Summary of Proposed Research
Motivation, Test Anxiety and Language Test Performance: An International Investigation

The purpose of this project is to better understand the social, educational, and contextual dimensions of language tests. With the trend towards globalization and internationalization on university campuses around the world, language tests are utilized extensively as powerful decision-making tools. Inferences drawn by decision-makers about test-takers' language abilities based on the scores from such tests result in high-stakes decisions such as university admission, program placement, graduation, and immigration to English-speaking countries like Canada. Among the factors that may potentially influence language test performance, motivation and test anxiety are considered to be *mutable* factors, that is, the increase of certain motivational orientations and the decrease of test anxiety can help test-takers perform better in language tests. Further, research indicates that current theories regarding these cognitive and psychological attributes were developed and validated separately and within specific social and educational contexts and may not hold cross-contextually. Language testing research also tends to be carried out with one test and with one test-taker group, therefore, with limited international implications.

This project therefore proposes to examine test-takers' motivation, test anxiety, and language test performance across a range of social and educational contexts on three high-stakes language tests − the Canadian Academic English Language (CAEL) Assessment in Canada, the College English Test (CET) in mainland China, and the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) in Taiwan. Test-takers of these tests comprise the largest group of learners of English in the world and the largest group coming to study and settle in Canada. The specific purposes of this project are 1) to compare motivation and test anxiety of language test-takers taking the CAEL in Canada, the CET in mainland China, and the GEPT in Taiwan; 2) to examine the relationships between motivation, test anxiety, and language test performance; and, 3) to explore the generalizability and situatedness of these relationships across the three language tests.

Three language testing researchers from two Canadian universities and three language testers from their respective testing organizations in Canada, mainland China, and Taiwan will collaborate on this international project. This research team has a history of effective research collaborations, the required skills and expertise in the areas of language testing and educational and psychological measurement to successfully conduct this project. Approximately 1500 students in total (500 students from each testing context) will participate in a questionnaire survey. Test-takers' demographic information, motivational orientations, test anxiety, and perceptions of the uses/stakes of the tests will be obtained via this survey. Students' questionnaire responses will be linked to their language test performance. Data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis (i.e., correlation, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling) to achieve the research purposes.

This project will clarify the relationship between test-takers' motivation, test anxiety, and test performance *within* each testing context and *across* three different social and educational contexts where the testing takes place. The project will take advantage of the combined expertise of Canadian and international researchers and will contribute greatly to collective understanding of the uses/stakes of language tests globally. The outcomes of the study will have important implications not only for test takers' educational and life choices, but also for high-stakes policies made about them in Canada, with potential long term impact on knowledge transfer and social, educational, and economic systems in Canada.