular when addressing the older members of Japanese society. This led to some students being evaluated negatively by native Japanese speakers. It is plausible that English NSs may be less successful than their Japanese counterparts in acquiring honorifics. Unlike some languages (Ihr and Lei for 'you' in German and Italian for example) English does not possess a more polite form. This is achieved more subtly, perhaps by one's choice of verbs (could, would etc).

Hashimoto (1993) also undertook a study examining language learning in the homestay. His research involved the case study of an Australian female student studying Japanese and living in a Japanese homestay. He explored the features of natural conversation in which the exchange student participated. He found that the student developed some awareness of the features of variation whilst she was in Japan, such as enquiring about the meaning of unfamiliar words, polite forms and their usage. She showed interest in learning the grammatical functions of words, such as who could use the words and how they could be used. Despite the fact that she was aware of some features, her actual use of language did not contain much variation. Indeed, it wasn't until she returned home that her language became more formal and polite.

One of the discoveries of Hashimoto's study (1993) was that some activities are more conducive to language learning than others. In some cases, such as watching a video or playing a game, the student focused on the activity itself and not on the talking. Another revealing discovery was that the homestay family used several strategies to make the input more comprehensible (paraphrasing, explaining, providing examples), implying that the homestay environment may indeed offer learners a range of opportunities which may facilitate second language learning. Campbell and Guyton's (2003) study produced further evidence of the linguistic strategies used by the homestay hosts. Some of the families in their study said that they often spoke more slowly, used simple words, and wrote things down.

A further study by Woodall and Takeuchi (1999) examined the language learning experiences of four Japanese students in America using semi-structured interviews. The group comprised two females and two males, ranging in ages from 19 to 21. Three of the students had been living in their homestays for approximately seven weeks prior to the interviews, while the fourth had been living in a homestay for seven months. They

had all studied English for at least six years but their levels ranged from beginners to intermediate. The families had had between five months and eight years hosting experience and came from different backgrounds. One family consisted of a single adult and the remaining three were two-parent households, all with two children between the ages of seven and eleven.

Several interesting factors were revealed by this research. The students differed in the amount of time they spent with their families but it appeared that mealtimes were when the most interaction took place. Students reported that they were satisfied with the cultural experience, but dissatisfied with not only the quantity but also the quality of English. Firstly, they lamented that they were bored with the topics, which tended to focus on homework, culture, and politics. Secondly, the study revealed that the speech was sometimes modified to FT, whereby the homestay family talked more slowly, used simplified structures, and enunciated their words more clearly. Another problem was that one family did not correct their student because, even though she was grammatically incorrect, they could understand her. It seems that they were used to student mistakes and as a result this particular student received no valuable feedback. Fourthly, the researchers discovered that one of the students actually tuned out from the interactive learning environment. This was because his family could not understand his humour on Japanese religion and this became too much for the student to explain. Another finding showed that one of the families always had to initiate the conversation. To keep the conversation flowing they had to ask the student lots of questions and they were also responsible for topic switches. These families felt that such strategies were not typical of spontaneous speech. Woodhall and Takeuchi (1999) explained that this type of behaviour could have stemmed from shy personalities or from cultural differences, as Japanese is a less direct language than English.

From these findings, it could be inferred that quality is more vital than quantity. More quality input would foster engagement and thus promote intake and avoid the immersion response as in the case of the student tuning out. Woodall and Takeuchi (1999) stress the importance of quality of language, saying that if the quantity is decreased but the quality is increased, then the language growth does not necessarily have to be sacrificed.

Further research by Wilkinson (1998) of seven Americans in France challenged many of the commonly held beliefs that study abroad is a shortcut to linguistic fluency (Carroll,

1967; Dyson, 1988; Lafford, 1995; Milleret, 1991; Milton & Meara, 1995). She discovered that the classroom discourse strongly influenced students' out of class speech in that students revealed an attachment to the interaction patterns reminiscent of those that they had learnt in the classroom and a desire for NSs to adopt the role of the teacher. This teacher talk transfer was extended to one of the student's (Amelia's) homestay. In communicating with her host mother, Amelia's interaction was typically of the 'initiation-response-feedback' type found in the classroom. Amelia would often provide a response, not to initiate a topic, but rather to react to a topic already established by her host mother, who in Amelia's eyes was the teacher. In communicating in this way, however, it is likely that a more 'literal' message was conveyed. Amelia felt that her family treated her as a child and regarded her host mother's attitude towards her as condescending. This problem in communicating certainly influenced Amelia's decision to return home late each evening when she knew that her host mother would already be in bed.

A study by Masakazu (1998) explored the language use and behaviour of Japanese homestays by placing video cameras in the dining rooms of 30 Japanese families over a four-year period. She also used additional data collection methods of questionnaires, interviews, group sessions, and audio-taped recordings. Her study found that dinner table interactions functioned as a transmitter of culture and offered valuable learning experiences for the participants. One of the main ways of communicating with students was by non-verbal means. In order to explain words, families often referred to visual aides and objects which were readily available in the household. They allowed students to touch, taste, smell, and examine the objects so that they could conceptualise the meaning of the word. Sometimes, they used gestures to explain. At other times they wrote down the word, which Masakazu (1998) believes helped the student to recall and memorise.

These studies reveal interesting factors about the homestay as a place where language learning opportunities occur. Admittedly, however, compared to the number of students living in homestays worldwide, the knowledge is somewhat limited. Furthermore, research focusing on this vital aspect of the homestay experience in NZ is non-existent. If students' main aim in choosing a homestay is to improve their linguistic competence, further research in this area is essential, so that homestay families can fully understand how best to promote the language learning environment.

3.10.1 Cross Cultural Learning

Students also view the homestay as a place to learn about the host culture and customs (Welsh, 2001) and indeed some studies have focused on cross-cultural learning underpinned by the notion that many miscommunications stem from cultural rather than linguistic misunderstandings. For example, in Wilkinson's study (1998) one of the students Ashley, wished to return a malfunctioning hair dryer to the store. Despite not having a receipt of purchase, she expected to have no problems in receiving an exchange. Instead, the sales person refused to accept the faulty item. What Ashley did not know was that she had encountered a cultural difference in not adhering to the French norms of customer roles. In France, unlike in America, it is the client who is at the mercy of the employee. In this case, Ashley interpreted the woman's behaviour as rude and obstinate. In another instance Ashley experienced friction with her host mother, Chantal, regarding the use of the telephone. Ashley had telephoned her friend to make an appointment, because in America you cannot just 'pop' around to someone's house unannounced. However, in France this is the norm. The host mother had deemed Ashley's use of the telephone to be unnecessary.

A study by Liskin-Gasparro's (1998) yielded similar findings. Using weekly interviews supplemented by field notes, journals, and emails he studied seven high intermediate learners studying for a Spanish M.A. in Vermont. The participants were aged between 21 and 45 and were selected after an interview in Spanish examining their oral skills and interest in linguistic introspection. One of his findings revealed that sometimes the learners' difficulty in comprehending was not entirely due to their linguistic limitations but was partly the result of their lack of socio-cultural knowledge. For instance, students watched a play and a movie in Spanish but had difficulty comprehending, blaming their linguistic capabilities. However, on further probing, it seems that the cultural content of the entertainment was the main obstacle. These two studies bring to light the need to consider the cultural implications. It should not be assumed that all breakdowns in communication are due to linguistic misunderstandings.

3.11 SUMMARY

From the review of the literature, it can be seen that the main expectations of international students in choosing homestays are to practise the target language and learn about the host culture. However, the problem both overseas and in NZ is, that these expectations are often unfulfilled. Other expectations, such as the quality of food, emotional warmth, and interaction, are often not met, leaving students feeling unhappy and dissatisfied. As a result, students often avoid contact with their homestays by either staying in their rooms or by socialising outside of the family. Consequently, opportunities for language learning within the homestay environment are lost. To alleviate this problem further research is needed, to clearly establish what students' expectations are. In doing so the creation of a positive homestay environment may be facilitated. Furthermore, if the homestay industry is to achieve customer satisfaction, the perceptions of the homestay families also need to be considered. This area, having been severely neglected in the past, can no longer be ignored. Finally, it is necessary to examine whether international homestay students in NZ experience difficulties adjusting and experience culture shock. If students are not adjusted to NZ lifestyle and suffer from culture shock, it is unlikely that they will benefit from language learning opportunities, even if they do arise.

As a result of addressing these issues, one would assume that language learning opportunities would arise in the homestay. Despite this being the main objective of homestay students, the literature has overwhelmingly shown that this area has practically been abandoned. It is essential that future research investigates the linguistic interaction between the families and international students in an attempt to add greater depth to the limited body of knowledge in the field. For these reasons, my study will address the following:

MY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1A) What expectations do students have regarding homestays and

1B) Are students' expectations met?

2) What are the perceptions of the homestay families regarding their role in the homestay?

3A) Do international students experience adjustment problems and culture shock in New Zealand?

3B) Do homestay families perceive students as experiencing adjustment problems and culture shock in New Zealand?

4) As a result of expectations being met in the homestay what type of language learning opportunities arise and when?

CHAPTER FOUR - METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four presents the research methodology. First of all, I discuss what is meant by qualitative research and I look at the role of quantification in a qualitative framework. I discuss the research paradigm used in this study. Secondly, I present the study itself, the participants, and the setting. Thirdly, I look at the instruments used and discuss the choices for each. Limitations and concerns regarding the instruments and methods are also considered. Finally, I present the pilot study carried out before the main study and the process of data collection and analysis for the main study.

4.2 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH IN RELATION TO THE CURRENT STUDY

Traditionally, research has been grouped simplistically into two categories – qualitative and quantitative research. Simplified, the former, also known as ‘soft’ data, deals primarily with words, whereas the latter, often referred to as ‘hard’ data, is mainly concerned with numbers. Even though the two styles differ in many ways, they complement each other as well (Neumann, 2003) and as such, it is common for researchers to adopt both methods. Indeed, Bell (1999, p. 6) states that “once an approach has been assumed, the researcher may move from the methods associated with that style.” Similarly, Reichardt and Cook (1979) argue that qualitative and quantitative research are in many ways indistinguishable and that researchers in no way follow the principles of a supposed paradigm without simultaneously considering methods and values of alternative paradigms. These ideas are further supported by Gass and Mackay (2005, p. 164) who explain that, “It is increasingly common for researchers to present and discuss both quantitative and qualitative data in the same report, or to use methods associated with both types.”

There are many characteristics of qualitative research. Firstly, this research method uses descriptive data and provides a ‘rich description’. For this reason I have enclosed a detailed account of the setting, participants and data collection procedure. Secondly, this research method often aims to study individuals in their natural setting as opposed to an experimental laboratory. For my study, this setting is the ‘homestay’ context.

Thirdly, qualitative research, typically, comprises fewer participants, as it is less concerned with generalising from statistical data. For this reason, such research has often been criticised by quantitative researchers. However, Nunan (2003) states that because there is a subjective element to all knowledge and research, holistic studies, which cannot be generalised, are justifiable. It could also be said that any comparison, whilst probably being based on sound criteria and research design, may provide misleading results unless specifically limited to the country of origin. My study does not aim to generalise to all homestays in all contexts, but rather to examine one group of homestays in NZ. Fourthly, qualitative research considers the emic perspective, that is, it aims to interpret data in terms of the meanings people attach to them or the use of categories that are meaningful to the members of the study. In my study, I used open questions and interviews to encourage free, personal responses. In the diary studies, new categories such as small talk and body language emerged from the input given by the participants.

Qualitative research attempts to increase our knowledge of why things are as they are in our social world, and why people act the way they do. My study is an exploration of a group of people in a specific context and how these people behave in that context. Adding support to these claims, Bell (1999) suggests that research that adopts a qualitative perspective is more concerned with understanding individuals' perceptions of the world. It allows the researcher to gain an insight into the attitudes of the participants and to explore the reasons for such attitudes. Davis (1995) states that the main aim of qualitative research is to present and verify assertions. My study attempts to verify patterns in the data provided by the subjects and, in doing so, to make assertions about the types of language learning opportunities in the homestay. In particular, I examine the types of activities which may encourage language learning; factors which may promote language learning (children in the homestay/other students/being introduced to family and friends) and how these opportunities are maximised (correction/repetition/learning new words).

Some researchers are interested in patterns of occurrence and do not exclude the use of the sorts of numbers and statistics that are generally found in quantitative research (Gass & Mackay, 2005). Quantification is used to verify patterns that have been noted and for the purpose of data reporting. Numerical descriptions can make it readily apparent why researchers have drawn particular inferences and how well theories can reflect data.

Quantification also allows other researchers to ascertain quickly whether research findings are relevant to other contexts. In my study I quantified the closed questions in the questionnaires and the diary categories. This was to enable the researcher to have quick, easy access to the findings.

4.3 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to explore the types of language learning opportunities which occur in the homestay. To achieve this aim, I used qualitative research methods combined with quantification. The qualitative data collection tools which I employed comprised questionnaires, diary studies, and interviews. I used this triangulated approach as I wished to further validate my findings by using several data collection tools. Gass and Mackay (2005, p. 181) state that “the most common definition of triangulation is that it entails the use of multiple, independent methods of obtaining data in a single investigation in order to arrive at the same research findings.” Johnson (1992, p. 146) remarks that “the value of triangulation is that it reduces observer or interviewer bias and enhances the validity and reliability of the information.” Part of the questionnaires and the diary studies were analysed using quantitative methods.

I chose to design my own data tools because I felt that the selection of instruments already available would not facilitate the collection of appropriate data needed to answer *my research questions*. This is because very few studies have considered language learning in the homestay context. To answer research questions 1A and 1B, I used data from the student questionnaires. Research question two is answered using data from the homestay family questionnaires. Data from the student and homestay family questionnaires was used to answer research questions 3A and 3B. I used student and homestay family questionnaires and interviews, combined with the findings from student diaries, to answer the fourth research question.

Ninety questionnaires were completed by students and homestay families. The questionnaires began the initial exploration of the expectations of the students and perceptions of the homestay families. They comprised open and closed ended questions. The closed questions were quantified and tallied for frequency counts. In the open questions, patterns emerged. These were grouped and tallied and presented as a percentage. The student diaries lasted thirty days and were completed by ten

participants. Categories were formed based on predictions from the diary worksheet (Appendix A) and new categories emerged from the students' own writings. A frequency count was included. Both the student and homestay family interviews were semi-structured in nature and were presented as mini case studies.

4.4 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

The theoretical approaches underpinning this study were both ethnography and social constructionism. The former approach, according to Bell (1999, p. 10), stems from anthropologists who "wished to study a society, or some aspect of society, culture or group in more depth." Johnson (1992) states that the main aim of ethnography is to discover the insider's viewpoint. A quality of ethnography is that the research takes place in the 'real world' rather than in a laboratory setting as it aims to determine whether, or not, the setting has any affect on the behaviours of the subjects. This study wished to explore two groups of people in their natural setting (homestay) in more depth. The views I used were those of the participants. Ethnography does not merely rely on description but also relies on analysis, interpretation, and explanation of the data. To this end, I tried to support my findings by offering 'plausible answers' based on the literature.

The latter approach, 'Social constructionism' is the understanding of everyday life phenomena such as the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of participants in their own social context. I explored the feelings, thoughts, and behaviours of both the students and the homestay families in the homestay. I examined their expectations and perceptions regarding their roles and in particular their views about their roles in the language learning process.

4.5 PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study included forty-five students, and forty-five homestay families.

4.5.1 Students

All students completed a questionnaire. Ten of these subjects kept a diary for one month and attended a ten-minute interview. I believed that ten subjects would be an adequate sample size to gain a further insight into the homestay setting.

