

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

#### *Introduction*

My interest in conducting research on the learning process of study abroad students in language and culture began when I came to the United States as an undergraduate student in 1993. I have been traveling back and forth from Korea to the United States to get my undergraduate and graduate education in the fields of Communications and Education for twelve years. During those years, I have seen and heard many incidents and stories about individuals' study abroad experiences in practicing English and American culture, especially the local culture in two cities, Lynchburg and Blacksburg, in Virginia. I wanted to look into these experiences more scientifically and systematically through research methods in order to write about some types of reality involved in second language and second culture learning.

I conducted fieldwork from December 2001 to April 2002 to meet a class requirement during my course work at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. For this fieldwork, I used ethnographic methods to investigate Korean study abroad students' challenges in language and cultural learning experiences outside the classroom. After four months of preliminary fieldwork, I became even more interested in in-depth investigations of Korean students' meaning-making in the English language and culture learning in their new environment. Based on the findings from the preliminary work and my own study abroad experience, I wanted to continue exploring the recently arrived Korean study abroad students' ways of interacting and communicating with native speakers and non-native speakers outside the classroom.

After my preliminary study I began new fieldwork, with the belief that second language and second culture learning appear to take shape through language learners' interactions, especially face-to-face human interactions. Therefore, I began my research with the view that students' interactions are the most important factor. Through this research, I wanted to learn how the Korean students interact socially and communicatively

in English in the study abroad context. In other words, this study is about how students' participation in activities outside the classroom processes their learning and development in the target language and culture in the study abroad context.

### *Background of the Study*

#### *Study Abroad*

Many researchers have been interested in the study abroad context and foreign exchange students for over a 30 year period. Furnham (1997) refers to early researchers such as Bock (1970), Brislin (1979), Byrnes (1966), Tornbiorn (1982), and Zwingmann and Gunn (1963). Furnham (1997) says that the more students have sought study abroad experience, the more researchers are interested in their experiences and conduct studies on this topic (e.g., Crano & Crano, 1993; Furukawa & Shibayama, 1993 & 1994; Harris, 1995; Jenkins, 1983; Kagan & Cohen, 1990; Sandhu, 1994; Searle & Ward, 1990). Studying abroad has become a common and popular practice, and more and more students participate in study abroad programs. According to Moreno's (2000) report, approximately 1.5 million students move to another country each year, and 30% choose the United States (p. 129).

Likewise, many young Korean students think that it is compulsory to study abroad for a few months or up to several years. More than 150,000 Korean students were studying in foreign countries as of the end of August 2001, according to *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (World Beat, 2002). Short-term study abroad is a popular practice for college students in Korea especially for learning English, and the United States is one of the most preferred nations for Korean students to study abroad. The majority, 39% of 150,000 students in 2001, of Korean students studying abroad studied in the United States. The number of Korean students who studied in the United States in the 2001-2002 academic year was 49,046; there were 51,519 in the following year. According to the Institute of International Education's (IIE) *Open Doors project*, 586,323 international students studied in the United States in the academic year 2002-2003 (IIE, 2003). In the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 academic years, Korea was listed as the third country, after India and China, that sent the most students to the United States (Wheeler, 2002; Jacobson, 2003).

Among 586,323 study abroad students in the United States, 51,179 international students enrolled in Intensive English Programs (IEP) in 2002 (Institute of International Education, 2003). Korea held the second place after Japan and was followed by Taiwan, in sending the most students to IEP in the United States in 2000, 2001, and 2002 with 12,772 students, 13,110 students, and 10,000 students respectively (Institute of International Education, 2003). This again confirms that the United States remained the popular choice by many Korean study abroad students for learning English.

The term “study abroad” includes many different programs that students pursue such as exchange programs, academic programs for a degree, or language intensive programs. In all those different programs, the common goal of students is to gain the ability to communicate effectively in the target language in the target culture in order to accomplish their ultimate goal of study abroad. In addition to language learning, Hopkins (1999) sees studying abroad as a form of experiential learning and says, “[The students] inevitably find themselves looking inward as well as outward, reconciling their views of themselves and their cultural assumptions with the new cultural context”(p. 37). Berwick and Whalley (2000) view study abroad as including “learners’ direct, authentic, possibly even chaotic experience in another culture” (p. 326). Study abroad itself is a holistic experience, having every issue of living and learning in it. For students, study abroad experiences are often remembered for a lifetime.

The study abroad context gives language-learning students a chance to live in different environments. Language-learning students study abroad because of these different environments, which provide different situations and opportunities from the home countries. In the field of second language acquisition, the environment of the target language is a very important variable (Freed, 1995). Primarily, people in the chosen country speak the students’ target language for everyday communication in study abroad situations. For study abroad students, listening to the target language is “everyday survival” for language learners in a target culture and language environment (Carrier, 1999).

No matter how good and promising a study abroad environment looks and sounds for language and cultural learners, many scholars have found it problematic if the students

assumed that the study abroad environment generates automatic cultural and language learning (Talbert & Stewart, 1999). LoCastro (2003) argues that the learners will not pick up the “sociolinguistic and pragmatic norms” of the target language simply through exposure to the target culture (p. 297). Therefore, it is simplistic to conclude that students’ second language abilities will improve if they live abroad where the target language is spoken.

Gardner (1985) points out the importance of having social and emotional interactions and says that students’ attitudes toward the group of people who speak the target language improve when they build “social–emotional” relationships with the people. Rogoff (1990) believes that “[communicating] is not ‘cold’ cognition, but inherently involves emotion, social relations, and social structure” (p. 10). Hall and Guthrie’s (1981) qualitative study of children’s interaction gives insight regarding environments of interaction when they say, “People in interaction become environments for each other’s behavior” (p. 221). Their actual interactions in their particular social and cultural contexts determine whether or not each environment is rich, authentic, and meaningful for language and cultural development.