Section A of the questionnaire was used to gather a profile of the participants. All the subjects were international students studying English on a full-time basis (twenty-three hours per week) at either tertiary institution X or Y. Their ages ranged from eighteen to over thirty-five. The sample comprised twenty-two females and twenty-three males. The students came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds including: Chile, China, East Timor, Europe, Japan, Hong Kong, , Korea, Mexico, Saudi, Taiwan and Thailand. Most of the students had studied English in their own countries for at least six years, and had been in NZ between one and six months at the time of the research. Most of the learners intended to stay in NZ for a further three to six months. They all gave varying reasons for studying English. Some students were hoping to remain in NZ to attend a course at university. Others wanted to improve their job prospects. Some wanted to travel and thought that knowing English would facilitate this.

4.5.2 Homestay Families

The homestay co-ordinator at institution X gave me the full list of potential homestay families listed on the homestay database in order to reach a sample size of 45. Ten of the participants were interviewed at a later date.

4.6 SETTING

The research took place at two tertiary locations - institution X and Y. They were very similar in the way they were organised. Both had good reputations of offering a high quality service. I chose two institutions purely because there were not enough homestay students available in one location.

4.6.1 Institution X

Part of the research project took place in the English language teaching division of a large university in Auckland, NZ. This organisation operates as an independent school within a university setting. The language school offers a variety of English levels, ranging from Elementary to Advanced. All students study in the morning with full-time students also studying in the afternoons. The morning classes use a course book with a focus on the four skills as well as grammar and pronunciation practice. Teachers are expected to use supplementary materials. Students can choose from a variety of afternoon classes, including IELTS and TOEIC, Business and General English. The latter classes have a different topic, each lasting a week and tend to focus more on vocabulary and communication, with less emphasis on grammar.

Students are given a placement test on arrival. This consists of a written test, comprising multiple-choice grammar questions. In addition, students write two short texts and take part in an interview. The results of this test determine the entry level of the student. The courses run on a monthly basis, with two five-week courses in each year. At the end of each course, the students sit an assessment test. This is made up of the four skills with an exercise testing grammar and vocabulary. These test results, combined with a teacher assessment, and further discussion with a senior staff member determine a student's progression. With these assessment procedures in place, it was reasonable to assume that the students were at the correct level.

I used a convenience sample (Gass & Mackay, 2005) to select my subjects which means elements are chosen based on the purpose of the study. It does not produce a sample that is representative of the larger population, but is the study of a clearly defined and relatively limited group (homestay students). I knew some of the students personally from having taught them in previous classes. However, I believe that this did not impact on the research procedure because I treated all students equally and none of the students were in my classes at the time of the research.

4.6.2 Institution Y

Part of the research took place in a large, private language school in Auckland. The school offers a range of English levels, from complete Beginners to Advanced. All

students study in the morning with full-time students also studying in the afternoons. The morning classes are based on a course book and focus on the four skills with grammar instruction. Students have a wide choice of afternoon classes, which include: conversation, vocabulary, grammar-based, media and film studies (Both in NZ and overseas), NZ Studies (focus here is on language), travel (language needed for travelling and activities based around the topic of travel), IELTS, TOEIC and TOEFL.

The placement test is made up of a sixty-item grammar and vocabulary test, which is followed by an oral assessment. The academic team administer these tests. There is also a learner self-assessment test which is used for learners to rate themselves. The results of these tests determine the entry level of the student. Students can enrol for a minimum of two weeks, with the average enrolment being twelve. The monthly test content depends totally on the teacher and usually tests the four skills. These results, combined with class performance, teacher assessment and discussions with the academic team determine a student's progression.

An overview of both institutions can be seen in Figure Three.

Figure 3 *Overview of Language Institutions X and Y*

Institution X	Institution Y
Part of a large university	Private language school
Elementary to Advanced	Beginner to Advanced
Morning class – book based – four skills	Morning class - same
Afternoon classes: IELTS, TOEIC, Business and General English	Afternoon classes: Conversation, Vocabulary, Grammar Based, NZ Studies, Film & Media, Travel, IELTS, TOEIC, TOEFL
Placement Test – written, multiple choice, grammar questions, interview	Placement Test – sixty-item grammar and vocabulary test, oral and learner self-assessment
Monthly Tests – writing ,speaking, reading, listening, grammar and vocabulary	Monthly Tests – no specific format, depends on teacher discretion

4.6.3 Level of Students

The participants in the research were all intermediate level or above. I chose this level because the students came from a variety of countries and studying in an English medium environment, the language of instruction for the research project was by *necessity* English. It was believed that students at this level would be able to cope with the research instruments, from a linguistic capability. Students needed to be able to understand the questions and provide responses. Although most of the questions required only a tick as an answer, some questions did seek a further written response.

4.7 INSTRUMENTS

This study involved three sets of instruments for the students: questionnaires, diaries, and interviews. The questionnaires explored their expectations of the homestay environment. Ten of these students also participated in diary studies, which were a documentation of the language learning opportunities as they occurred. These ten students were chosen because they were still staying in homestays, and intended to remain in their respective homes for at least one month during the study. Furthermore, these students were willing to commit to the idea of writing on a daily basis. The interviews explored, clarified, and elaborated on the findings of both the questionnaires and diaries. For the homestay families, I used questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires explored the perceptions of their role in the homestay. The interviews further explored the questionnaire findings.

4.7.1 Questionnaires

I used questionnaires to explore the expectations of the students, and the perceptions of the homestay families.

4.7.1.1 Design and Development of Questionnaires

I chose questionnaires as an initial way of collecting as much data as possible, quickly, efficiently, and cheaply. Questionnaires, as a data collection method, allow the researcher to analyse the findings, extract patterns, and make comparisons between the different responses. The questionnaires comprised a combination of closed and open

questions. Many of the answers required participants to tick one or more boxes or to circle the most appropriate choice. Open-ended questions were used to explore the subjects' viewpoints and experiences in more depth. The last page of the questionnaire, which was optional, gave participants a further possibility to add any extra comments or to elaborate upon any of the questions.

4.7.1.2 Student Questionnaire

The student questionnaire (Appendix B) was divided into four sections (A –D). Section A aimed to build a profile of the students and to establish the length of time they had been studying English; their current level of English; and their motivations for studying. These details may be relevant to how the findings may be interpreted and discussed. Part B dealt with students general expectations of the homestay environment and what was happening in reality in their homestays. Section C examined the issues of adjustment and culture shock. Section D explored the types of language learning opportunities in the homestay and when they occurred. The questionnaires were coded with letters A – Z and A1 – Z1.

4.7.1.3 Homestay Family Questionnaire

The homestay family questionnaire (Appendix C) was divided into four sections. Section A was concerned with the profile of the homestay in order to gain an insight into the variety of families that host students and their commonalities. Section B dealt with hosting and homestay families' perceptions, including their perceptions of the homestay as a language learning environment. Section C asked the families' opinions about student adjustment and culture shock. Section D explored language learning opportunities.

4.7.2 Diaries

Ten of the students participated in the diary studies for one month. Students were staying in homestays at the time of the writings.

4.7.2.1 Design and Development of Diaries

Bailey (1990, p. 215) describes a diary study as a “first person account of a language learning or teaching experience, documented through regular, candid entries in a personal journal and then analysed for recurring patterns or salient events.” The introspective tool of diaries was chosen to gain an in-depth study of the students’ language learning opportunities in the homestay. Using diary studies, I was able to follow their perceptions of their own progress.

The advantages of diaries as a method of collecting data possess are varied. Firstly, as the diaries are essentially ‘private’ the diary writer can confide to the diary whatever thoughts and feelings occur to him. Secondly, diaries promote autonomous learning and allow learners to reflect on their language learning environment. Nunan (2003, p. 115) describes the diary as a “process of observing and reflecting on ones thoughts and feelings, motives, reasoning processes and mental states with a view to determining the ways in which these processes and states determine our behaviour.” Thirdly, Pellegrino (1998) stresses that in writing diaries accuracy is not important, but rather how learners perceive events. For this reason, I emphasised in the diary workshop that I was more interested in content than accuracy. By writing about their homestay experience on a daily basis, I was hoping that students would think about the language learning opportunities in the homestay on a deeper level and become more aware of what was actually happening in their learning environment.

However, just as there are advantages of any data collection method, there also exist disadvantages. One of the disadvantages of diary studies is the time factor involved. For this reason, I asked the students not to write more than 15 minutes per day and this was only necessary if there was enough data to discuss. I was also extremely conscious of the fact that by producing a diary worksheet, with suggestions about what to write, that I could potentially be influencing the diary findings. However, I felt that this was necessary for two reasons. Firstly, all subjects were writing in their L2, which is a challenge in itself. Secondly, I needed to ensure that the students were entirely focused. I was all too cautious about receiving superfluous data which I would not be able to use. To counterbalance my decision, I did stress to all the participants that my ideas were purely suggestions and that they were free to write about whatever they liked, within the context of language learning in the homestay. Indeed, Bailey (1990) points out that one

of the advantages of diary writing is that students can be in control. Patterns may emerge, which although not considered to be relevant by the researcher, may be of significance to the learner. Indeed categories emerged which I had not considered. A further complication of this method, expressed by Oppenheim (1966) is that subjects may modify their behaviour to complete the task. For this reason I encouraged my students to be honest and told them that if they did not speak English on any given day it was fine to write this in their entries.

The diary study was the most appropriate research tool in this study because I wanted 'ongoing' input from the students and I wanted them to write as they were experiencing in order to gain an accurate representation of the language learning opportunities in their respective homestays. The questionnaires provided valuable data but were short term and relied upon past reflection. The diaries, on the other hand, were based on the 'here and now' and were more long term. Prior to commencing the diary studies, I organised a diary workshop. The workshop was informal, and relaxed and I emphasised all of the above points. Once the students started the task, I kept in contact so that they could ask me about any concerns or queries.

4.7.3 Interviews

The ten diary study students also participated in a ten-minute interview.

4.7.3.1 Design and Development of Interviews

The student interviews were used as a response to the diary findings. My aim was to explore in more depth the findings generated in the diary studies. In fact Zimmerman and Wieder (1977, p. 489) view diaries as a preliminary for interviewing. "The diarist's statement is used as a way of generating questions for the subsequent diary interview. The diary interview converts the diary – a source of data in its own right – into a question-generating and, hence, data-generating device." Because the interviews were a response to the diaries, the questions for each individual were unique. In essence, the interviews were made to suit the needs of the individual respondents. All of the homestay family interviews, bar one, took place at the request of the interviewees in their own homes. The last interview took place in a work environment.

I used interviews for a number of reasons. Firstly, I wanted to follow up ideas, probe responses, and investigate motives and feelings provided by the questionnaires and diaries. All of the interviews were semi-structured in nature which, according to Kvale (1996), allows changes of sequence and question forms in order to follow up the answers given by the respondents. Some questions were prepared beforehand having analysed the diaries and questionnaires. However, questions were added, eliminated, or elaborated upon, depending on a subject's response. Secondly, interviews possess the advantage that the actual language content is preserved and the researcher can re-analyse the data. Thirdly, in interviews, subjects can clarify their responses and provide the interviewer with richer reportage and they can also act as a check on previous responses.

However, there are also disadvantages to using interviews. Often the respondent is eager to please the interviewer. I emphasised to all subjects that there were no 'correct' answers and encouraged honesty by re-emphasising confidentiality. I also explained that subjects would be recorded as a number, not a name, and made a purpose of them listening to me do this. Another disadvantage is that the interviewer can possess pre-conceived emotions. I tried to manage this by using open-ended questions and exploring participants' viewpoints as they arose. Wallace (1998) describes the limitations of interviews as being those of subjectivity, the nature of the sample, and intrusiveness. Subjectivity refers to the truthfulness of the responses, which I tried to overcome by assuring all subjects that the interviews were private and anonymous. I was able to control my sample by 'inviting' subjects to participate in the study. I reassured all those who took part that the research was voluntary and that by not participating they would not be penalised in any way. All subjects agreed to provide information as honestly as they could and to complete the instruments accurately. I catered for intrusiveness by designing instruments that were easy to understand and to complete with minimal time.

4.8 DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED WITH DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The next section outlines the difficulties encountered with the data collection methods.

4.8.1 Questionnaires

Firstly, due to the fact that the homestay family questionnaires were mailed out, it took considerable time and effort to reach a sample of 45. Secondly, analysing the questionnaires, it became apparent that individuals had spent varying amounts of time in responding to the questions. Thirdly, a further limitation of this type of data collection method is that the researcher cannot control the conditions under which the questionnaires are completed. Finally, because some of the families had close bonds with the homestay organiser, it is also possible, that they may have responded in a way that they deemed favourable.

4.8.2 Diaries

Despite providing clear guidelines on how to approach the task of diary writing, once the students commence the diary studies, the researcher has to relinquish control (Bailey, 1990). In the absence of the researcher the student is free to write whatever they like and this can often mean providing superfluous data to the task, or responding inaccurately to the task. One student completed the diary successfully but failed to show up for his scheduled interview. It was not possible to re-schedule as this student had already left NZ. A second student, who had promised to keep the diary, failed to do so. A third student kept regular contact with me and assured me that everything was fine. However, when I collected his diary after one month, he had only made nine entries and the content was irrelevant to the task at hand. I decided to abandon this diary.

4.9 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was carried out approximately two months prior to the research study.

4.9.1 Pilot Study Aims

The pilot study was conducted for several reasons. Foremost, I wished to test for reliability and validity of the data collection methods. I did this by establishing the type of data yielded by the questionnaire and whether this would assist me in answering my research questions. I also wanted to check that the respondents had no difficulty in answering any of the questions or if there were any questions that they were reluctant to

answer. I was also concerned about the length and layout of the questionnaire. The first purpose of the diary pilot was to ascertain whether or not the diary study would actually work (i.e. would students be able to reflect upon their homestay as a language learning environment and would they be able to report on this) and secondly whether or not the worksheet was helpful in assisting students to complete this task. In analysing the responses, I grouped the respondents' answers into categories which corresponded to patterns on the diary worksheet. By physically doing this, I knew that the diary could work. The pilot interview was to determine the length of the interview and to check that the interview was indeed an extension of the diaries and questionnaires.

4.9.2 Pilot Study Methodology

The student pilot study involved the participation of two intermediate students, both females from Thailand and China. These students came from institution X. Both were currently studying in my morning class. I invited both students to take part in the pilot and explained its purpose. They completed the questionnaire in their own time and were asked to give some feedback on the questionnaire. The feedback questions asked the students about the ease of filling in the form, vocabulary and completion time. These same students kept a diary for ten days and also participated in a short interview.

The second part of the pilot involved two members of a homestay family, whose details had been provided by the homestay co-ordinator. These volunteers were mailed a questionnaire, which was returned by post. They were also asked to complete a feedback form, asking questions similar to those of the students. Both members were interviewed in the privacy of their own homes about their responses.

4.9.3 Pilot Study Amendments

The pilot study was successful in that revisions and improvements were made prior to the main research taking part. The questionnaires were made shorter; several questions were eliminated because they did not yield suitable data. No major changes were made to the diary worksheet apart from the fact that a couple of categories were abandoned. The pilot enabled me to shorten the interviews and revise the questions to extract the most useful data in the shortest possible time.

4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE MAIN STUDY

Ethical approval was gained from the Ethics Committee board (Institution X) where I was enrolled to do half of my research. This committee gave permission for the research to be carried out at a second institution. The second institution, being a private language school, did not have their own ethics committee and were happy to receive an approval of ethics from institution X. I gave the Director of Studies at both institutions a Director of Studies Information Sheet (Appendix D).

In order to participate in the study, all subjects gave informed consent. A Participation Information Sheet (See Appendix E and F) explaining the research details, research procedures, time commitment, as well as practical requirements of taking part was distributed to all participants. This sheet emphasised that the research was voluntary and that subjects would not be penalised in any way for not taking part. It was also explained that the research was confidential and that no names would appear on any part of the research. Each questionnaire was coded so that I could trace the students and homestay families who would later volunteer to participate in the diary studies and the interviews. A Consent form (See Appendix G and H) was signed and dated by all willing participants.