There are surely benefits and opportunities in those study abroad environments, but more importantly, students need to make the most of opportunities and benefits by participating in interaction and communication. Students need to generate constantly meaningful interactions to develop existing skills; meaningful interactions make the environment authentic. In other words, the quality of interaction the students choose is more important than where they live or how long they stay there.

### *Interactions outside the Classroom*

Students can have informal interaction outside the classroom abroad. Often, a real situation outside the classroom is considered authentic as compared to classroom practice. The reason the environment outside the classroom is considered authentic is because students receive various types of input or interactions in informal situations and produce output in many real life situations. Students gain knowledge and practice skills in the

classroom in order to apply and make use of them in real situations (Dunlap & Grabinger, 1996).

Many scholars in second language acquisition also believe that interaction outside the classroom can help students learn the target language and culture. Students can improve second language acquisition through outside communication experiences (Freed, 1995). Bacon (2002) mentions that students' success is directly related to their opportunities to interact with native speakers in various situations. The participant, Lily, in Bacon's (2002) study shows "cultural adjustment, personal change, and language growth" through outside interactions during her study abroad period (p. 645). Interactions and integration outside the classroom are presented positively in Cross's (1963) study as well, in which Peace Corps workers who experienced interactions outside of work learned casual French (Horwitz, 2000). Wilkinson (2002), in discussing the supposed benefits of study abroad for American students in France, worries about students who do not take advantage of being in a target language environment and who do not go beyond the classroom.

However, some scholars in second language acquisition view interactions outside the classroom in study abroad contexts rather negatively. Freed (1995) argues that evidence has been contradictory, and that some scholars such as Day (1985), DeKeyser (1986), Freed (1990), Krashen and Seliger (1976), Krashen, Seliger, and Harnett (1974), and Spada (1985 & 1986) suggest that "out-of-class contact does not necessarily enhance students' learning" (p. 6). Higgs and Clifford (1982) claim that outside contact "may even impede second language acquisition" (Freed, 1995, p. 6). If students' learning processes are viewed as inherently individual cognitive processes, places outside the classroom where students interact with unfamiliar people and make mistakes may be viewed as unsafe. Moreover, in classrooms, students learn more grammatically correct sentences. In contrast, outside the classroom, students interact with various people from various backgrounds, and they may learn broken English, slang, or non-conventional language use in that uncontrolled environment.

Hall (1999) argues that the classroom is "a more safe environment" for language-learning students because they can "explore the various uses and consequences of talk" in

the target language (p. 150). She says that in classrooms the students may have “fewer negative social and other consequences” (Hall, 1999, p. 150). However, in study abroad situations, experiences outside the classroom are inevitable, and the students sometimes just have to deal with “the negative social and other consequences.” While peer interactions and teacher-student interactions in classrooms are expected and comparatively safe learning opportunities, students’ interactions with native speakers and other international students outside the classroom are their unexpected and rather adventurous learning opportunities. For study abroad students, space and time outside the classroom can be full of resources as well as full of insecurity or unsafe adventures. In study abroad situations, students are exposed to many opportunities for taking challenges with their various levels of confidence and proficiency in their communication using the target language and culture.

Therefore, I agree with many scholars in second language acquisition who believe that “language can only be learned in interactions where meaning is negotiated with native and nonnative speakers” (LoCastro, 2003, p. viii). As compared to the traditional view of language learning, that of memorizing and rehearsing grammatical phrases and sentences, this view requires that language learners practice the target language by negotiating meanings through face-to-face interaction in a specific local culture (LoCastro, 2003). I also believe my fieldwork data about students’ interactions outside the classroom with native speakers and non-native speakers play an important role in understanding, teaching, and learning the target language.

#### *Development in Sociocultural Framework*

Vygotsky (1986) says, “Development should be studied as a process determined by the interaction organism and environment” (p. 66). Within the sociocultural framework, interaction is a focused and highlighted element that is directly related to one’s development. Active interaction is a key element that brings a student success in development. Many researchers argue that development occurs in interaction and participation in the community. As she applies sociocultural theory to second language acquisition, Kinginger (2001) says that students learn “through interacting with people (or

themselves, playing the role of social other) using the resources made available to them by their environment and culture” (p. 420). She follows this by stating that “social interaction is at once the medium and the result of development” (p. 422). Shrum and Glisan (2000) say, “[Our] linguistic, cognitive, and social development as members of a community is socioculturally constructed” (p. 7).

Kinginger (2001) points out Vygotsky’s notion of the “genetic developmental process”: “during purposeful social interaction [. . .] participants attempt to achieve a shared definition of the situation or problem before them” (p. 422). Platt and Troudi (1997) say, “research in the sociocultural framework demonstrates that meaning may be shaped in the act of production” (p. 31). Therefore, learning and development are processed within students’ participation in activities (Rogoff, Radziszewska, & Masiello, 1995). In my study, I investigate Korean study abroad students’ social and communicative interactions and learned about their learning processes within the sociocultural framework.

### *Theoretical Framework*

#### *Epistemological Perspectives*

Crotty (1998) says that there are various and differing researchers’ viewpoints underlying all research processes. From how we, as researchers, identify problems in our areas to how we interpret our findings, every little step we take is related to how we understand the realities and truths of the world, societies, cultures, groups of people, and individuals. Parsons and Brown (2002) say that a researcher’s background and expertise will influence interpretation of the data. In other words, who s/he is and what s/he believes will affect the construction of research.

Crotty (1998) explains clearly that a research process includes four elements: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods (p. 3). Epistemology is “a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know,” and a theoretical perspective is “the philosophical stance” (p. 3). Methodology is “the strategy, plan of action, process or design” of the research, and methods are “the techniques or procedures” such as interviews, observations, or survey questions (p. 3). For conducting research, researchers

should bear in mind that these four elements should be consistent and relevant.

Crotty (1998) introduces three types of epistemology: objectivism, subjectivism, and constructionism (p. 5). Objectivism is an epistemology in which objectivists believe that there is no subjective meaning-making involved in the object they study. They find truth with only scientific experiments. The philosophical viewpoint of objectivism is positivism. Positivists are concerned with facts, and with understanding the world objectively. They separate themselves as scientists from the objects they study. They believe this objectification can help them find facts more scientifically. Positivists believe in the development and growth of human science and human societies. This perspective is one of the scientific approaches that positive evidence must be shown in order to believe or prove a hypothesis. Positivists often rely on numbers to explain their findings and use quantitative approaches to research (Creswell, 2003). Parsons and Brown (2002) point out that “logical positivism posits that only those things that can be observed and measured can be said to exist” (p. 49).

Another epistemology is subjectivism. According to Crotty (1998), in subjectivist epistemology, only the subjects know the meanings, and only subjective meaning-making is important. Subjectivists understand the truth in multiple ways and believe that there is more than one truth. Their realities come from mainly personal experiences (Rossman & Rlllis, 2003). Crotty argues that it is hard to be absolutely subjective because “even in subjectivism we make meaning out of something” (p. 9). Creswell (2003) provides this approach for qualitative research such as “feminist perspectives,” “racialized discourses,” “critical theory,” “queer theory,” and “disability inquiry” (p. 10).

The final epistemology of Crotty (1998) is constructionism, which is positioned between objectivism and subjectivism. In constructionism, constructionists make sense of objects through the relationships of objects and subjects. Constructionists argue that both subjects and objects construct the meanings and realities in societies. For them, everything in the world is constructed in a social and cultural context. Constructionists believe that there is more than one truth, depending on how we construct knowledge. They do not believe that there is one absolute truth or one definite reality (Parsons & Brown, 2002).

Schwandt (1994) says, “[Constructionists] are deeply committed to the contrary view that what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective. Knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by mind” (p. 125). Creswell (2003) says that in the socially constructed knowledge claims, “meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas” (p. 8). Then he says that the researcher has to work towards including “participants’ views of the situation being studied” (p. 8) as much as possible. Therefore constructionism can be an epistemology of qualitative research.

In addition to these three epistemologies, Creswell (2003) claims pragmatic knowledge that supports mixed methods research. It combines qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Creswell (2003) says that a researcher may consider mixed method research when s/he “may want to both generalize the findings to a population and develop a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon or concept for the individual” (p. 22). A researcher takes what works in her/his study. He argues that research can be both qualitative and quantitative.

### *My Stance and Qualitative Study*

My own way of knowing what I know has evolved over time and experience. When I think back to how I understood the process of learning a second language, which is my study interest, I realize that I once could have been considered a positivist. I had always believed that there was a particular way, an only way, and a best way to learn English. I came to the United States to discover the most effective way to learn English for everybody. My concern was to find out how I could maximize the effectiveness of learning and to apply the findings to those who were students of English as a second language, or a foreign language. My previous understanding of English learning/teaching and international learners of English was the positivists’ ways of looking at the problems.

My ways of seeing began to change when I began fieldwork in the area of English learning as a second language for the courses that I took at Virginia Tech, in Blacksburg, Virginia. The more I studied and was engaged in my research process, the more I learned

that there was no one, right way of learning English for everybody. Each student's everyday life was complex, and it affected his/her learning. The student participants in my study said that it was more difficult to manage their ordinary lives than taking English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Most of the embarrassing experiences and challenges came from outside the classroom. For these reasons, I wanted to include these individuals' particular experiences in their particular contexts and environments, and qualitative methods were best fitted to my intentions.

Wolcott (1994) talks about his own difficulty when he was reporting on the life of an elementary school principal. Wolcott says that he had become aware of the limitations of observing objectively when he was deeply participating in the field. Schwandt (1994) says, "[Constructionists] struggle with drawing a line between the object of the investigation and the investigator" (p. 119). In this study I sometimes found myself emotionally involved with situations that the participants went through sleepless nights anxious and stressed about the lack of improvement in their English, the uncertainty of their future, their unbalanced eating habits, their personal problems, etc.

However, I have tried to understand the problems from a researcher's point of view. I needed to take a standpoint that was not too subjective and not too objective. I took constructionists' viewpoint, in assuming that there is more than one truth, and that realities are constructed. I tried to observe and listen to the meanings in my participants' interviews and conversations while I was participating in any activities. To construct discourses in this study, it was important that I tried to be as reflective and responsible as I could for the sake of the consequences of the research process.

### *Purpose of the Study*

Through this study, I wanted to gain knowledge about how Korean study abroad students learn to communicate and interact with native speakers and non-native speakers by participating in the target culture. Therefore, as Johnson (2004) proposes the goals for research in the field of second language acquisition, my main goals of study were "to investigate how participation in a variety of local sociocultural contexts affects the learner's

second language ability and how participation in one sociocultural context affects the learner's [language and culture acquisition] in another" (p. 176). In short, the purposes of the study is (a) to gain knowledge about the process of second language and culture learning through outside-the-classroom interactions, and (b) to investigate how language learners develop their ability to interact and communicate using the target language in a target culture.

Finally, my study addresses what areas the educators in the United States consider in helping the students' process of learning English outside the classroom. I hope that this study helps educators to connect their students' outside experiences with classroom instruction. It will give guidelines to other students in Korea who are preparing to study abroad in the United States, and to international educators who prepare potential study abroad students. I hope that this research is beneficial for EFL teachers when they apply the findings to their classrooms.

### *Research Questions*

In order to discover how the students' everyday social and cultural interaction and communication influence their language and cultural learning in the United States, there are three research questions that guide this study. The overarching question is:

How do Korean study abroad students learn the target language and culture through interactions outside the classroom?

The two subordinate questions are:

- How do Korean study abroad students interact socially with native speakers of English and other international students outside the classroom?
- How do Korean study abroad students develop communicative competence through social interactions?