4.11 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE FOR THE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES, DIARIES AND INTERVIEWS

The next section outlines how I collected the data for the students.

4.11.1 Questionnaires – Institution X

I firstly obtained a list of all eligible students from the homestay co-ordinator at Institution X. Secondly, I matched students to their morning class and teacher. Thirdly, I wrote individual notes to each student inviting them to consider participating in the research. I gave these notes to each student's morning teacher, who gave them to each individual concerned. All interested participants came to a meeting. Using the white board, I introduced myself and I explained the research outline in brief. I emphasised that the research was *voluntary* and that it was also *confidential*. I also explained that it was not a test, and that students who did not wish to participate would not be penalised

in any way. I pointed out that students could decide to take part in just the questionnaires and that if they wanted to participate in the diary studies and interviews they had to meet the following criteria:

- They had to complete the questionnaire
- They had to be living in a homestay during the month of the diary writings
- They had to be available until the end of August so that I could interview them

Students were given the opportunity to ask questions. At the end of the meeting, students were asked to place a tick on the attendance sheet if they wished to participate in the questionnaire and a cross if they did not. Four students decided not to take part. No reason was given for this and I did not seek any explanation. I informed the other students that I would send them a reminder note the following week.

The following week I wrote individual reminder notes for the students who had expressed an interest to participate. There were fifteen students in total. I re-introduced myself and using an overhead projector explained the purpose of the questionnaires, diary studies and interviews. I then handed students a Participation Information Sheet, which I read out loud to them. I paused on several occasions to check everyone was following and to verify if anyone needed to ask questions. I re-emphasised that students could take part in just the first section of the research (questionnaires) and that participation did not mean that they were also volunteering to do the diary studies and interviews. I also re-emphasised that if students decided to take part in the diary studies I would have to interview them. I asked students who were still happy to participate to sign and date the Consent Form. At this stage everyone agreed to take part. I then collected both the Consent Forms and Participation Information sheets and distributed the questionnaires.

Students were told that they could use dictionaries, ask questions and that there was no time limit. Six students asked questions which were lexical in nature. I asked students to tick the appropriate box on the front of the questionnaire outlining whether they wished to take part in the second section of the research. Five students expressed interest. The shortest time to complete the questionnaire was twenty-five minutes. Two students took forty minutes. Another senior member of staff was present at the meeting. I had asked this colleague for assistance as she had previous research experience. She

familiarised herself with the study and I gave her all necessary forms in advance. She assisted me in distributing the forms and answering student questions. I coded each questionnaire with a letter so that I could trace the questionnaires to the diary studies and interviews if necessary. This same procedure was repeated six weeks later with the arrival of a new student intake.

4.11.2 Questionnaires – Institution Y

Due to the fact that we did not have enough students staying in homestays at institution X, it was necessary to seek volunteers from another school. Several months prior to the research I had contacted the Director of Studies at institution Y, who agreed to assist me. I made an appointment with several staff members and outlined the research. I presented my ethics approval and they asked me for a copy of the questionnaire. A date and an appointment time were made. The member of staff who was assisting me had asked me to send a flyer to entice students and I was informed that someone had distributed these on my behalf. Unfortunately, my first meeting was extremely unsuccessful with not one student turning up. Upon further probing, it emerged that the flyer had simply been handed to teachers, who had informed students on my behalf. I then contacted the same member of staff and suggested a more ‘personal’ approach. I wrote two individual letters (One for Intermediate level and one for Upper Intermediate and Advanced) and this was given individually to each student addressing them in person. I was allocated two appointment times, each lasting one and a half hours.

The morning appointment time was for the intermediate level and the afternoon time was for the upper intermediate levels. I was unable to read the Participation Information Sheet individually because students arrived separately and not in a group. Instead, I gave students this Sheet to read by themselves and before signing the Consent Form I asked if they had any questions or concerns. If I thought students were having difficulty in understanding, I explained by outlining the main points. Twenty-one students took part on this day. Several students expressed an interest to take part in the diary studies. The minimum completion time was twenty-five minutes and the maximum time was one hour. The student who took the most time was a more ‘advanced’ student and wrote detailed responses.

4.11.3 Student Diaries

Exactly one week after the questionnaires were completed, I made a group appointment with the students, studying at institution X, who had said that they would like to participate in the diary studies. As this was a small group we sat around a table and I handed out the diary study worksheet. I read through the sheets, clarifying points as necessary. I asked if students had any questions and emphasised that I was more interested in content, rather than style. I also emphasised the fact that students could add their own ideas, as long as they were about language learning. A couple of the students asked questions about the content. All five students agreed to take part. The same procedure was carried out for five students studying at institution Y.

4.11.4 Student Interviews

After analysing the diaries I contacted each student to arrange an interview. These interviews were conducted in private rooms at both of the institutions. The interviews were tape-recorded and lasted no longer than ten minutes.

4.11.5 Data Collection Procedure for Homestay Families

This next section explains how I carried out the data collection for the homestay family questionnaires and interviews.

4.11.6 Questionnaires

The homestay co-ordinator at institution X printed a list of all 75 homestay families on the school's database. I sent each potential participant a questionnaire, a Participation Information Sheet, a Consent Form, information of where I had obtained their details and a pre-paid stamped-addressed envelope. Each questionnaire and homestay information sheet was coded with a number. This was so that I would be able to trace the participants who wished to take part in the interviews. I sent this information on the 11th July 2005. It was emphasised that the research was voluntary and confidential. By

Friday the 22nd July 2005, I had only received eight responses. The 'reminder' was approached by either sending a letter or by phoning potential participants.

4.11.7 Interviews

Families who had indicated on the Consent Form that they were willing to be interviewed were contacted by phone. An interview time was arranged. I travelled to ten homestay family homes and interviewed one member of each family. Interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed by a professional transcriber (See Appendix I). Each interview lasted approximately fifteen minutes.

4.12 DATA ANALYSIS

This section outlines how I analysed each individual instrument used in the data collection of the research.

4.12.1 Data Analysis of the Questionnaires

I dealt with each section (A – D) of the student and homestay questionnaires in turn. I firstly tallied all the responses for the closed questions. Then I grouped the responses for the open-ended questions. I analysed these groups and where possible I collapsed the categories. I placed all the answers, which I was unable to categorise, into 'others'. I also made additional notes about non-responses, and incomplete answers. These were counted and a tally was made. I presented the main findings in the form of tables with frequency counts and percentages.

4.12.2 Data Analysis of the Diaries

Firstly, I read each diary to get a feeling of the overall content. Secondly, I re-read the diaries and, using the diary worksheet, I grouped the emerging patterns. I re-read the diaries a third time and looked for categories which had emerged from the students' writings which I had not considered. A name was assigned to these groups. I then coded all of the groups and provided a frequency count for each code. These were

tallied and a total number of counts was given for each individual. I presented the results of the diaries as a group, in table format.

4.12.3 Data Analysis of the Interviews

The student questionnaires were re-read and notes were made about significant points. I also re-read the diary results and made notes. The interview questions were based on both the questionnaire and diary findings. Furthermore, they enabled me to elaborate upon and clarify points which were revealed in the diaries, as well as being a check for discrepancies between the diaries and interviews. Open-ended questions allowed me to add, change, and elaborate upon responses. These were later transcribed and discussed as individual case studies. The homestay questionnaires were re-read and questions were made based on these findings. In addition to the points raised above, open-ended questions allowed me to diverge, if homestay families raised any points of significant interest.

4.12.4 Triangulation

One of the values of using more than one method of data collection is that it prevents the researcher from relying on their initial impressions. It helps correct for observer bias as well as enhancing the development of valid constructs throughout the study (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The questionnaires were an initial exploration into the expectations of the students and the perceptions of the homestay families. The student diaries explored in more depth the findings of the questionnaires, and in particular the language learning opportunities initiated in section D of the questionnaire. Both the student and homestay interviews allowed me to elaborate on and clarify the findings provided by both the questionnaires and diaries.

4.13 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have discussed the methodology behind the research. I have looked at both the qualitative and quantitative approaches and outlined the research paradigm used. I presented the study itself, the participants, and the setting. I have considered the development of data collection instruments and how these were used in the research.

Limitations and concerns regarding the instruments and methods were also considered. Finally, I presented the pilot study, as well as the process of data collection and analysis for the research. The next chapter, Chapter Five, will present the results of the research and will provide a discussion of these results in relation to the research questions and literature.

CHAPTER FIVE – RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results and discussion together. Firstly, I present research questions 1A and 1B with the results from the student questionnaire which I used to answer these questions. These results are presented descriptively with frequencies and percentages to highlight particular findings. If students could provide more than one answer, the percentage is displayed as the total sample size, not as a percentage of the overall responses. I then discuss these findings in the light of the literature. Secondly, I present research question 2 and the results of the homestay families' questionnaires, which I used to answer this question. These results are presented in the same format as research questions 1A and 1B. I also discuss the findings in relation to the literature. Thirdly, I present research questions 3A and 3B and the results of the student diaries, student interviews, and homestay family interviews which were used to answer these questions. I present the results of the ten student diaries as a group in tabulated form with frequency counts. The student interviews were an individual response to each diary and for this reason I present the interviews as mini case studies. I discuss the findings of both the diaries and interviews together, taking into consideration pertinent findings from the literature. Finally, I present the ten homestay interviews as mini case studies and discuss the patterns which emerged from these interviews as a group.

5.2: WHAT EXPECTATIONS DO STUDENTS HAVE REGARDING HOMESTAYS? (1A)

The aim of research question 1A was to determine the types of expectations students have before they move into the homestay environment. If expectations are met, it is likely that students will feel happy in their homestays and, in turn, will be able to concentrate on improving their communicative skills when language learning opportunities arise.

The literature has shown that there is some common dissatisfaction amongst students concerning their expectations and well-being in the homestay (Campbell, 2004; Crealock, et al, 1999; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2004; Welsh, 2001). However, the literature has yet to acknowledge that student expectations and well-being could be closely linked with how students take advantage of language learning opportunities. If students are unhappy in the homestay and their expectations are not met, then they will be unlikely to take advantage of language learning opportunities, even if they arise. Research question 1A examined these expectations.

The first question asked students about their expectations of living in a homestay. As Table 1 reveals, the most popular reason for choosing a homestay was to learn English. Over half the students also expected to learn about NZ culture and customs.

Table 1 *Expectations of living in a homestay*

Reason	Frequency	%
To learn English	41	91%
To learn about NZ culture and customs	23	53%
Food included	9	20%
Parents chose	8	18%
Cheap	5	11%
Other	9	20%

Note: students could tick more than one response

Question two was an expansion of the first question and looked in particular at the ways homestay hosts could assist students with their language learning. This question asked whether students expected their families to speak lots of English, to teach them English and to assist them with their English homework. Table 2 shows that students' main expectation was to speak English.

Table 2 *Expectations of homestay life*

Expectations	Frequency	%
A) I expected my homestay to speak lots of English	44	98%
B) I expected my homestay to teach me English	29	64%

C) I expected my homestay to help me with my English homework	10	22%
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In order to explore further students' expectations of learning English, question three asked how much English they expected to speak on a daily basis. As Table 3 reveals, the most common expectation was between one and two hours of English per day.

Table 3 *Amount of daily English students expected to speak*

Amount	Frequency	%
1 hour per day	14	31%
1-2 hours per day	14	31%
2-3 hours per day	9	20%
3 + hours per day	8	18%
Total	45	100%

In addition to how much English and the ways in which homestay families used English, I also wanted to explore the types of activities homestay families do with students which may provide opportunities for language learning. For this reason, question four asked students about the types of activities they expected to do with their families. As can be seen in Table 4, 88% expected to eat meals together and 87% expected to watch television.

Table 4 *Expected activities*

Activity	Frequency	%
A) Eat meals together	40	88%
B) Watch TV together	39	87%
C) Go out together	21	47%
D) Play games/sports together	20	44%

Predominantly, research has demonstrated that students choose to live in homestays to practise the target language and to experience the host culture (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2004; McFedries, 2002; Welsh, 2001) This study supports these findings with 96% expecting to learn English and 51% expecting to learn about NZ culture and customs. Ninety eight percent of the students believed that practising the target language meant their homestay hosts would speak English. A further 64% expected to be taught English, casting their homestay members in the role of teacher. Some literature has demonstrated that one of the complexities regarding the homestay is the

role students expect their homestay hosts to assume (Richardson, 2003). Campbell and Guyton (2003) believe that some common assumptions stem from a clash of values and expectations. For instance, some male students in *their* study had no perceptions of the male role in NZ culture.

Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) believe that the homestay's main advantage is that students can interact with NSs and therefore have opportunities for language learning. Indeed, 62% of those interviewed in this study expected to speak one to two hours of English with their homestay hosts each day. Furthermore, the literature has revealed that students who participate in homestay programmes expect to spend time with their families and to become involved in family activities (Crealock, et al, 1999; Fryer & Lukasevich, 1998; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2004). This study showed that in NZ, students expected to eat meals, watch television and go out with their families.

5.3: ARE STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS MET? (1B)

The aim of research question 1B was to determine if the students' expectations explored in research question 1A were actually met because if expectations remain unfulfilled students will be unhappy or dissatisfied in their homestays. Such feelings could impact on their language learning in a number of ways. Firstly, students may avoid interaction with their homestay families by staying in their rooms. Secondly, they may choose to socialise with students of the same nationality outside of the homestay and abandon the L2, using their L1 instead. In extreme cases, students may choose to leave their homestay altogether, instead seeking other accommodation options such as flatting with compatriots or living alone (Welsh, 2001).

To answer research question 1B I used data from part B of the student questionnaire. This section asked students whether their expectations were fulfilled. The first question I mentioned asked students if life in the homestay was like they had expected it to be. Fifty six percent said that the homestay life was as they expected. However, 44% said that their homestay life was not as they had expected. This question was followed up by asking which particular expectations were met. As we can see from Table 5, not all language learning expectations were fulfilled.

Table 5 *The reality of homestay life*

Reality	Frequency	Expectation %	Reality %
A) My homestay speaks lots of English with me	32	98%	71%
B) My homestay teaches me English	21	64%	47%
C) My homestay helps me with my homework	14	22%	31%

Twenty seven percent of students spoke less English than they had expected, and 17% received less English teaching than they had expected. The next question explored how much English students actually spoke each day, to determine if the amount of English they were expecting to speak was fulfilled. As Table 6 reveals many expectations were not met. Only 11% spoke more English that they had expected, 22% spoke the amount they had expected but 67% spoke less than what they had expected.

Table 6 *Amount of English students actually spoke*

Amount	Frequency	Expectation %	Reality %
Less than 1 hour per day	13	-	29%
1 hour per day	15	31%	33%
1-2 hours per day	12	31%	27%
2-3 hours per day	3	20%	7%
3 + hours per day	2	18%	4%
Total	45		100%

The following question asked students if they spoke enough English. Forty-four percent said that they did speak enough English and 56% said that they did not. The final question in this section asked students about the activities they did with their homestay hosts to ascertain the ways in which they interacted in English. As Table 7 shows the results were clearly divided.