### *Nature of the Study*

I believe that Becker's (1998) "small step notion" can be used to understand these Korean study abroad students' everyday learning experiences. Becker says, "the steps he

[the young man in his story] does take are never so very radical. Each one is simply another small step on a road from which he might at any minute turn to some other of the many roads available. Each small step is intellectually and emotionally understandable to people who themselves are nothing like this young man, once the circumstances are made intelligible to them” (p. 27). Like Becker’s young man, Korean study abroad students are taking small steps every day. Through qualitative methods, I wanted to learn what steps they are taking.

For this dissertation study, I chose qualitative methods, using ethnographic techniques to discover Korean students’ English learning process in the United States. I listened to understand what happens to the students from their perspectives. In addition, the short-term experiences of Korean students in the United States are on a continuum with their previous lives in Korea, and with their futures. I actually investigated a small portion of their lives, during their short time in the United States, as compared to the bigger picture of the entire journey of their lives, as Nesor (1997) says:

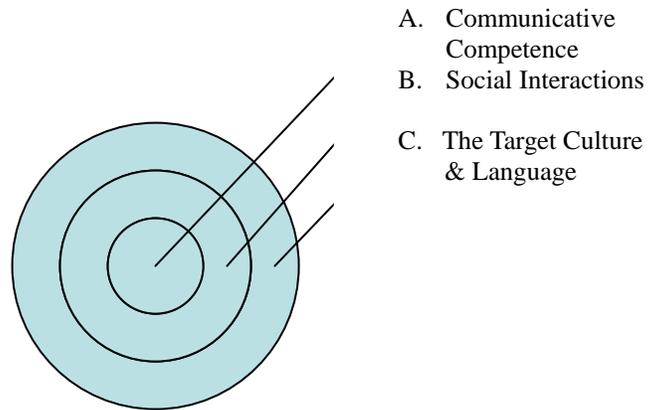
Ethnographies examine sectioned-out parts of ongoing processes. We may treat these processes as if they had beginnings, middles, and ends, but it’s really our engagements with the processes that begin and end. The people and institutions we study don’t stop what they’re doing when we stop looking at them. The meanings people attach to the things we see, hear about, or experience during fieldwork continue to change. (p. 196)

#### *Limitations of the Study*

As I have already mentioned, this study covers a small portion of Korean study abroad students’ lives. In this study I focused only on the time the students were living in Blacksburg, Virginia. Their language and cultural learning experiences before or after the sojourn experience did figure into what was considered in this study. The findings about the students’ development mainly reflected on the beginning or the middle of their whole journey of second language and cultural learning.

In this study, I looked for social interactions and communications that Korean study abroad students had with native speakers and non-native speakers using English outside the

classroom. Data included their acts, thoughts, and conversations. While I was investigating the learning experiences that happened in almost every moment of their living in the target culture (C), I tried to be careful not to invade their truly personal lives, which are not the focus of the study. This study focused on students' learning in (B) social interactions and development of (A) communicative competences.



*Figure 1.* Focus of the study

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

#### *Introduction*

To understand how Korean study abroad students develop their language and cultural competence while they are living in the target culture, I studied the literature in the areas of (a) second language acquisition (SLA) and (b) second culture acquisition (SCA). The literature in the area of SLA addresses how and what people learn during the process of second language acquisition. I attempted to include models and theories in a chronological order, so that I could put sociocultural theory at the end of the section to emphasize that the main idea of this study is framed by sociocultural theory. In the literature review of second culture acquisition, I tried to account for the process of culture learning that the study abroad students inevitably face. Second culture learning is part of second language learning. However, I wanted to put this information in a separate section to stress the importance of second culture learning especially for the students who have arrived recently in the target culture to learn the target language.

#### *Second Language Acquisition (SLA)*

Among the many areas in SLA, I will begin my literature review on relationships between individual factors and second language development. Then, I will focus on the development of interpersonal oral communication because that is what the study abroad students will be practicing outside the classroom. This will be the subject of my data collection during the fieldwork. In SLA, I included sociocultural theory because this provides the framework of development that students will process through social and cultural interactions. The list of literature in this section includes (a) individual factors, (b) oral proficiency improvement, (c) interpersonal communication, (d) communicative competence models and interactional competence theory, and (e) sociocultural theory.

*Individual Factors*

LoCastro (2003) claims that researchers in the field of SLA should consider individual and societal factors in attempting to understand the process of learning the target language and culture. As individual factors, LoCastro lists the learner's (a) position in the L2 societal context, (b) consciousness of the aims of language learning and language use, and (c) consciousness of the self in general. Social factors are: (a) face concerns; (b) power relations; (c) male/female roles; and (d) discrimination (LoCastro, 2003, p. 297).

Individuals choose how to interact in a situation. Through communicational interaction, language learners demonstrate their attitudes, manners, and world views (LoCastro, 2003). Likewise, study abroad students may have their particular individual ways of using the target language in the target culture. They may choose to use certain kinds of language in certain circumstances, and their choices may be influenced by their attitudes, manners, and world views. In addition, their personalities and motivation may affect their choices in participation in interaction and communication.

*Motivation.*

Scholars find that students' affective and motivational levels influence their language development processes in their interaction with native speakers or other people who speak in the target language. Students' motivation in a study-abroad situation is discussed by Hinenoya and Gatbonton (2000). They argue that not everybody is motivated to "interact" and "integrate" with native speakers in the target culture. They point out that "the higher the learners' desire to interact and integrate with the target group (integrative motivation) or to find employment, seek advancement, and so on (instrumental motivation), the better their performance in their course work and the higher their proficiency levels" (p. 225). Gardner and Lambert (1972) say instrumental motivation helps students to learn the practical customs and a new language, while integrative motivation "[reflects] a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group." (p. 132).

*Willingness to communicate.*

Yashima (2002) tested Japanese students' willingness to communicate in a second language and generalized that "motivated students studied harder and achieved a higher

level of competence than less motivated ones” (p. 62). However, she also says, “merely having motivation does not seem to be sufficient for an individual’s being willing to communicate” (p.62). Freed’s (1995) study shows that there are no significant differences between a group that studied abroad and one that did not in terms of motivation. This means that the study abroad experience does not necessarily give students the motivation to further study the target language. However, the results in the literature vary in regard to this matter.

#### *Personality types.*

Students’ personality types influence language learning according to Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002). Their study (2002) shows how students’ personality types affected their adjustment to host families in a Spanish-speaking environment. Most of the host families reported that students with open minds, good personalities, and maturity adjust to their new environment better than other students without these, and that personality matters more than a student’s language ability (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002). In their study, they stress the importance of the host family as a valuable linguistic and cultural learning environment outside the classroom. From their interviews with the host families, it is clear that the parents of the host families tried to act as “teacher, tutor, and counselor” (p.198). However, Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) conclude, “our students may not be taking full advantage of this rich linguistic and cultural haven” (p.198).

#### *Oral Proficiency Improvement*

Brecht and Davison (1991) say that study abroad is effective for learning to speak a target language. This is based on the results from their Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) that indicated that study abroad students in Russia spoke better than students in a four-year college Russian program in the United States. Shrum and Glisan’s (2005) definition of proficiency is “the ability to use language to perform global tasks or language functions within a variety of contexts/content areas, with a given degree of accuracy, and by means of specific text types” (p. 5). Some scholars, such as Moehle (1984) and Moehle and Raupach (1983), suggest that studying abroad may improve students’ pronunciation or some type of

global fluency. Global fluency is “the ability to ‘sound good’ by increasing the rate of speech and/or decreasing the length of time between utterances, and by learning appropriate fillers, modifiers, formulae and compensation strategies, all of which provide [the students] with a series of ‘native-sounding’ attributes” (Freed, 1995, p. 10). After studying the research by Freed (1995) and Lafford (1995), Bacon (2002) summarizes it by saying, “Study abroad is beneficial for oral language growth, although the details are difficult to generalize” (p. 638). One benefit of study abroad in terms of oral proficiency improvement is that students may have extended discourse and immersion experiences (Glisan & Donato, 2004).

Freed’s (1995) study found that there was no difference in study abroad students’ progress in oral proficiency as compared with the students’ progress in the homeland when an OPI was the test instrument. She found that OPI detects only novice learners’ improvement but not advanced learners’ improvement. Then Freed (1995) said that the OPI was not the best method to compare students at home and abroad. Glisan and Donato (2004) may disagree with Freed (1995) because they believe that language learners with advanced-level proficiency also develop their language ability to superior-level proficiency. According to Johnson (2001), an OPI is an examination of an examinee’s face-to-face conversation with a skillful tester. It is an interview format, and scholars like Van Lier (1989) question whether that format is a valid method of accessing speaking ability. Johnson (2001) argues that the OPI is one of many communicative speech events that reflect part of everyday conversation. However, Johnson (2001) believes that the OPI should include sociocultural perspectives so that it can show not only students’ performance at an interview session, but also the progress of students’ learning.

### *Interpersonal Communication*

Hymes’ (1974) three communicative units -- speech situation, speech event, and speech act -- are useful to understand and analyze communication. The biggest picture of communicative interaction is a speech situation; the next is a speech event, and the smallest unit of communication is a speech act. Johnson’s (2001) explanation of these three units is

clear. She explains that when someone tells a joke to her/his friend in a conversation at a party, the joke is a speech act; the conversation is a speech event, and the party is a speech situation. Interpersonal communication is speech events that are defined as “activities or aspects of activities that are directly governed by rules and norms for the use of speech” (Hymes, 1974, p. 52).

The interpersonal communication mode is one of the three communicative modes that *The Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (1999) identifies as primary contexts of communication. The other two communicative modes are the interpretive mode and the presentational mode. The interpersonal communication mode will be the focus of this study, and is face-to-face, direct oral and written communication between two people. Students receive more in the interpretive mode while they produce more in the presentational mode. In the interpersonal mode, students should constantly both receive and produce messages with one another.

Shrum and Glisan (2005) summarize the characteristics of oral interpersonal communication:

1. There are two or more people who are engaged in conversation in a face-to-face or telephonic situation.
2. It is a meaning- or information- sharing activity where a speaker’s intention and need to communicate is clearly laid out.
3. The speakers who are involved in conversation usually do not plan what to say or how to say it; it is spontaneous.
4. When one speaks, the other usually listens to interpret meaning and prepares to respond based on what s/he heard.
5. The people who are engaged in conversation negotiate meaning by “asking for repetition, clarification, or confirmation, or indicating a lack of understanding . . . by repeating, restating, or correcting.”
6. Non-verbal communication such as gestures, facial expressions, and body movement is part of it or an alternate way for circumlocution.
7. Classroom practices in pairs are not counted as interpersonal communication when

the dialogues are pre-scripted or prepared by memorization. (Shrum & Glisan, 2005)

*Interpersonal communication between a native speaker and a non-native speaker.*

Non-native, language learning students may aim to communicate in the target language as they do in their first language. However, a set of dialogues between a native speaker (NS) and a non-native speaker (NNS) must look different from a set of dialogues between native speakers. Markee (2000) says that NNS learners and NS interlocutors constantly make adjustments, more often than in NS and NS conversation, when they do not understand what is said during their conversation. The adjustments include repairs, comprehension checks, clarification requests, confirmation checks, verifications of meaning, definition requests, and expressions of lexical uncertainty (Markee, 2000, p. 8).