Table 7 *Activities*

Activity	Frequency	Expectation %	Reality %
A) Eat meals together	42	88%	93%
B) Watch TV together	37	87%	82%
C) Go out together	15	47%	33%
D) Play games/sports together	6	44%	22%

It is apparent from these results that student expectations were not always met because 56% stated that homestay life was not how they had anticipated. Noor (1968) believes that student expectations are sometimes too high while Farthing (1997) has concluded that orientation sessions, prior to the overseas departure, can be vital to the study abroad experience as they prepare students for their experience. Possibly, by being more informed, students would have more realistic expectations of homestay life. Overall, students' expectations in the homestay were not met in terms of English speaking and teaching. Fifty six percent said they did not speak enough English. Twenty seven percent revealed that their homestay families did not speak lots of English, 17% said they did not teach them English. However, 9% received assistance with their English homework, despite not expecting to do so. Some expectations were not met concerning the amount of daily English. Sixty two percent of students spoke English for one hour or less daily, despite the fact that 69% had expected at least 1 hour or more. This lack of English opportunity does reflect the findings of other research (Campbell, 2004; Fryer & Lukasevich, 1998; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2004; Welsh, 2001). If the main objective in choosing a homestay is to benefit from interaction, the figures in this study show that for many students, their main objective is not being met. Further evidence of expectations being left unfulfilled is provided by the fact that 41% did fewer activities with their families than they had expected. Crealock, et al (1999) found that many of the Japanese students in their study were not prepared for life overseas and in some cases the homestay had been inaccurately represented. If students had contact with their homestays prior to departure and were educated about NZ living, the reality of homestay life may more clearly match expectations.

5.4: WHAT ARE THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE HOMESTAY FAMILY REGARDING THEIR ROLE IN THE HOMESTAY? (2)

The literature has demonstrated that often students and homestay hosts possess different expectations and perceptions about homestay life (Campbell, 2004; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002, 2004). It would seem that if student and homestay host expectations and perceptions are different, then the homestay environment cannot possibly be a positive, interactive setting where students can improve their communicative competence. For this reason, research question 2 explored the perceptions homestay families have of their role using data from part B of the homestay family questionnaire.

The first question I asked homestay hosts was about their reasons for hosting. As Table 8 shows, the most popular reason was financial. Although money was a significant factor for most families, only 7% respondents stated that money was their only reason. However, unlike the students surveyed, who stated that English was their main objective in choosing to live in a homestay, only 60% of families stated that this was one of their reasons for hosting. Forty percent did not perceive helping students with their English as part of their role.

Table 8 *Reasons for hosting*

Reasons	Frequency	%
Money	40	89%
Learn about other cultures	32	71%
Help students learn English	27	60%
Enjoyment	21	47%
Companionship	11	24%
Other	5	11%

This question was followed up by asking families how they could assist students with their learning. Even though families recognised that they should speak lots of English, no-one thought that they should help students with their English homework. However, 91% did perceive their role to include teaching students about NZ culture and customs. Table 9 shows the results.

Table 9 *How homestay hosts assist students with learning*

Response	Frequency	%
Homestay hosts should speak lots of English	42	93%
Homestay hosts should teach students about NZ culture and customs	41	91%

The next question asked families about what they perceived to be their main responsibilities. As we can see in Table 10 all families believed their main responsibility was to provide students with a comfortable home environment.

Table 10 *Hosting responsibilities*

Responsibility	Frequency	%
Comfort and well-being	45	100%
Language help and learning	25	56%
Health and safety	16	36%
Help/advice	16	36%
Cultural experience	11	24%
Providing meals	10	22%

However, only 56% of families interviewed perceived language help and learning as one of their responsibilities. The following question asked families how much English they spoke with their students per day. Table 11 reveals that slightly less than half the families spoke between 1 and 2 hours of English daily. On average the homestays surveyed believed they spoke more English than the student sample surveyed.

Table 11 *Amount of English spoken daily*

Amount	Frequency	%
Less than one hour	5	11%
About one hour	13	29%
1-2 hours	19	42%
2-3 hours	6	13%
3+ hours	2	4%
Total	45	99%

In order to further explore the homestay families' perceptions of language learning I asked if they spoke the right amount of English, if they would have liked to speak more English but didn't have time, or if they spoke too much. Eighty percent believed they spoke the right amount of English, 18% would like to speak more but didn't have time, and only 2% stated that they spoke too much. I also wanted to determine the types of activities families did with their students to explore how English was used in the homestay. Table 12 shows that the most common activity for interacting was at mealtimes.

Table 12*Activities*

Activity	Frequency	%
Eat meals	45	100%
Go out	41	91%
Watch TV	41	91%
Play games	23	51%
Travel	16	36%
Sport	9	20%

The reasons for hosting were quite varied with the most popular choice, 89%, being monetary. However, only 7% of respondents stated that this was their only motive and indeed Farthing (1997) suggests such families should be banned from hosting. Sixty percent said that they hosted to help students with their English but 71% were more interested in learning about other cultures (Palmer, 2000). Ninety three percent believed they should speak lots of English and 56% perceived their role to include language assistance and teaching. Interestingly, families placed learning about other cultures and customs as being more important than helping students learn English, concurring with Campbell's (2004) findings that families were sometimes unaware of the students' language learning expectations. Families considered the students' well-being and comfort as a top priority. The homestay responses pertaining to the amount of English they spoke was on the whole higher than the student responses. One plausible explanation could be, as Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) determined, that families were not completely truthful in their responses. It is also feasible that students, in answering this question, only considered the amount of English they produced, whereas homestay hosts may have considered the entire interaction process. Most families thought they spoke enough English and this could be linked to the fact that they hold more realistic expectations about daily life than students. Finally, in terms of activities which may engage students in speaking English, all families claimed that they ate meals

with their students. A further 91% said that they watch television together and 91% go out. This provides some evidence that homestay hosts do interact with students and opportunities for language learning are likely.

On the whole, this study has demonstrated that there are some discrepancies between student expectations and the perceptions homestay families have of their roles. In order to fulfil expectations and avoid disappointment, and, in turn, to provide a positive homestay environment which is conducive to language learning, several measures need to be taken. Crealock, et al (1999) believe that more accurate and timely information should be provided to students. Researchers such as Farthing (1997) claim that orientation sessions are an invaluable way of educating students about overseas life. Furthermore, Richardson (2003) suggests the selection process of homestay families provided by homestay organisers could be more rigid. As a result, homestays and students could be more suitably matched.

5.5: DO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS EXPERIENCE ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS AND CULTURE SHOCK IN NZ? (3A)

Unanimously, the literature has shown that two of the major problems impacting on students' expectations of the overseas experience are those of adjustment and culture shock (Beaver & Tuck, 1998; Eng & Manthei, 1984; Klepinger, 1995). Often students are ill prepared for their overseas experience (Everts & Sodjakusumah, 1996). They experience communication problems and socialise in their own groups (Dalley, 1972 cited in James & Watts, 1992). The purpose of research question 3A was to ascertain if international students in NZ suffer from adjustment problems and culture shock. If students are not well adjusted to NZ life and suffer from culture shock, it is unlikely that they will be in a position to take advantage of language learning opportunities in the homestay. However, if they are happy, settled and well-adjusted, they are more likely to use any potential opportunities for improving their communicative competence. This question was answered by using data obtained from part C of the student questionnaire.

The literature has demonstrated that often students possess little cultural knowledge (Campbell, 2004; Fryer & Lukasevich, 1998; Knight & Schmidt, 2004). Therefore, the first question I asked students was if they knew a lot or a little about NZ culture and customs before they arrived. Only 4% of students stated they knew a lot about NZ culture and customs. The majority, 96%, stated they they knew only a little.

The follow up question enquired if students had attended an orientation session about NZ life before their arrival. By attending an orientation it would be reasonable to assume that students would have some NZ knowledge. Only 11% said that they had attended such a session. Eighty nine percent said that they had not. I then asked students if they had received information about their homestay families prior to arrival to find out if students were well prepared. Although 76% had, 24% stated that they had not. Of the 76% that had received information, most agreed that the information was basic and 65% said that additional information would have been useful.

The fourth question asked if students had experienced culture shock in NZ. Despite the literature claiming that culture shock is inevitable (Oberg, 1960), only 31% admitted that they had experienced it. Sixty nine percent of students said that they had not. In order to explore this question further the fifth question asked students to determine what culture shock was. Only 36% were able to explain. 64% gave an incorrect answer. The next question asked students to describe how they felt in their first few weeks in NZ. Table 13 reveals that students experienced a range of feelings, both negative and positive but that negative feelings were more common.

Table 13*Feelings*

Feeling	Frequency	%
Worried	18	40%
Nervous	15	33%
Happy	15	33%
Excited	12	27%

Note: 15 students provided 2 answers

In order to explore if students experienced adjustment problems I asked if life in their own countries was very different, different, similar or very similar to NZ life. As we can see in Table 14, most students believed that NZ life was very different.

Table 14*Lifestyle comparison*

Response	Frequency	%
Very different	25	56%
Different	19	42%
Similar	6	13%

Note: 5 students gave 2 answers

As an extension of this question I explored whether or not it had been easy for students to adjust to NZ life. Table 15 shows that most students found it easy to adjust.

Table 15*Adjustment*

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	4	9%
Agree	29	64%
Undecided	9	20%
Disagree	3	7%

The next two questions explored the adjustment process further. My first question asked whether students had made NZ friends outside of the homestay. Forty seven percent said they had, while 53% said they had not. Of those students who had not made friends 54% said that they had no contact with New Zealanders, and 46% believed that New Zealanders did not wish to make friends with foreigners. My following question asked students if they were a member of a NZ church, sports or social club. As is evident from the responses shown in Table 16, most students did not belong to any organisation.

Table 16 *Organisation membership*

Response	Frequency	%
Church	2	4%
Sports Club	9	20%
Social Club	2	4%
None	36	80%

Note: 4 students belonged to more than one organisation

My next question asked students if they wanted *to speak* like a New Zealander. As Table 17 reveals, most students said they did.

Table 17 *Do you want to speak like a New Zealander?*

Response	Frequency	%
No	5	11%
Undecided	9	20%
Yes	31	66%
Total	45	100%

My follow up question asked students if they wanted *to be* like a New Zealander. Table 18 shows that the results are somewhat mixed, with 36% of students saying that they were undecided.

Table 18 *Do you want to be like a New Zealander?*

Response	Frequency	%
No	13	29%
Undecided	16	36%
Yes	16	36%

Ninety six percent of respondents felt that they knew only a little about NZ culture and customs prior to their arrival, supporting the findings of studies that students often do not possess enough cultural knowledge (Campbell, 2004; Fryer & Lukasevich, 1998; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2004). This evidence is further supported by the fact that 89% had not attended an orientation session which could provide students with indispensable information (Farthing, 1997). In turn, being better informed and possessing more realistic expectations could assist the adjustment process. Although some students did receive information about their family beforehand, 65% claimed that this was limited and stated that they would have liked additional information. This concurs with findings from a study conducted by Crealock, et al (1999), in which there was a lack of pre-departure information. Despite 69% of students claiming that they had not suffered from culture shock, 53% were unable to explain what this was. One explanation could be that students had experienced culture shock but did not actually realise it. Students used negative and positive adjectives to describe their feelings upon arrival, contradicting studies which found that the initial response is either negative (Holmes, 2000; Pedersen, 1995) or positive (Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960).

Although 98% of students said that life in NZ was different to that in their own country, 73% stated that it had been easy to adjust. Globalisation may mean that many countries have more in common than before (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002). Furthermore, advances in technology may allow students to have more contact with their own families and this may make adjustment easier. A study by Leo (1983) revealed that students who made friends with New Zealanders were better adjusted. However, 53% of students in this study had no Kiwi friends. Butcher and McGrath's (2004) research showed that being a member of a church or club was another influential factor in helping students to adjust, yet 80% of students in this study were not members of an organisation. The fact that so many students had no NZ friends and only a few had become members of an organisation may suggest that the students regarded NZ as a temporary place of residence. Although 69% wanted to speak like a New Zealander, 64% were undecided or said they did not want to be like a New Zealander. Further to the point of adjustment, Schumann (1978) believes that if learning is to be successful,

learners need to acculturate to the target language group. Schumann's (1978) acculturation theory is based on the principle of adjustment between the learner's own social group and the target language group. However, 98% of those surveyed regarded NZ as a temporary residence and most had no desire to live the life of a New Zealander.

5.6:: DO HOMESTAY FAMILIES PERCEIVE STUDENTS AS EXPERIENCING ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS AND CULTURE SHOCK IN NZ? (3B)

The literature has shown that homestay families do not always recognise the symptoms of culture shock and the fact that students have difficulty adjusting (Campbell, 2004; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002; Richardson, 2003). Even when families do identify the signs, often they do not know how to deal with them. If families are to ensure that the homestay is an optimal language learning environment, they must be able to notice and deal with adjustment problems and culture shock so that students can feel adjusted to NZ life and take advantage of language learning opportunities when they arise. The aim of research question 3B was to find out if homestay hosts believed international students in NZ experienced adjustment problems and culture shock.

The first question I asked was whether families felt students knew a lot or a little about NZ culture and customs. Overwhelmingly, 93% believed that students knew only a little. When I asked families if students suffer from culture shock, 16% said that they do not and 84% said that they do. My follow up question asked families to describe the signs of culture shock. As Table 19 reveals, there was a wide range of suggestions, with most families providing more than one response. Only 7% said that they had no idea.

Table 19 *The signs of culture shock*

Sign	Frequency	%
Withdrawal/unwilling to communicate	35	78%
Homesickness/depression	20	44%
Differences in lifestyle	19	42%
Other	18	40%

To determine how families perceived the adjustment process for students my next question asked them how students usually feel in their first few weeks in NZ. The

responses, given in Table 20, show that there is a mixture of both positive and negative emotions.

Table 20 *Feelings*

Feelings	Frequency	%
Nervous	37	82%
Excited	26	58%
Happy	19	42%
Worried	16	36%

The following question was asked to explore what kinds of things students had difficulty adjusting to. Table 21 reveals that 38% perceived language to be an area of difficulty.

Table 21 *Adjustment difficulties*

Response	Frequency	%
Language	17	38%
Lifestyle	14	31%
Quietness	13	29%
Food	13	29%
Homesickness	8	18%
Transport	8	18%
Being independent	8	18%
Climate	6	13%

My subsequent question asked families how students could help themselves to adjust to NZ life. Fifty three percent suggested students should mix with the family and other students. Table 22 shows all the responses.

Table 22 *How can students help themselves to adjust?*

Response	Frequency	%
Mix with family/friends	24	53%
Be open and receptive	14	31%
Spend more time speaking English	10	22%
Have more NZ knowledge	8	18%
Travel	6	13%
Other	13	29%

Note: 3 people failed to respond.

'Other' included watching TV, reading, asking questions, and discussing problems.

I expanded this question by asking families what they could do to help students adjust to NZ life. Table 23 shows a variety of responses.

Table 23 *How families can help students to adjust*

Response	Frequency	%
Involve students	23	51%
Provide comfort and warmth	21	47%
Talking	17	38%
Patience	9	20%
Other	14	31%

Note: Other includes lending students things, introducing them to people, helping them to be independent.

This section explored how families believed students adjusted to NZ life and the issues of culture shock. Ninety three percent of homestay respondents agreed with students that they possess a limited knowledge of NZ culture and customs. Contrary to the student sample, 84% of participants believed that students do suffer from culture shock. Despite 7% saying they did not know what this was, most families were able to explain. The homestay families' responses pertaining to students' initial feelings suggest that these feelings are slightly more negative than the students perceived, supporting some research (Holmes, 2000; Pederson, 1995) that the overseas experience can initially be negative. Thirty eight percent of families said that language was an area students had difficulty adjusting to. Perhaps, in orientation sessions, students could be introduced to some common Kiwi phrases and expressions. Fifty three percent suggested that students could help themselves to adjust by socialising more with the family and other students. Indeed, the host mothers in Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart's (2002) study felt that some students spent too much time outside of the homestay. Thirty one percent commented that students need to be more open and receptive to NZ life, possibly indicating that students are reluctant to try new things. Twenty two percent stated that students should use more English and thought that they should discuss problems and ask more questions. Some families believed that students often think that the best way to improve their language skills is by studying alone in their rooms and the literature (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991; Burns, 1991) has acknowledged that one of the adjustment problems is due to differences in learning styles. Fifty one percent of homestay

families, in this study, believed that they could assist students to adjust by involving them. Forty seven percent believed that this could be achieved by providing warmth and comfort. However, none of the families suggested that this could be achieved by their role in the language learning process.