Another point that Markee (2000) makes is about topics of conversation. When the topic is familiar to NNS learners but not to NS interlocutors, the learners can be talking more than listening. In addition, interlocutors' communicative competence influences who plays the dominant role in conversation (Markee, 2000, p. 11). Zuengler (1993) points out that the conversation topic situates speakers within the interactions, which means the topic will influence speakers' conversational roles (p. 184). In other words, when a speaker knows the topic well and feels good about it, s/he may take an active role in conversation.

*Communicative Competence Model*

Foley and Thompson (2003) say that they focus on the development of communicative competence and interaction to fulfill their ultimate goal of understanding what it means to learn language (p. 44). Similarly, the goal of my study is to understand how Korean study abroad students learn the target language and culture. I believe that I will accomplish this goal by learning how the students develop communicative competence and how they learn to interact with native speakers and non-native speakers. Along the same line, a language learner must have a goal to be a communicatively competent person. According to Foley and Thompson (2003), a communicatively competent person is able to “integrate the knowledge of social, cultural and linguistic structures in order to produce and

contribute to the ongoing interaction and hence that are meaningful to others” (p. 45).

Several competence models have been developed. Communicative competence models have been developed by Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980), Bachman (1990), and Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995). An interactional competence model was developed by Hall (1995, 1999) and Young (1999). Before all these models, Chomsky (1965) viewed language theory as two integral parts of linguistic competence and performance. For Chomsky (1965), linguistic competence means grammatical and structural knowledge of sentences that is built in an individual person’s brain; performance means the outcome of competence. His view has been criticized by Hymes (1972) and many other scholars for not including the context of the language used (Shrum & Glisan, 2005).

*Hymes’ communicative competence.*

Hymes (1972) was the first person who brought up the notion of communicative competence (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Hymes (1972) and his colleagues argue that “language competence consists not only of Chomsky’s (1965) grammatical competence but also of sociolinguistic or pragmatic competence, which covers all situated aspects of language use and related issues of [appropriateness]: the speaker (and, if different, the original author), the addressee(s), the message, the setting or event, the activity, the register, and so forth” (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p. 16). In Hymes’ (1972) words, competence means “what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner” (p. 277). Hymes (1972) believes that a model of language should include “communicative conduct and social life” (p. 278).

Hymes (1972) further argues that Chomsky (1965) has failed to make clear what performance means. Chomsky’s (1965) definition of performance is vague with regard to whether it means “the behavioral data of speech or all that underlies speech beyond the grammatical” (Hymes, 1972, p. 280). Hymes (1972) introduces the concept of “ability for use,” and he distinguishes it from “actual performance” in real situations. He defines “ability for use” as non-cognitive factors, such as motivation, capacity, courage, and confidence. Hymes’ communicative competence model can be found in Johnson’s article

(2004, p. 89).

*Canale and Swain's communicative competence model.*

Canale and Swain (1980) introduce communicative competence from pedagogical perspectives. Their model has been a strong influence in second language teaching and testing (Johnson, 2001). They argue that there are four components of communicative competence: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). The differences between Canale and Swain's communicative competence model and Hymes' models are that: (a) the former one includes two more additional major competencies: discourse competence and strategic competence, and (b) it does not have "ability for use," non-cognitive factors as a category. Instead, Canale and Swain's (1980) two additional competencies, discourse and strategic competencies, seem to consist of some of the elements of "ability for use" (Johnson, 2001).

Canale and Swain's (1980) model has been problematic with some scholars who find ambiguities in their claim that "communicative competence requires interaction among four competencies in actual production and comprehension" (Johnson, 2001, p. 160). Johnson (2001) says that Canale and Swain do not explain the mechanism of interaction, such as how the interaction is achieved, what degree of which competence influences the interaction outcome, or whether a competence influences interaction, and in what contexts. Although their model lacks some explanations, it was the only model for language teaching and testing until Bachman (1990) introduced the communicative language ability (CLA) model.

*Bachman's communicative language ability model.*

Bachman (1990) placed strategic competence in the center of his CLA model separated from language competence and world knowledge. Bachman's (1990) model shows that strategic competence carries language competence and world knowledge into social contexts. Johnson (2001) explains that Bachman's (1990) strategic competence means "general underlying cognitive skills in language use like assessing, planning, and executing, which are instrumental for achieving communicative goals" (p. 162). Differently from Canale and Swain's (1980) model, Bachman's model represents the interactional

mechanism of the competences. However, in Bachman's model, interaction is viewed as a cognitive event not as a social event, which differs from the interactional model based on sociocultural theory (Johnson, 2004).

Bachman's (1990) language competence model includes organizational competence and pragmatic competence. The model is shown below. In the model, pragmatic competence is divided into two competences: functional competence and sociolinguistic competence. Bachman (1990) defines functional competence as the ability "to interpret relationships between utterances or sentences and texts and the intentions of language users" (p. 69). Sociolinguistic competence is defined by Bachman (1990) as "sensitivity to, or control of the conventions of language use that are determined by the features of the specific language use context" (p. 94). However, Johnson (2004) argues that Bachman (1990) loosely defines pragmatic competence because pragmatics should be viewed as one of "many approaches to discourse analysis, [such as] speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics, variation analysis, the ethnography of communications, and conversation analysis" (p. 93).

According to LoCastro (2003), pragmatic ability is "being able to use language to carry out everyday functions in culturally appropriate ways" (p. viii). Pragmatic ability links one's linguistic competence and cultural competence. Celce-Murcia & Olshtain (2000) say, "Pragmatic competence relies very heavily on conventional, culturally appropriate, and socially acceptable ways of interacting" (p. 20). In general, people expect certain behaviors in certain circumstances and certain language uses in certain speech events. This is more obvious within a homogeneous social and cultural group of people, and this is challenged when people from different social and cultural groups mingle and communicate with each other.

*Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell's communicative model.*

The last model that I studied is the one by Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995). In their model, there are no new elements as compared to the previous models; however, they introduced in the communicative model the idea that discourse competence is placed in the center. From the center, three arrows point to sociocultural competence,

linguistic competence, and actual competence respectively. The outer part of the model demonstrates ongoing circulation of strategic competence. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) state that “it is in discourse and through discourse that the manifestation of the other competencies can best be observed, researched and assessed” (p. 16). Discourse competence is defined as the knowledge “which involves the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, and sentences/utterances to achieve a unified spoken or written whole with reference to a particular message and context” (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p. 16). The difference between this model and other earlier models is that this is diagrammatically presented, but the earlier ones are linearly presented. The model attempts to show multidimensionality.

#### *Interactional Competence Theory*

Johnson (2004) argues that the communicative competence models that have been presented by Chomsky (1965), Canale and Swans (1980), and Bachman (1990) are developed mainly from cognitive theories and are lacking either in sociocultural elements or interactional competence. The competences in those models are combined in order to demonstrate what occurs in an individual person’s brain. (Johnson, 2004). However, Johnson (2004) seems to support Hymes’ (1972) communicative competence model because it includes the notion of sociolinguistic competence along with grammatical competence. The model also distinguishes “ability for use” from “actual performance” in real situations (p. 89). The notion of “ability for use” can be counted as interactional competence in a local context, which is important when we try to understand native speakers’ intentions in their second language learning (Johnson, 2004).

Young (1999) provides the definition of interactional competence; it is “a theory of the knowledge that participants bring to and realize in interaction and includes an account of how such knowledge is acquired” (p. 118). Interactional competence requires “face-to-face interaction” (Hall, 1999; Johnson, 2004) and is developed when students participate in interactional practices in sociocultural settings (Hall, 1999; Johnson, 2004). This view of seeing interaction as a social issue is a major difference from other communicative

competence models. Hall (1999) proposes a framework of analysis that includes the elements of interactional practices. It is shown in Figure six below. The first of the two categories of Hall's (1999) framework is the linguistic category that contains "topics, participation structures, trajectory of speech acts, formulaic opening, transitions, and closings" (p. 146). The second is the extralinguistic category that contains "settings, goals, and participants" (p. 146).

Hall (1995) presents a concept of "oral interactive practices" that is similar to Hymes' communicative speech event (Johnson, 2001). Hall (1995) provides three steps for oral interactive practices: observation, reflection, and creation. Hall (1995, 1999) and Young (1999) believe that "[during these three processes,] the individual acquires many resources of various types, such as vocabulary and syntax, knowledge of how to manage turns and topics, and knowledge of rhetorical scripts and skills" (Johnson, 2001, p. 177). Johnson (2001) says that it is a theory of knowledge and a theory of second language acquisition. She argues that the interactional competence theory originates from or is rooted in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory.

### *Sociocultural Theory*

Some scholars in the field of second language acquisition have succeeded in framing their research within sociocultural theory (e.g., Appel & Lantolf, 1994; Donato & McCormick 1994; Platt & Troudi, 1997; Lantolf, 2000; Shrum & Glisan, 2000; Kinginger, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2002; McCafferty, 2002; Johnson, 2004). They all claim that their major reference is Russian psychologist Vygotsky, who lived from 1896 to 1934. Vygotsky (1986) sees language as "a cultural tool that has been developed and refined in the service of social action and interaction" (Wells, 1999, p. 10).

Vygotsky (1986) investigates the understanding of the interrelationship between "thought and speech" through children's learning processes (p. lviii). He says, "To understand another's speech, it is not sufficient to understand his words--we must understand his thought. But even that is not enough--we must also know its motivation" (p. 253). In his book, he argues that children's speech is social even in their early years, and

that social speech is divided into two categories: “egocentric speech and communicative speech” (p. 35), which can be interpreted as “speech-for-oneself and speech-for-others” (p. xxxv). Kasper and Rose (2002) describe those two categories as having “the double function of language as means for communication and a tool for thinking” (p. 33).

Vygotsky (1987) says, “It may be appropriate to view word meaning not only as a unity of thinking and speech but as a unity of generalization and social interaction, a unity of thinking and communication” (p. 49). Using this approach, Kasper and Rose (2002) state that interaction is “a tool for [second language] learning and a competency in its own right” (p. 33). They argue that social interaction is not considered as “context” or “input and output,” but rather as “learning” or “cultural development” (p. 34).

*Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).*

Rogoff (1990) says that it is important to have both “guidance and participation in culturally valued activities” in novice and expert interactions (p. 8). Along with the novice and expert interactions, Vygotsky (1978) views interactions among peers as important elements in development and learning, and he introduces the practical concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). According to Vygotsky (1978), ZPD is “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86).

ZPD is sometimes compared with Krashen’s  $i + 1$  concepts, but Lantolf (2000) argues that Vygotsky’s ZPD concept and Krashen’s  $i + 1$  concept differ in that the latter explains only language practices, while the former concerns “the individuals involved in the negotiation of learning and development” (p. 80). Kinginger (2001) differentiates the ZPD construct from the  $i + 1$  construct by saying that Krashen’s  $i + 1$  concept views progress as “that learners can make in their language acquisition process when presented with language input that is just beyond their current level of competence” (p. 417). On the other hand, Vygotsky’s concept is a “metaphorical social space representing activities learners can carry out with success if they are provided assistance from others more competent in such activities” (p. 417).

Vygotsky's (1986) statement gives a definition of development: "What the child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow" (p. 188). Shrum and Glisan (2000) point out that there are two development levels, actual and potential. They summarize these by saying, "Today's potential developmental level becomes tomorrow's actual developmental level" (p. 9). As Rogoff (1990) stresses, development is a process in which individuals share purpose and focus, and "cognitive, social, and emotional exchange" are involved in this process. (p. 9). Having the same goal of learning the target language, peer interactions may give both communicators opportunities to develop. Johnson (2004) says, "Scaffold help does not need to be created by the experts; it can be provided by the learners themselves" (p. 131). In collaborative peer interaction, the opportunities for second language learning are numerous and rich for students, and the collaboration "[enables] students to gradually develop their productive use of assessments and alignments" (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 41).