5.7: WHAT TYPES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ARISE IN THE HOMESTAY AND WHEN? (4)

Some literature has demonstrated that student expectations are not met and that their well-being is often neglected (Campbell, 2004; Crealock, et al, 1999; Fryer & Lukasevich, 1998; Knight & Schmidt, 2004; Welsh, 2001). Some research has also considered the perceptions of homestay hosts (Campbell, 2004; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002; Richardson, 2003). although this is severely lacking in NZ. Furthermore, some researchers have focused on the issues of adjustment and culture shock and how this can affect the overseas experience (Beaver & Tuck, 1998; Butcher & McGrath, 2004; Eng & Manthei, 1984). However, only a few studies have considered the language learning which occurs in the homestay (Hashimoto, 1993; Woodall & Takeuchi, 1999). Furthermore, to date, there have been no studies which have considered all of these issues together in NZ. My study is based on the belief that, in order for language learning opportunities to occur and to be made use of, both student and homestay expectations must be fulfilled. If expectations are not met both parties are likely to feel unhappy and dissatisfied, and in turn, language learning is unlikely to occur. On the other hand, a happy, positive homestay environment, which promotes interaction between homestay members and students, will be more conducive to language learning. What is more, if students are to benefit from the language learning opportunities presented to them, they must feel accustomed to NZ life and experience minimal problems such as adjustment and culture shock. If all of these expectations are met, it would be reasonable to assume that the homestay could be a valuable linguistic source which can offer students opportunities to improve their communicative competence. Research question four examined the types of opportunities which occur in the homestay and when such opportunities arise.

To answer research question four I used data from multiple sources. Firstly, I present the results of part D of the student questionnaire, which examined the types of language learning opportunities in the homestay. These results are presented descriptively with

frequencies and percentages to highlight particular findings. These results are then discussed.

5.7.1 Student Questionnaire - Results

My first question asked students if their homestay hosts corrected their pronunciation. Table 24 shows, less than a third of the students were corrected often.

Table 24 *Does your homestay family correct your pronunciation?*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	5	11%
Sometimes	27	60%
Often	13	29%
Total	45	100%

To explore correction further I asked students if their homestay families corrected their grammar. As we can see in Table 25, only 9% of students are corrected often.

Table 25 *Does your homestay family correct your grammar?*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	11	24%
Sometimes	30	67%
Often	4	9%
Total	45	100%

My next three questions focused on the types of language students learn in homestays. Firstly, I asked if students learnt new words. Four percent said that they never learnt any new words, while 44% replied sometimes and 51% stated often. Secondly, I enquired whether students learnt idioms. As Table 26 reveals, only 9% said this happened often.

Table 26 *Do you learn idioms?*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	21	47%
Sometimes	20	44%
Often	4	9%
Total	45	100%

My third question asked if students learnt slang. Surprisingly, as can be seen in Table 27, no-one responded 'often.'

Table 27 *Do you learn slang?*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	29	64%
Sometimes	16	36%
Total	45	100%

My next question enquired if students aided their understanding by asking questions. Only 2% of students said that they never asked questions. Thirty eight percent responded 'sometimes' and 60% responded 'often.'

My next set of questions focused on the language learning difficulties which students encounter. Firstly, I asked students if they had difficulty understanding. Overwhelmingly, 76% said that they do sometimes have difficulty, while 24% stated 'never.' I then enquired about the types of difficulties students experience by asking if their families spoke too fast. As we can see in Table 28, 65% of respondents felt this happened either sometimes or often.

Table 28 *Does your homestay host speak too fast?*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	16	36%
Sometimes	25	56%
Often	4	9%
Total	45	101%

As a further exploration of difficulty types I asked students if they had difficulty speaking. Twenty nine percent of students said they never had difficulty and 71% said they sometimes did. My following three questions explored how homestay families assisted students with their language learning. To begin I asked students if their

families repeated things. Fifty one percent of students said that they did repeat things sometimes and 49% stated often. Secondly, I asked students if their families explained things. Only 7% of students said never, 36% said that they explained things sometimes and 58% responded often. I then asked students if families used simple language. Again 7% of students said never, but the rest, 93%, were evenly divided between sometimes and often.

These questions were followed by asking students if they received help with their English homework. As Table 29 shows, most students did not receive assistance.

Table 29 *Does your family help you with your homework?*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	25	56%
Sometimes	14	31%
Often	6	13%
Total	45	100%

My next question enquired whether or not students received feedback on their English. Table 30 reveals that one third of families never did this.

Table 30 *Do you get feedback on your English?*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	15	33%
Sometimes	23	51%
Often	7	16%
Total	45	100%

The following question asked students if they thought their families had time to talk to them. Only 7% of students replied never, 38% replied sometimes and 56% said often.

The next section explored the language learning opportunities in more depth. When I asked students who assisted them the most with their language learning, 73% responded that the host mother did.

My follow up question asked students how this person assisted them with their language learning. Thirty one percent answered simply by talking, 29% by providing correction and 9% by using simple language. Thirty one percent included other responses. When I asked students which skill they had improved the most by living in a homestay, listening was the most popular choice. The results are presented in Table 31 below.

Table 31 *Most improved skill*

Skill	Frequency	%
Listening	37	82%
Speaking	27	60%
Reading and writing	4	9%

Note: 16 students provided more than one answer

I then asked students to comment on the extent that living in a homestay had helped them to learn English. Sixty four percent said that it had helped them, with a further 24% saying it had helped them a lot. Only 11% responded negatively. My following question asked students how they felt when they spoke English in their homestay. As Table 32 reveals, most students experienced positive feelings.

Table 32 *How do you feel when you speak English in your homestay?*

Feeling	Frequency	%
Comfortable	23	51%
Happy	22	49%
Confident	8	18%
Nervous	6	13%
Worried	5	11%
Frustrated	1	2%

Note: 2 students did not respond

I wanted to find out what students talk about with their homestay hosts, so I asked them to name the topics they discuss. As we can see in Table 33, there are a variety of responses.

Table 33 *Discussion topics*

Topic	Frequency	%
Culture and countries	23	51%
News/TV/film	18	40%
Study/school	12	27%
Daily life	10	22%

Family	5	11%
Other	28	62%

As a follow up question I asked students if the topics they discuss are boring or interesting. Eighty nine percent stated that the topics were interesting, 16% stated that they were boring, and two students chose both responses, presumably depending on the topic. My final question asked students about the resources they used in their homestays to promote their language learning. Ninety six percent watched TV, 51% read English newspapers, 49% read English books, and 44% also listened to English radio.

Homestay families often or sometimes corrected students' pronunciation. However, 11% of students said that their grammar was never corrected. Woodall and Takeuchi's study (1999) found that families were so used to hosting that they could understand the students, even when they were not grammatically correct. In such cases they did not provide correction and valuable feedback was lost. In terms of acquiring lexis some studies have shown that the homestay can be valuable (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2004; Hashimoto, 1993; Tanaka, 1997) and this research supports these findings, with 96% saying that they often or sometimes learnt new vocabulary. However, only 9% learnt idioms and 64% of students never learnt slang. Possibly, the families themselves did not use idioms or slang in their own speech. Another plausible explanation could be that families did not wish to confuse students and tried to use more simple language. Hashimoto's (1993) case study revealed that the student often asked questions and all the students in this study asked questions either sometimes or often. This provides some evidence that students were interested in learning and improving their linguistic skills.

Campbell and Guyton's study (2003) revealed that homestay hosts were often unaware that students do not understand. Supporting these findings, 63% of the students sampled said that their homestay hosts spoke too fast either sometimes or often. By means of language training, homestay hosts could be made more aware of adjusting their speech pace to suit the students' needs. Hashimoto (1993) discovered that homestay families do use strategies to make language input more comprehensible, implying that the homestay environment may indeed facilitate second language

learning. The host parents in her study often assisted students by paraphrasing, explaining and providing examples. Campbell's (2004) study produced further evidence of the linguistic strategies sometimes used by families. This study showed that most families were aware of some of the ways in which they could assist their students' understanding. A vast majority, 56%, stated that their families never assisted with homework. Possibly the students never asked for assistance or the families did not perceive this as their role. By asking families to check their homework students may receive valuable feedback. In fact, 33% of students said that they never received any feedback. This was also revealed in Woodall and Takeuchi's study (1999). Furthermore, feedback can provide students with valuable information about their linguistic progress. Other NZ research (Campbell, 2004; Welsh, 2001) has found that families are often too busy to engage with students. This could be due to the demands of daily life and the fact that many families now work. This issue could also be addressed in homestay training courses, and by means of orientation sessions students could have more realistic expectations about how much time they are likely to be able to spend with their families.

Knight and Schmidt-Rineharts's study (2002) showed that the host mother offered the most assistance because the host father was often out at work. The results in this study could be due to the same factor, but it could also be explained because 42% of students interviewed lived in households comprising single mothers. The most popular way of assisting students was purely by interacting with them. Interestingly, 82% of students believed that the skill they had improved the most was listening, not speaking. This could be explained by the fact that some students are more passive than active learners or that the homestay provides a continuous immersion environment in which students are exposed to language (Families conversing, TV on, and so on). Most responses indicated that these students believed that the homestay could be beneficial for language learning, supporting studies such as Fryer & Lukasevich (1998). Furthermore, most students in this study are positive about speaking English, suggesting that students are living in environments which encourage language learning. Unlike some studies (Rivers, 1998; Woodall & Takeuchi, 1999), a wide range of topics were discussed and 89% students felt that the topics were interesting. Woodall and Takeuchi (1999) stress the significance of quality, stating that if the quantity is decreased but the quality is increased, then language improvement does not necessarily have to be sacrificed. Finally, this study revealed that students have access to and do use resources available in the homestay to facilitate their learning. Possibly, if they lived in other types of

accommodation, these resources would not be available. In order to further explore the language learning opportunities in more depth, the next section presents the findings of the diary.

5.7.2 Student Diary - Results

Triangulation was used in this study. The diaries sought to confirm, negate or provide additional information for the student questionnaires. The results are displayed in tabulated format as a group with frequency counts (See Tables 34 and 35 below). Row one displays the student's code and nationality. Row two is the homestay family composition and the student's English level. Rows three to seventeen contain the number of language learning opportunities (frequencies) as described by the students in their diaries. Beneath these rows, the total counts of language learning opportunities are displayed. The notes (row eighteen) contain additional information primarily about language learning opportunities. Row nineteen displays the activities students did with their homestay hosts and row twenty displays how the students felt as they were completing their diary studies. A blank means no response.

From the diary study results, it is immediately apparent that the opportunities for language learning vary considerably in each homestay. For instance, student A discussed thirty-three topics with her host mother in one month, and yet student B1 discussed only six. This student often ate meals in front of the television in silence. Most of the students tended to converse with just one person at a time as opposed to conversing in a group situation. There is limited pronunciation and grammar correction and yet, as most students were at intermediate level, it would be reasonable to assume that these are both areas which they could improve on. Some students are clearly not learning any lexis and yet others learn new words frequently which includes slang and idioms. Ninety percent of the students received explanations from their hosts but only half received feedback on their English progress. The diaries provide evidence that some homestay families assisted their students' learning by using repetition, rephrasing or speaking more slowly. In some cases, understanding is made easier by asking questions and using body language.

The language learning opportunities, revealed in the diaries, were further explored in the interviews. The next section outlines the major interview findings.

5.7.3 Student Interview - Results

The first purpose of the interviews was to further explore the student questionnaire answers. The second purpose was that they were a response to the diary findings. Although some patterns did emerge, each student provided different insights and for this reason the interview questions were tailor-made as a response to each individual. For this reason, I will discuss each interview separately as mini case studies, highlighting particular areas of interest. (See Tables 36 - 45 at the end of the mini case studies for overall results of the student profiles).

Student Q

This student is a mature Italian male who lived with a single mother and her four-year-old child. The homestay mother assisted him with homework, which included spelling, grammar and writing. Student Q didn't think that the presence of a child assisted his learning. However, he did comment that an older child may have been more beneficial. The homestay offered resources such as a computer, books and television. As an independent learner he often used these to assist his learning. This particular homestay provided plenty of opportunities for learning new words and idioms, which the student wrote down. Student Q insisted that a happy homestay was essential for language learning to be successful and commented that if he were unhappy he would go out or stay in his own room. He often asked his homestay mother to repeat things when he experienced difficulty. There was grammar correction but this was mainly restricted to tenses. His homestay mother often explained things by providing examples. To aid understanding she simplified her language and altered her speech pace. Student Q insisted that feedback was always positive and this student was satisfied with the amount of correction he received. In his view he feels it would be unrealistic to ask his family for more correction because she is not his teacher.

Student A

Student A is an advanced female learner from Japan. She lived with a host mother and another student of a similar level. From the interview she revealed that the most important

aspect of homestay life, for her, was having the opportunity to speak English and in her diary she mentioned as many as thirty-three topics. She placed so much emphasis on actually speaking that sometimes, when she did not understand her host mother, she did not ask questions. This was because she did not wish to interrupt the flow of the conversation. If she were unhappy in her homestay she believes this would actually stop her from studying English. She enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere her homestay had to offer and was able to speak freely. She admitted that one of the things she particularly appreciated was that the homestay was a female household and felt that males would distract her from her studies. She sometimes prepared what she was going to say and explained that this is so she could control the direction of the conversation. One of the activities that she found useful was that her host mother checked her English by providing reading and listening tests. Although there were no children, the homestay's grandchildren often visited. Student A's experience is that children can help with language learning as they can teach you new words. Her host mother explained things by paraphrasing and often taught words and phrases unique to NZ. Student A also used the resources in the homestay such as the television and radio as she believed this could improve her listening skills. There was limited grammar and pronunciation correction but this was probably due to the fact that her level was advanced. On the whole, this was an extremely happy homestay which assisted the student's language learning in many ways.

Student C

Student C is a male intermediate student from Hong Kong. He lived with two parents and one other student. He enjoyed having another student in his homestay as this forced him to speak English. His diary entries were somewhat sparse and on some days he didn't make an entry. When I questioned him about this he said that he often socialised with friends outside of the homestay. He also has a Chinese aunt who he often stayed with. Further probing also revealed that he often went to his own room after dinner. He openly pointed out that he did not wish to learn English slang and idioms because he felt that he did not need to improve his English level any further. His homestay family explained things by showing him the object and he claimed that all of the feedback was positive. He had no hesitation in asking questions when he did not understand. Activities were limited to mealtimes and watching TV and the news was often used as a source of discussion. For this

student the most valuable aspect of homestay life was that, by mixing with older people, he learnt to use more polite language. This student appeared to lack enthusiasm and seemed to have given up on his studies. One plausible explanation for this is that he had been in NZ for several months and was due to return home.

Student E

This student is a Taiwanese male studying at intermediate level. He lived with two parents and another student, who possessed a higher level of English. From his diary writings it would seem that he lived with just a single mother and another student but in his questionnaire he mentioned a father. When I asked him about this he stated that apart from basic greetings they had no conversation, and he attributed this to the fact that the father possessed a quiet personality. Although the diary showed having another student of a higher level sometimes meant he could not join in the conversation, he did state in his interview that this was an influential factor in his learning, because the other student provided him with vocabulary. However, she never corrected his grammar. Homestay life was not as this student anticipated and he believed that the lack of interaction was due to the busy lives of the homestay members. In fact, they only ate meals together and even this did not occur on a daily basis. He said that going out together would help him improve his language. He did comment that he learnt new words and his host mother often explained the words and provided him with the spelling, which he wrote down. Although he was not entirely happy with the amount of interaction in his homestay he decided not to change his situation. This may be because he simply could be bothered to change or because he was satisfied with some aspects of homestay life and believes that another homestay would be the same.

Student M1

M1 is a male student from Taiwan who was obviously content in his homestay. He lived with two parents and their two teenage children. Initially he found understanding English difficult and would retreat to his room. He was actually afraid to speak English but became more relaxed. He preferred to speak to just one person at a time, as group interaction amongst New Zealanders was difficult for him due to their speech pace. He claimed that

his family didn't often correct his grammar because even though he was incorrect they could still understand him. His closest rapport appeared to be with the host father who M1 openly stated liked speaking to him. The father used simple English, explanations and asked questions to help him understand, as well as teaching him new words. Non-verbal gestures such as body language were extremely useful in the beginning when M1 did not know a word. His family assisted his learning by giving him plenty of encouragement and they discussed a wide range of topics. M1 believes that the presence of children has helped him improve his linguistic skills. Even younger children (the family's grandchildren) helped because they asked him lots of questions. Often, if this student did not know how to complete a sentence his homestay family finished the sentence for him.

Student O1

Student O1 is a male, intermediate student from Taiwan. He was so dissatisfied with his homestay that he changed family on day eight of his diary writing. He explained to me that his old family were a quiet household and had no interest in talking to him. (Off tape this student admitted that he thought the family's incentive to host was purely financial). His questionnaire revealed that he had improved his reading skill the most and he told me that this was because he often stayed in his room reading. The reason he changed his homestay was because he wanted to speak to NZ people. His new homestay provided him with a much happier environment and although he did not receive any formal English lessons from his family, he felt included and comfortable. These were both factors which enabled him to talk. His family often explained things in a simpler manner and he particularly enjoyed spending time with the homestay father. As the father originally comes from Croatia, O1 felt that he could empathise with his situation. For this learner having another student in the homestay was extremely helpful because he never felt nervous when they talked together and could express himself freely without worrying about using a dictionary. Often the two homestay friends talked late into the night. He would like more grammar and pronunciation correction and believed that a good way to improve his language ability was by asking questions. Often the grandchildren visited and he viewed this as an opportune moment to tune his listening skills. He was able to follow their conversations easily because the language was simpler, due to their age.

Student X

Student X is an intermediate male from Saudi Arabia. He lived with two parents and two students. This student seemed to be the only person to struggle with the diary task. As his speaking skills are quite strong the interview provided invaluable insights into his homestay life and some of the language learning opportunities, which were not mentioned in the diary, were clearly happening in his home. X appreciated the company of another student. He said that sometimes the homestay family were too busy and having another student provided companionship and the opportunity to talk. His main interaction time with his family was meal preparation and watching TV. His family provided him with examples to help him understand and student X used this strategy himself when he encountered difficulties. He was sometimes unable to follow the conversation but did not ask his family because he did not wish to appear boring. Even though his family sometimes talked too fast he never asked them to repeat things or to slow down. This may be an area where some potential language learning opportunities were lost. Feedback was always positive and his host mum often corrected his pronunciation but never his grammar. On the whole he viewed the homestay as a place to practise his English on a daily basis and stated that if he lived in an alternative type of accommodation he would probably speak his own language.

Student I

This student is a male intermediate learner from China. He lived with his host mother and two students, one of whom could speak fluent Chinese. This student mentioned learning a lot of slang in his diary. He explained that in the evenings he often sat around the kitchen table with the other students. As they talked, the host mum listened to their conversation and provided correction of words and suggestions of words they could use (often slang). In addition to spelling the words she often drew pictures to help the students understand. The television news provided a great source of conversation as they often watched it together and discussed the day's events. Frequently, they compared situations in NZ and their own countries. However, apart from eating meals together and watching TV, the students and homestay family didn't do any additional activities. Student I attributes this to the fact that the host mother was often busy working. Feedback in this household was very direct. The host mother often told student I to use a dictionary and admonished him when he spoke

Chinese. She insisted that the homestay was an English speaking only environment. They also made use of body language to assist understanding and the host mum was always willing to assist with homework. This student regarded the homestay as a place where he was forced to speak English on a daily basis.

Student G

Student G is a shy female student from Korea who lived with a single mother and another student who arrived during her diary writings. Her diary did provide evidence of language learning but often it was apparent that she was reluctant to talk and this interview explored this aspect in more depth. Frequently, if the student's feelings were not good and she felt unhappy she would go to her room immediately after dinner. She often expressed that she was worried or afraid to speak English. This may be because she lacked confidence in speaking. From her writings it seemed that her host mum expected her to make an effort to speak but she explained that her level often hindered her from doing so. This home appeared to be a very quiet household and often the student seemed bored with just watching TV. On the one hand, the television can be used as a source of discussion if the content is understood. On the other hand, if the level is too difficult, the student may have felt too embarrassed to speak. When visitors came to the house she did not talk to them as she was unable to comprehend the conversation. She felt that the pace of their speech was too fast and she also believed her English was not good enough. On one occasion, the student and homestay mum used a memo as a way of communicating with each other. The subject of the memo was about a delicate issue (electricity costs) and possibly by using written and not verbal means of communication they were both hoping to ease the situation and avoid further misunderstanding or embarrassment. Even though her diary revealed that she experienced difficulties, there were seven instances of her host mother explaining things to her. Student G eventually left her homestay and moved into an apartment by herself. Having taught this student personally, I know that she is a conscientious worker and with plenty of encouragement can achieve many things. Possibly, a different type of homestay where she was actively engaged in family activities would have been more suitable.

Student B1

This student comes from Switzerland. He is male and is studying at upper intermediate level. He lived with a host mum, two adult children and another student. B1 was clearly dissatisfied with the lack of English available in his homestay and during his diary writing moved to another homestay family. He revealed that his old family had no interest in talking to him. They often watched TV but this was not used as a means of discussion - they merely watched in silence. If he did try to talk or make a comment no-one responded. In his diary he described his family as a very 'adult' family and when I asked him about this he explained that they all led very independent lives. He gave an example of when his host mum went away for a day without leaving a note. He stated quite frankly that his family host purely to earn money. Often, when he would try to explain a word he was convinced that his host mum did not want to understand and provided no assistance whatsoever. B1 believed that having another student in the house was only beneficial if the other student was of the same level. For this reason he rarely communicated with the other homestay student. His second homestay environment was more positive. They ate meals together and talked and he liked the fact that he could study freely, without restrictions on computer use. When I asked him what makes a good homestay he replied that it is to accept the student and actively engage them. He thinks that introducing students to other people and allowing students to use the homestay resources are both factors which would contribute to a beneficial learning environment.

5.7.4 Diaries and Interviews - Discussion

On the whole, evidence provided by the questionnaires, diaries and interviews clearly shows that the number and types of language learning opportunities occurring in these homestays is varied. In some cases, some students were so unhappy in their environment that they left their homestays (B1, G, O1, I). However, for other students, living in a homestay proved to be beneficial for their language learning (A, Q1, M1).

Most of the data revealed that the person mainly responsible for assisting students with their language learning was the host mother, supporting the findings of Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart's study (2002) which found that, often, the host mother took care of students because the host fathers were out at work. In this study the result could also be explained by the fact that 50% of the homestay families comprised single mothers. Eighty percent of students lived with at least one other student. With the exception of student B1, the interviews support the view expressed in the diary studies which revealed that other students can make a valuable contribution to the language learning process because students feel more relaxed in the company of their peers. Fryer & Lukasevich (1998) found that other students often provided companionship and opportunities for talk. Student B1 pointed out, in his interview, that the other student's English level was too low to be of assistance to him. Student G's interview, on the other hand, showed that he particularly found having a student with a higher English level useful because she could teach him new words.

The questionnaires and diaries showed that only 30% of the students lived with children although several students had contact with younger family members. Student A disclosed that grandchildren were helpful because they could assist with vocabulary. Student M1 explained that children helped him understand. This does give some support to studies by Hashimoto (1993) and Tanaka (1997) which found that the presence of children may be useful for improving one's target language. This may be because children enable students to feel more relaxed. As a result, the student's Affective Filter may be lowered, creating a more conducive language learning environment (Krashen, 1981). Furthermore, if students are less conscious of making mistakes, interaction between them and other homestay members is more likely to occur (Long, 1996). With the exception of three students (X, O1, G) all students usually spoke to just one person at a time. One explanation could be

that the NZ accent is too difficult to understand or that New Zealanders tend to speak too quickly.

The diaries revealed that the number of topics students discussed varied immensely. On the one hand, student B1's diary mentioned only six topics in one month. On the other hand, student A discussed as many as thirty-three topics. In his interview, student B1 said that often his family was not at home and that the television was his best friend. Even when his family was at home, they often ate dinner in front of the television in silence. Student A, however, enjoyed frequent and intense discussions with her host mother and in the interview said that speaking had been the most useful part of her learning. The diaries and interviews do give additional support to the questionnaires that students were happy with the quality of the topics, contradicting studies by Rivers (1998) and Woodall and Takeuchi (1999) that students were often bored with daily conversation. However, in terms of quantity, 60% of the students were dissatisfied. Only 30% believed they spoke enough English and only student A spoke more than she had expected. These results, on the whole, support findings that students are often disappointed with the quantity of language (Campbell, 2004; Fryer & Lukasevich, 1998; Welsh, 2001).

The diaries and interviews further support the questionnaires that mealtimes provided the most interaction. However, there were some exceptions. Students E and B1 rarely ate with their families and some students often ate outside the homestay (Student C). Eighty percent mentioned watching television together and 50% reported doing house chores. However, only students A and Q1 mentioned using amenities such as newspapers and the radio in their homestays to further facilitate their learning.

In 50% of cases, the diaries contradict the questionnaires in terms of lexis. For instance, student O1's questionnaire stated that he never learnt new words and yet in his diary there are five instances of learning. Students C, E, G and X wrote that they sometimes or often learnt new words in their questionnaires but all failed to record this in their diary writings. This discrepancy may have occurred because students simply failed to record this in their diary writings, focusing instead on other area of language learning. Several studies (Hashimoto, 1993; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2004; Tanaka, 1997;) have, however, shown that the homestay can be an excellent environment to learn new words and that television can provide a source of discussion. For those students whose diaries showed that

they were learning new words, the interviews revealed that this was done by spelling the word, drawing, showing the object or writing down the word. Masakuzu (1998) found that by writing down the word learners were able to recall the word more easily. However, contrary to the questionnaire findings, the teaching of slang and idioms occurred less frequently with only a few students having this opportunity. In his interview student I told me that his host mother often listened to him talking with the other homestay students and provided necessary vocabulary, which was often slang. However, some felt that slang was not necessary (Student A and C). Only A's and Q1's diaries support their questionnaire response stating that they learn idioms often, with a recording of five frequencies each. The interview showed that their host mothers wrote down the idioms or paraphrased to help them remember.

Eighty percent of the questionnaire responses showed that pronunciation and grammar were corrected sometimes or often. However, the diaries provided limited evidence to support these claims. It is feasible that students were corrected but failed to record this in their diary entries. However, as most of the students were at intermediate level, it would be expected that they would possess at least some pronunciation difficulties. This discrepancy could indicate that families simply did not correct. This would support findings by Woodall and Takeuchi (1999) in which they discovered that families were sometimes so used to hosting that they could understand students regardless of whether they were correct or not. In these instances no correction was provided and opportunities for valuable feedback were lost.

Eighty percent of the diary sample support the questionnaire that families often or sometimes explained things. The interviews showed that this was achieved by showing students the object, drawing, spelling and writing. Sixty percent of the students' diaries showed that the homestay hosts used strategies to aid their learning. The interviews further showed that this included slower speech, paraphrasing or repetition. These findings reinforce the results of other studies (Campbell, 2004; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002) demonstrating that some families are willing to assist students in their language learning. However, unlike the questionnaire findings in which 93% of the families reported using simple language, only students M1 and O1 mentioned this as happening. These students told me their families used simpler vocabulary and shorter sentence structures. Three students (B1, E, O1) said they never received feedback and yet the diary writings revealed

that 50% of the students were given feedback. The interviews further showed that the feedback was positive. In the case of student I, his host mother's feedback consisted of recommendations for learning. The questionnaires also showed that 98% of students asked questions. Only 60% of the students in the diary sample talked of asking their homestay hosts questions to aid their comprehension.

Both the diaries and interviews support the questionnaire findings that students experienced a variety of feelings during their year abroad. These findings support the literature that feelings can be either positive or negative (Holmes, 2000; Lysgaard, 1955; Pedersen, 1995). Two patterns which arose spontaneously from the diary writings were those of body language and small talk. Small talk was anything considered as a short conversation or salutation and the interviews of students B1 and O1 revealed that this was the only kind of conversation they had access to. Body language was mentioned in the diaries of B1 and M1. The latter told me in his interview that this was a strategy he had relied on frequently during his first few weeks of homestay life.

With the exception of student X, all the diaries showed that students at some time had difficulty understanding or speaking. In the interviews it was revealed that this was because of the NZ accent or because homestay hosts spoke too fast. Despite the fact that learners sometimes had difficulty they were reluctant to ask for help. This could be explained in terms of cultural differences or even differences in personalities (Woodall & Takeuchi, 1999). However, if families, by means of language training, were made more aware, they may recognise situations when students are struggling. Language training would also provide families with strategies for making their speech simpler, such as rephrasing, using repetition, asking questions to check understanding, and so on. Another benefit of such training is that it would give families the confidence and means to be able to respond to basic grammar questions.

The additional comments provided in the diaries and interviews gave a valuable insight into the students' levels of satisfaction. Student G had problems with heating costs, which in turn made her feel uncomfortable. She was often reluctant to talk and sometimes pretended she had understood when she had not. She eventually left her homestay and moved into a studio. At the commencement of the diary writings student O1 was clearly dissatisfied with his homestay, complaining of a lack of conversation, silent atmosphere

and no correction. Upon finding his new family his level of engagement increased significantly. Student B1 also left his homestay because he was clearly frustrated at the lack of language learning opportunities. He used to initiate conversation but seldom received a reply. From his diary writings it is evident that he really wanted to learn but most of his language improvement took place in the classroom.

In some instances, however, the lack of conversation may have been because of the students themselves. For example, Student C often chose to stay out with friends or visit his Chinese-speaking relatives. Student E and X were often away on trips. Despite some of the diaries providing a negative picture of the homestay environment, some students were clearly learning English successfully. Student M1's homestay helped him by using body language and providing vocabulary. Student Q1, as a more mature student, often discussed language problems with his host mother. They frequently did spelling together and he used the resources in his homestay (computer, books, television) to promote his own learning. Student A, as the most advanced learner, liked to practise what she had learnt in class at home. Often, on her way home from school she planned what she was going to say. She frequently initiated conversation and her host mother tested her English pronunciation by providing tongue twisters.

The variety of language learning opportunities amongst these ten students differed considerably. This could be due to a number of factors. Firstly, the level of engagement between students and families was considerably less in some households. Secondly, the language level of the learner and the type of learner are both factors which will influence learning. Thirdly, the personality of the learner should be considered. Finally, some students completed the diary task better than others. For example, student X, although a competent speaker, did not complete the task well. His diary reveals very little and yet a further exploration of his situation (interview) revealed he was happy in his homestay and had a lot of contact with his family.

From the students' perspective, several of the homestay families need to re-examine their motives for hosting. In some cases, even the basic requirements of eating meals together is not fulfilled. In several instances families clearly have no desire to communicate. From the perspective of the homestay family, students must also consider the amount of effort they make in their homestay life. If students go to their rooms or socialise outside of the

household language learning is not going to occur, even if the families themselves are happy to provide interaction. One important aspect that this study did reveal is that students feel that their expectations need to be met and they need to feel happy for learning to occur.

5.7.5 Homestay Family Questionnaire - Results

In order to explore the language learning opportunities in the homestay I felt that it was also necessary to consider the homestay family's perspective in more depth. For this reason part D of the homestay family questionnaire focused on language learning opportunities. This was further explored by fifteen-minute interviews with ten homestay families. I present the results of the homestay questionnaire with a discussion. The homestay interviews are presented as mini case studies. I provide a discussion of the patterns which emerged from these interviews, taking into consideration the literature.

Firstly, I asked the homestay families if they correct students' pronunciation. Forty nine percent said they did this sometimes and 51% said they did this often. Secondly, I asked families about grammar correction. The results were exactly the same as for pronunciation.

As I wanted to explore what kind of language families teach students I enquired about teaching new words. As Table 46 reveals, 67% often teach new words.

Table 46 *Teaching new words*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	1	2%
Sometimes	14	31%
Often	30	67%
Total	45	100%

As a follow up question I enquired if families teach idioms. As Table 47 shows, the results are clearly mixed.

Table 47 *Teaching idioms*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	5	11%
Sometimes	24	53%
Often	16	36%
Total	45	100%

I then pursued the idea of language learning further by asking if families taught students slang. Table 48 shows the results.

Table 48 *Teaching slang*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	13	29%
Sometimes	19	42%
Often	13	29%
Total	45	100%

I then asked homestay hosts if they ask students questions to aid their understanding. Table 49 shows that most families did this often.

Table 49 *Asking questions*

Response	Frequency	%
Sometimes	2	4%
Often	43	96%
Total	45	100%

When I asked families if they ever had difficulty understanding their students 100% said that they did experience difficulty sometimes. I followed these questions by asking about the specific ways in which families assist students in their language learning. First of all, I asked families if they ever spoke more slowly. Table 50 reveals that all families, with the exception of one, did.

Table 50 *Speaking more slowly*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	1	2%
Sometimes	8	18%
Often	36	80%
Total	45	100%

Secondly, I asked homestays if they repeated things to help students understand. Eighteen percent said that they used repetition sometimes and 37% of families said they used this often. Thirdly, I asked homestays if they explained things. As Table 51 shows, more than half the families did this often.

Table 51 *Explaining*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	3	7%
Sometimes	11	24%
Often	31	69%
Total	45	100%

Question four asked families if they ever rephrase. Eighty two percent said they rephrased often. Eight said that they rephrased sometimes. Question five asked if homestay hosts ever used simpler language to facilitate learning. Thirty eight percent said that they did this sometimes. Sixty two percent replied that they did this often.

The next question asked if families ever helped their students with English homework. The results are displayed in Table 52.

Table 52 *Homework assistance*

Response	Frequency	%
Never	2	4%
Sometimes	33	37%
Often	10	22%
Total	45	99%

When I asked families if they provided students with feedback on their English progress, 53% claimed they did this often and 42% stated sometimes. Only 4% of families said that they never did this. My final question in this section asked families if they had time to talk to students. As Table 53 reveals the results are positive.

Table 53 *Time to talk*

Response	Frequency	%
Sometimes	15	33%
Often	30	67%
Total	45	100%

The next question asked families to name the topics they discussed with their students. As can be seen in Table 54, the topics were very varied.

Table 54 *Topics*

Topic	Frequency	%
Family and friends	38	84%
Travel	36	80%
School	29	64%
Culture and customs	28	62%
News/TV/film	21	47%
Daily Life	17	38%
Hobbies	14	31%

I then enquired about the types of activities homestay hosts engage in which help students to speak English. Table 55 shows that families believe a wide range of activities promote language learning.

Table 55 *Activities which help students speak English*

Response	Frequency	%
Social events/travel	28	62%
House Chores	14	31%
Games/sport	12	27%
Interacting with children	8	18%
Other	16	36%

My next question enquired which skill families thought students improved the most by living in a homestay. Many respondents provided more than one answer. Ninety three percent chose listening, 91% speaking, 7% reading and 4% chose writing. When I asked families how they personally help students with their language learning a number of responses were revealed. These can be seen in Table 56.

Table 56 *How homestay hosts help students learn English*

Response	Frequency	%
Talking	30	67%
Check homework	12	27%
Correction	10	22%
Explaining	9	20%
Confidence Building	8	18%
Other	23	51%

Note: Other included board games, using fridge magnets, speaking slowly, using simple language, new vocabulary, asking questions.

I followed up this question by determining how homestay hosts thought students could assist their own language learning. Table 57 reveals some interesting responses.

Table 57 *How students can assist their own language learning process*

Response	Frequency	%
Talking/being sociable/ Spend more time with homestay family	45	100%
Read/watch TV	17	38%
Ask questions	10	22%
Take an interest in NZ life	6	13%
Other	9	20%

5.7.6 Homestay Family Interview - Results

Homestay 11

This family are New Zealanders with twenty years of hosting experience. The host father, who I interviewed, works part-time. The family host to help students with their English, for companionship, enjoyment and economic benefits. With the students they eat meals, watch TV, travel, play games and go out. On average, they spend about one hour per day speaking English but the host father would like to speak more. He said that the students are often out or are too busy. He told me that in order for students to improve their language homestay families must choose the activities they do with them carefully. This is because some activities encourage more interaction than others (travelling together as opposed to going to the cinema for example). He believes that children can be beneficial for language learning because they use a more common language and are more relaxed. Two students is an ideal number for language learning, as long as the nationalities are different. He often teaches new words by explaining and doesn't think idioms are too important. He actually believes that language schools teach idioms because they have nothing else to teach. He deliberately avoids teaching slang because he doesn't use it himself. He thinks he corrects students' pronunciation too much and feels it is vital not to make students feel uncomfortable. Feedback is always positive and he often takes an interest in what students have learnt at school and provides further examples and practice. He does sometimes help students with their homework which usually involves grammar. He would only correct a student's spoken grammar if it was a major mistake. He believes that students should adjust to NZ life and feels that it is now easier to adjust because Asia has become more westernised. To further promote language learning students should be less afraid of making mistakes and should share their homework with their families. He feels that an unhappy homestay or a homesick student would draw into themselves and that this would be disastrous for their language learning.

Homestay Family 27

This family are New Zealanders. They have been hosting for four years and enjoy the companionship and financial benefits hosting has to offer. The host mother works part-time. Together, they eat meals, watch TV, play games and go out. On average they speak

one to two hours of English each day. The host mother believes that one on one interaction is too intense and that two students are a good number for language learning. Although her children are now grown up, she thinks that their presence would have been beneficial because children enjoy games and interaction. She only corrects grammar if students ask because she feels too much correction is not healthy. Pronunciation correction is only given if she can't understand the message being conveyed. In the interview she revealed that she does not regard correction as part of her role. More importantly, she wishes to create a relaxed environment. From her teaching background she feels that feedback must always be positive. For this reason she offers plenty of praise, and builds the student's confidence by reinforcing positive responses and ignoring the negative ones. She teaches new words by explaining the meaning and providing the spelling. She deliberately doesn't teach slang because she doesn't use it herself. Idioms are taught but only sometimes. She remarks that sometimes it is difficult sustain conversation if students possess limited English. She's happy to help students with their homework and uses fridge magnets to make sentences.

Homestay Family 30

This family considers themselves to be of NZ, Maori and European descent. They have been hosting for four years and the host mother works part-time. Their motives for hosting include learning about other cultures, for enjoyment, to help students learn English and monetary. They spend between one and two hours daily speaking English and do activities such as eating, watching TV, going out and travelling with the students. The host mother explained that she likes to host just one student because this can provide the student with more interaction. She feels that children are an essential part of the language learning process and explains that her son often spends time talking to the students. This family are happy to correct pronunciation and even provide drilling of individual sounds. She often assists students with their homework, and in particular with their grammar. She uses pictures and simpler vocabulary to help students understand. Feedback is always positive because she feels that students need to feel good about their learning. The television is also useful, because it often promotes discussion about different cultures. This family believes that an unhappy homestay environment would make students introverted and that they would socialise outside of the homestay.

Homestay Family 22

This family are New Zealanders with four years' hosting experience. They host for enjoyment, economic benefits and to assist students with their language learning. They eat meals together, watch TV and go out with students. On average they speak about one hour of English daily. The host mother told me that two students is a good number in terms of language learning but the students must be of a similar age and from different countries. They deliberately choose to host older students as they feel that they are more independent. The reason that grammar correction only occurs sometimes is because the host mother does not feel confident explaining grammar rules. She sometimes corrects a student's pronunciation if there is a misunderstanding but this depends on the level and personality of the student. She feels that for feedback to be beneficial it must be positive. She teaches new words by telling them the word, which students then check in their electronic dictionaries. She says that TV is an activity which promotes learning as students enquire about culture and lexis. She feels that she assists students by talking and checking their homework but remarks that often students have their own agenda and different interests to the family. She finds initiating conversation quite stressful and feels it is easier when students arrive with a more advanced level of English. If students were unhappy in the homestay she believes they would be less likely to communicate. She says that students could enhance their learning simply by talking, watching TV and reading English books.

Homestay Family 20

The NZ homestay family are retired and have been hosting for eighteen years. They host to assist students with learning English and for money. They eat together and generally speak less than an hour each day with the students. The host mother told me that two students is a suitable number to host because this forces the students to speak English. She also stated that it is the family's responsibility to enforce an English only speaking environment. On one occasion, when they hosted two students of the same nationality they intentionally extended dinner-time to provide more English interaction. She explained that the reason they don't do other activities with the students is because the students are often busy studying or with their own lives. She said students rely on their electronic dictionaries to assist them with pronunciation and that grammar correction usually involves tenses. She often writes words down in an effort to make the language

simpler as she tends to find that students often say they have understand even when they have not. She also adopts slower speech and thinks patience is vital to assist students with their learning. She commented that difficulties understanding students often arise from cultural differences and not from language barriers. An essential part of the language learning process for this family is that students should try to live like New Zealanders and that they shouldn't socialise with members of their own culture. They should also be more knowledgeable about NZ life.

Homestay Family 5

This is a NZ home, comprising a host mother who doesn't work and her two teenage children. She has eight years of hosting experience. They host for economic reasons and to assist students with their learning. They eat meals together and go out. Each day they spend about one to two hours speaking English. The host mother feels that for language learning to be successful students must be in a happy, relaxed atmosphere. Two students are ideal for language learning as long as they are from different countries. Children can facilitate language learning because they have patience and use simpler language. The host mother teaches lexis by writing down words, spelling and using a dictionary. She comments that it is important for students to learn slang and idioms in order to really comprehend the language. She makes her language simpler by limiting her tenses. Often, she helps learners with homework which is mainly gap fill exercises. Grammar correction mainly consists of correcting tenses and if she can't understand a student she will provide pronunciation correction. Feedback is given in a gentle manner so as not to offend the student. She says that students often go to their rooms, rather than converse, and believes that this is a privacy issue. To promote language learning she says that students should spend less time with their compatriots and feels that having more cultural knowledge would spark discussion.

Homestay Family 31

This mother is a New Zealander and has been hosting for seventeen years. She doesn't work and hosts to help students with their learning and for companionship. She spends an average of one hour per day talking English. The activities she does with students include eating meals, watching TV, playing games, and travelling. She thinks that household

chores assist students in their learning as they often enquire about unfamiliar objects and words. She revealed in her interview that two students is a good number because they can ask each other questions and provide companionship. She believes children are beneficial for language learning as they use simpler language. Before correcting a student's pronunciation she always asks for permission. She teaches new words by writing them down and doesn't teach idioms because she thinks they are too difficult. She sometimes teaches slang but says that this depends on a student's attitude. Feedback is positive and she states that misunderstandings often stem from differences in cultures, not in language. She firmly believes that if students were unhappy they would avoid interaction by staying in their rooms.

Homestay Family 41

This is a NZ household with over three years hosting experience. The incentive to host is economic. By having an international student in their home the parents can pay the fees to send their daughter to university. They do a variety of activities such as eating together, watching TV, travelling and going out. The host mother told me that children are important for language learning because children expect a response when they ask a question and students are not afraid to speak in their company. Pronunciation correction is done subtly so as not to offend the students and she only corrects spoken grammar when she doesn't understand. She does provide feedback and this is done in a positive manner to encourage students with their language improvement. She assists students with their learning by proof reading their homework, and using gestures, simpler words and slower speech. She often explains words and idioms by using a dictionary but would only teach slang if it came up in conversation. She firmly believes that students should adjust to NZ life and join in with the homestay family. She says that if students are unhappy in their homestays they would not interact with the family. For this reason expectations must be met. She thinks that learning can be maximised if students join in, accept correction, are not afraid to try new things and use English.

Homestay Family 7

This is a single mother who is of NZ, Maori and European origin. She has hosted for four years and enjoys the companionship and money hosting has to offer. On average she

speaks about one to three hours per day. She eats dinner with students, watches TV and plays games. She considers three students to be an ideal number as it forces them to speak English and allows her to continue with her household chores. The TV provides opportunities for language learning as students often ask questions about unfamiliar words. Grammar correction is mainly tenses and she does provide feedback which is always positive. Although she does teach new words by spelling them, she avoids teaching both idioms and slang as she feels that these are too difficult for students. She sometimes helps students with their homework by correcting their grammar. Although she is part Maori, she does not educate students about this aspect of her life because she feels that they have enough to deal with.

Homestay Family 26

The host mother is a New Zealander and the host father is from Croatia, but has been in NZ for over twenty years. They have been involved in hosting for almost five years and do it for enjoyment, love of other cultures and for financial benefits. They eat meals with students, watch TV with them and go out together. They speak about one to two hours of English per day. On occasions they have hosted students of the same nationality. However, the host mother explained in the interview that this had not affected the students' learning because there was an English only rule in the house. She feels that children are more natural and relaxed and this assists students in their learning. Before correcting students she always asks for permission. She emphasises to students that there is often more than one way to pronounce a word. Grammar correction usually involves tenses, plurals and genders. Homework assistance is usually about grammar. Often, she feels that she can tell students whether an answer is correct or not but is unable to explain the grammar rule. When she teaches new words she often writes the words down and then makes sentences for the students. She frequently asks her husband how he would explain a word because English is not his mother tongue. She would only teach idioms or slang if they arose because she feels that it is too confusing for students. She often asks students questions as a way of concept checking because, in her experience, some nationalities have a tendency to say they have understood, even when they have not.

5.7.7 Homestay Family Interviews - Discussion

Overall, the interviews further supported the questionnaire findings, as well as providing a valuable clarification of those findings.

The questionnaires did not reveal that there were any major problems in the homestay. Most problems were minor and were able to be resolved through communication. Overall, the families interviewed agreed that in order for learning to be successful students' expectations need to be met and they need to feel happy. According to these families, not being happy in one's environment resulted in no communication. In such circumstances students either retreat to their rooms, socialise with students from their own countries, or become introverted. Supporting the questionnaire findings, 90% of the families interviewed felt that in terms of language learning the ideal number of students to host was two, providing that they came from different countries. In addition to providing opportunities to talk, the presence of another student also provided company. One family stated that one student provided more personal interaction, but this family had only ever hosted one student. All families stated that they insist on an English speaking only environment and one family even had a money jar, for students to place money into, if they spoke their L1. This strategy was also used by the host mothers in Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart's (2002) study.

Supporting some of the literature (Hashimoto, 1993; Tanaka, 1997) that the presence of children is believed to be beneficial for learning, the families said that children were more patient and that they provided a relaxed, natural environment. Students were often not embarrassed or afraid to speak to children and two families even said that children had their 'own' language. The questionnaire revealed that the most common activities which homestay hosts do with their students is eating meals (100%), going out (91%) and watching TV (91%). All the families interviewed ate meals with their guests, 80% watched TV and 70% took students out. Mealtimes appeared to be the most opportune time for language interaction. However, the interviews revealed that some families felt that television sparked discussion and provided opportunities for language learning. This supports Tanaka's (1997) findings that television is a good way to learn. Families often discuss the news and movies

provide opportunities to discuss cultural differences. Some research has found (Fryer & Lukasevich, 1998; Rivers, 1998, Woodall & Takeuchi, 1999) that students are often bored with the topics which were often limited to daily conversation. However, this study contradicts those findings. Homestay hosts discuss a variety of topics and the student sample appeared to be content with the topics discussed. Students often ask questions about vocabulary. One family did comment that activities must involve interaction, not merely listening, if the student is to benefit. The questionnaire showed that 100% of families correct grammar and pronunciation sometimes or often. When these issues were further explored it was discovered that grammar correction was mainly related to tenses. Twenty percent of the interviewees did say that they could correct but that they couldn't explain the grammar rule. These findings contradict a study by Woodall and Takeuchi (1999) in which hosts could understand students, so even when they were incorrect no correction was provided. The interviews revealed that families did correct pronunciation but were worried about offending the student. Most asked the students for permission to correct and felt that it was important to do this privately and gently. Twenty percent of those interviewed were concerned about 'over correction' and some families tended to correct only when understanding was affected. The majority felt that students did welcome correction. Unlike some studies (Rivers, 1998; Woodall & Takeuchi, 1999) these families do provide feedback.

Only 2% of the questionnaire sample reported that they never teach students new words, 11% said they never teach idioms and 29% stated that they never teach slang. 100% of the families in the interview sample do teach new words by explaining. These findings add further support to studies by Hashimoto (1993) and Tanaka (1997) that the homestay is a good environment to acquire new lexis. The most common methods of teaching new words were by writing the words down, a strategy which Masakazu (1998) believes helps recall, and by using a dictionary. Families tended to welcome the use of electronic dictionaries as they were often a 'fast' resolution to a communication problem. Families were clearly divided about their opinions on teaching idioms and slang. One host felt that this was an essential element of language learning. Others felt it depended on the students themselves. Some families deliberately chose not to teach these because they felt that it would complicate matters. Others would teach it, if the students asked them.

Supporting other studies (Masakazu, 1998; Schmidt & Rinehart-Rinehart, 2002), the families aid understanding by using slower speech, pictures, writing down words and dictionaries. All of the families, when questioned about homework, said that they assisted with grammar and some provided proof reading. All of the families aided students' language learning by using several strategies. The interviews showed that families explained things by showing students the object, drawing pictures and using body language. Other helpful learning strategies included repetition, rephrasing and using slower speech.

The questionnaire results showed that 100% of the participants experienced difficulties understanding students. Interestingly the interviews revealed that these difficulties did not always arise from language problems, but were often due to cultural differences. Several of the families felt that students should possess more cultural knowledge of NZ life and that this would facilitate their learning and promote discussion. Indeed, research has shown (Crealock, et al, 1999; Farthing, 1997) that students often possess limited knowledge in this regard. Only 5% of the questionnaire responses indicated that there was no feedback. All of the interview group do provide feedback and in all cases it was emphasised that this should be positive. All of the families felt that they should be encouraging and perceived their role to include confidence building. Despite some of the literature claiming that families are too busy to talk (McFedries, 2002; Welsh, 2001;) these homestays all claimed that they did have time. On average, 50% spent one hour per day conversing in English; 40% spent one to two hours and 10% said that the amount was one to three hours daily. One family said that they would like to speak more but that students were often busy with their own lifestyles. This concurs with the findings of Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart's study (2002).

5.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have presented the results of the student and homestay questionnaires and interviews, and the student diaries. I have discussed the findings in order to answer my research questions, also taking into consideration the findings in the literature. In the final chapter, six, I will present a summary of the key findings

of the research project, as well as a consideration of the theoretical and pedagogical implications of the study. The limitations of the study will be discussed in addition to providing suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER SIX - CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Firstly, this chapter presents a summary of the key findings of the research followed by a consideration of theoretical and pedagogical implications for students, homestay families and homestay organisers. Secondly, recommendations for future research are suggested. Thirdly, the limitations of the study are assessed. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief summary of the preceding sections.

6.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the types of language learning opportunities which arise in the homestay, and when such opportunities arise. The study was carried out at two separate tertiary institutions in Auckland. Forty-five students and forty-five homestay families were involved in the research. The data collection method of triangulation using questionnaires, diaries and interviews was used.

To take advantage of language learning opportunities in the homestay, it was felt that students need to feel happy and that their expectations need to have been met. For this reason, and in order to address the above objective, the following research questions regarding expectations were explored:

What expectations do students have regarding homestays?

Are these expectations met?

Above all, students expect to hear and use the target language and to experience the host culture. They expect families to spend time talking to them, to provide lots of English conversation and to be taught English. In addition, they expect their homestay hosts to provide frequent interaction, and to engage them in English by doing activities together such as eating meals, watching television and going out.

The study results were somewhat mixed. In some cases student expectations were met but for many they were not. Many students were dissatisfied with the quantity of English provided, stating that families did not speak enough English or provide enough English teaching. Furthermore, students did fewer activities with their families than they had expected. Some students were so unhappy that they actually left their homestays in search of alternative types of accommodation. On the whole, the study supports other research (Welsh, 2001; Campbell, 2004) which has found that students are not happy with the amount of interaction they receive.

This study considered not only the students but also the homestay families' perspectives in order to gain a deeper understanding of the homestay environment and to examine the language learning opportunities which arise. For this reason, the following question was asked:

What are the perceptions of the homestay families regarding their role in the homestay?

Above all, homestay families perceive their main responsibility to include ensuring the students' well-being and comfort. Although ninety-three percent of the families realised that they should speak lots of English, forty percent of those surveyed said they only spoke an hour or less of English a day. Forty-two percent perceived the time of speaking to be around one to two hours. Only seventeen percent believed they spoke more than two hours of English with their students daily. Only sixty percent said that they should help students learn English and only fifty-six percent stated that they should offer language assistance and teaching. However, ninety-one percent recognised that educating students about NZ culture and customs was part of their role.

Not only should students' expectations be met, but also they should feel settled and adjusted to NZ life. If students do not suffer from adjustment problems or culture shock, they can feel relaxed and happy in their homestay environment and can benefit from the language learning opportunities presented to them. For this reason, the following questions explored the issues of adjustment and culture shock in more depth.

Do international students experience adjustment problems and culture shock in NZ?

Do homestay families perceive students as experiencing adjustment problems and culture shock in NZ?

The results of this study have confirmed that although life in NZ is different to that in students' own countries, there were no major problems of adjustment. However, some students, according to eighty-four percent of the homestay families and thirty-one percent of the student sample, may suffer from culture shock. Both parties agreed that students possess limited knowledge of NZ culture and customs prior to their arrival and as many as eighty-nine percent of students had not attended an orientation session. Sixty-five percent of the student sample had experienced problems with the pre-departure information they had been given. Over half the students had no NZ friends and eighty percent of the student group were not members of an organisation. These findings further support previous research (Crealock, et al, 1999; Farthing, 1997) which has shown that students could be more prepared for their overseas experience.

If student expectations are met and these expectations closely match the perceptions the homestay families have of their role, it is likely that the homestay environment will be a happy, relaxed one. Furthermore, if there are no major problems of adjustment or culture shock, it is likely that students will feel settled and will be able to take advantage of the language learning opportunities presented to them in the homestay. The final and primary objective of this study was to examine the types of language learning opportunities in the homestay and when such opportunities arise. In order to explore this area, the following question was asked:

What types of language learning opportunities arise in the homestay and when?

The findings of this study have confirmed that language learning opportunities do occur in some homestays and the most common time for such opportunities to arise is at mealtimes. This supports Kaplan's (1989) findings that dinner time is the most beneficial time for language learning as families often sit around the table and talk. This study also revealed that watching television provides valuable opportunities for language learning. Students often ask their homestay hosts about unfamiliar words and phrases and families use movies to explain cultural differences. Learning opportunities also occur because the presence of

children provides a relaxed ambience for students to converse in. Furthermore, this study indicates that other international students can provide opportunities to communicate. However, such students should come from different countries and have a similar English level.

This study has suggested that, overall, students are disappointed with the quantity of English they are exposed to, and it could be beneficial to their learning if homestay hosts provided more interaction. As well as providing opportunities for conversation, some families aid students' learning by correcting their grammar or pronunciation. However, this could be offered more. In some instances opportunities for learning occur because families make their language more accessible by speaking at a slower rate, using repetition, rephrasing, and simpler language, and by asking questions. Many families provide feedback which is usually positive. It is likely that such feedback provides students with valuable information about their linguistic progress. This study has also shown that homestays may be beneficial for language learning because homestay hosts provide opportunities for students to learn new words, and in some cases idioms and slang. Some students are also able to benefit from assistance with homework which some families are willing to provide. Despite these positive factors, it is necessary to point out that not all families offer assistance, and it appears that some families offer more help than others. The student sample disclosed that they often had difficulty understanding their hosts and it is believed that this could be because families often talked too quickly. In many cases families were not aware that their speech pace was too fast.

6.3 IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study confirm aspects of previous research and add some new implications theoretically and pedagogically. The following sections discuss these implications.

6.3.1 Theoretical Implications

With regard to SLA theories, it is generally accepted that for learning to be successful, a learner must have access to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981). Some researchers

(Hatch, 1992; Long, 1995; Pica, 2001; Swain, 1995) have disputed Krashen's claims that comprehensible alone is sufficient for SLA to occur. They argue that learners must also have opportunities to practise and produce the target language. Supporting such claims, this study has shown that those learners who are happy in their homestays and who have opportunities to practise the L2, are the learners who feel that the homestay is beneficial for their language learning.

This research goes further by adding to our understanding of how homestay families assist students' learning. The Interactionist View (Long, 1996) suggests ways in which NSs can modify their speech to aid comprehension. In this study it was found that families used repetition, rephrasing, slower speech, simpler language and questions. Furthermore, as part of this interaction process, learners will inevitably have exposure to feedback. Feedback provides learners with information which they can use to revise their interlanguage (Ellis, 1994). The findings from this research suggest that such feedback is positive and that students tend to welcome correction.

Finally, in considering the amount and type of input a learner has access to, Schumann (1978) proposes his Acculturation Theory, which considers the social distance between NNSs and NSs. For learning to be successful, this theory states that learners need to acculturate to the target language group (homestay). This study has offered some support to the view that those learners who spend time with their homestay families and actively become involved in homestay life are the ones that benefit most from the language learning opportunities presented to them.

6.3.2 Pedagogical Implications

Although this study has shown that language learning opportunities do occur in the homestay, there is some evidence to suggest that such opportunities could be further enhanced. Although there were no major problems of adjusting to NZ life, students could be more prepared for their overseas trip. For instance, some students do suffer from culture shock; many possess limited knowledge of NZ culture and customs; very few students attend orientation sessions and many are disappointed with the pre-departure information they receive. Farthing (1997) insists that orientation sessions provide students with indispensable information about their overseas experience. Crealock, et al (1999)

suggest that more accurate and timely information should be given to students beforehand. If students were more prepared it is likely that they would hold more realistic expectations of life overseas. Richardson (2003) thinks that homestay organisers should be more rigorous in their selection of homestay families. A stricter recruitment process would certainly eliminate those families whose main incentive to host is monetary. Furthermore, if homestay organisers received some language training, they could place more emphasis on the language needs of the students. For many families in this study language learning was not a main concern. Some families also need to be made aware of the commitment of hosting and be prepared to spend more time interacting with the students.

A further suggestion would be to provide homestay families with basic language training to help them recognise when students experience difficulties. For instance, families could be taught how to ask the right questions to check students' understanding. If families could read body language more confidently they may be able to offer assistance more readily when students are in need. Also, basic training would give families more confidence in correcting some grammatical errors and providing feedback. Often families in this study could correct but could not explain the grammar rule.

From the students' point of view, they should not enter into a homestay environment lightly. Firstly, they should be prepared to spend time with their families and less time alone in their rooms or socialising outside of the homestay. Secondly, students need to be more open and honest. When they do not understand they should tell their hosts, instead of just agreeing or saying nothing. In this way the host can alter his speech or use simpler language. If some expectations are not met, students should be prepared to discuss this with their families and to try to resolve the problem. Often students don't deal with the situation and in extreme cases leave the homestay. Thirdly, students should be more receptive about NZ life and should become as involved as possible. For example, in addition to spending more time with the family, students could make NZ friends or join a club to engage them in meaningful activities using the target language. Perhaps language schools and homestay organisers have an obligation to unite students with New Zealanders. Finally, students should take advantage of the facilities most homestays have to offer. By reading English newspapers and books and by listening to the radio they can further enhance their learning.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Firstly, the most obvious limitation of this study was the length of time some students had been residing in their homestays. Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart's study (2002) revealed that students who had been in their homestays for more than one month were more settled. My original intention was to involve students who had been living in homestays for a minimum of three months but due to the limited number of students in homestays at the time the research was conducted, this was not possible. Secondly, I originally wanted to involve homestay families who were hosting at the time the research was carried out. Again, due to restricted numbers, this was not feasible and as a result some of the responses may have been relying on recall. Thirdly, I had wanted to provide a direct correlation between the student and homestay families involved but for reasons of practicality and limited numbers of willing participants, this was not achievable.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

These results have provided evidence that families can provide students with valuable language learning opportunities in the homestay. The study has shed some light on the types of opportunities which occur and when such opportunities arise. It has also made suggestions about how both students and homestay hosts can further enhance the learning environment.

Future research could consider the home organiser's role in more depth, particularly from a linguistic perspective. If homestay organisers underwent basic language training, the linguistic needs of students could be more meticulously examined, so that students are placed in homestays where opportunities for language learning are maximised. Furthermore, homestay organisers could use this linguistic knowledge to assist homestay families in creating homestays where language learning occurs. Further research incorporating a larger sample of students and of a longitudinal nature would also be of value. The present study was conducted with ninety participants in NZ over a period of six months, and it is, therefore, not possible to generalise the findings to other homestay contexts. Yet another suggestion for further research would be to carry out a case study comparing two learners of the same nationality and level staying in two separate

homestays. Such a study would not only be able to explore language learning opportunities in more depth, but would also be able to compare the students' progress and provide more detailed analysis of how students can promote their own language learning.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to examine the types of language learning opportunities which occur in the homestay and when such opportunities arise. Prior to exploring this issue, the research also aimed to investigate the expectations of students in homestays and the perceptions of homestay families. The study also examined the issues of adjustment and culture shock. The research was based on the premise that if expectations are met and students do not have difficulty adjusting or indeed suffer from culture shock, then they will be in a position to take advantage of language learning opportunities presented to them in the homestay. The study was carried out in the Auckland region using a sample of ninety students and homestay families. Multiple instruments including questionnaires, diaries and interviews were used to collect the data. The results of the study suggested that even though some families do provide language learning opportunities, such opportunities could be further enhanced by both parties. Suggestions have been made to improve the homestay as a potential linguistic centre. Increased awareness may lead to more students choosing homestays as an accommodation option. In addition such awareness may assist in eliminating some of the negative press the homestay industry in NZ has received.

Further research was suggested to examine in more depth the language learning opportunities by comparing two students of the same nationality and level in two separate homestays. Alternatively, a longitudinal study involving more participants would also be beneficial. Future research could also examine the homestay organiser perspective to determine if everything possible is being done to place students in families that closely match their linguistic needs.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A	Diary Studies Worksheet
Appendix B	Student Questionnaire
Appendix C	Homestay Family Questionnaire
Appendix D	Director of Studies Information Sheet
Appendix E	Homestay Family Participation Sheet
Appendix F	Student Participation Sheet
Appendix G	Homestay Family Consent Form
Appendix H	Student Consent Form
Appendix I	Typist Confidentiality Agreement
Appendix J	Examples of Diary Entries
Appendix K	Example of Student Interview
Appendix L	Example of Homestay Family Interview