In the framework of ZPD, McCafferty (2002) studies nonverbal communication between a Taiwanese student who studied in the United States and his English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. He affirms the learner's willingness to interact with the native-speaking teacher. However, this study shows the results from the conversation activities already set up by the researcher, which makes my study different from this study. In my study, students go out of the classroom and usually do not plan or know with whom they will speak or interact. Many times unplanned conversations happened with unfamiliar interlocutors in unplanned settings. Within these natural settings outside the classroom, students' engagement in their conversations with native speakers and other international students may develop their ability to understand and speak the target language. While the language learning students develop social relationships during interactions, they may also develop their ability to understand the cultural aspects of the target language. So far, the literature review confirms that my study should take the position of seeing interaction as a medium of second language development. Also, development was considered as a process, not as a result.

*Interaction and communication as mediated actions.*

Interaction and communication are the “mediated actions” of developing students’ language and cultural competencies. They are situated deeply in the social and cultural contexts and take students to opportunities to learn. Wertsch (1991) argues that “mediated action is inextricably linked to historical, cultural, and institutional settings, and that the social origins of individual mental functioning extend beyond the level of intermental functioning” (p. 144). Wertsch (1991) also insists that one must examine “the speech genres” to analyze the interaction and communication in which the participants are engaged.

The intersection of interaction and communication is, as Kasper and Rose (2002) write, “language socialization” or “developmental pragmatics” (p. 42). Language socialization is “the process whereby children and other novices are socialized through language, part of such socialization being a socialization to use language meaningfully, appropriately, and effectively” (Ochs, 1996, p. 408). Kasper and Rose (2002) say that developmental pragmatic studies take “a narrower focus” than language socialization and include such things as “conversational participation and organization, understanding and producing speech acts, politeness, genre-specific discourse, and indexicality” (p. 43). By studying novice participants’ socialization access to the target culture and by studying their interaction and communication practices in given contexts, I believe that I will be able to learn the development process of Korean study abroad students’ second language and culture learning.

Lantolf (2000) relies on sociocultural theory to understand second language learning as a mediated process. He indirectly suggests that study abroad students may use various resources around them and may rely on people or on building relationships with people while they access the various mediations. Lantolf (2000) explains mediation in second language learning by providing three categories: social mediation, such as peer mediation; self-mediation, through private speech; and the impact of artifact mediation, such as a portfolio. In terms of peer mediation, the language-learning students also spend significant time interacting among themselves in their internationally mixed classroom. These international study abroad students practice and learn English from each other. Interestingly,

Lantolf (2000) finds that “learners benefit from interacting with either more, or less, proficient peers” (p. 84). This is related to my previous observation on interactions among the students of English as a Second Language (ESL) during lunchtime in the student lounge at the English Language Institute (ELI) at Virginia Tech. The key participant, Jeongmin, seemed to listen more when she talked with more fluent speakers, but she seemed to talk more when she was with less fluent speakers. The latter could be a speaking practice, while the former could be a listening practice.

### *Second Culture Acquisition (SCA)*

Culture plays an important role in learning the second language especially when the learners come and live in the target culture. Study abroad students come and live in the target culture to learn the culture so that they can learn the target language better. The language-learning students’ everyday experiences in the target culture are closely related to their culture learning experiences along with their language learning experiences. In this section of second culture acquisition, I have included arguments about (a) cultural learning, (b) intercultural conflict, (c) cultural adaptation, (d) intercultural communicative competence, and (e) cultural understanding.

### *Cultural Learning*

When Korean students decide to study abroad in the United States, they may assume that they can learn English in more lively and interesting ways because they will be also learning the target culture. There is no doubt that culture is embedded in the language spoken among people. With cultural learning, the students get to know nuances and underlying meanings of the language. With the learning, the students better understand native speakers and their intentions, and they better express themselves and their intentions in the target language. Therefore, as McKay and Hornberger (1994) note, “cultural understanding is an indispensable part of second or foreign language acquisition” (as cited in Liu, 1999, p. 207).

Second culture acquisition or second culture learning is many scholars’ research

interest in the field of second language acquisition. Among those scholars' inquiries on the topic, Lantolf's (1999) questions are fundamental. He asks, "How are we to interpret acquisition when it comes to culture? Does it have the same meaning with respect to culture as it does in the case of linguistic development, or does it mean something different?" (p. 28).

*Learning culture seen as getting information or being in process.*

Robinson-Stuart and Nocon (1996) say that there are two views on culture and culture learning. In regard to the first view, they say that one can learn culture automatically since it is considered as "knowledge, skills, static products or forms that may be objectified" (p. 432). In regard to the second view, others see culture "as a process, that is, as a way of perceiving, interpreting, feeling, being in the world, wanting to smile, wanting to scream, loving, hating, and relating to where one is and who one meets" (p. 432). The first view implies that the second culture is learnable or achievable for second language learners because it is treated as a piece of knowledge, while the second view implies that it may be very difficult for the learners to acquire the second culture because it is more related to emotions.

When culture is seen as information and knowledge, a goal of interaction between two cultures is for each representative to gain knowledge about the other culture. In this approach, Kramsch (1993) introduces a concept of a third culture that is not hostile to either the students' home culture or the target culture. The third culture is "a culture of intersection" between the home and the target cultures such as a popular culture, a critical culture, and an ecological culture. Wright (2000) also sees culture as information and knowledge when he divides students into the two categories of "culturally adaptive and nonculturally adaptive" (Wright, 2000, p. 337). This distinction might be necessary for teaching students how to understand the second culture; however, I think that this kind of division does not tell us what to do to help students with their "adaptiveness." Students have their own ways and paces of developing their second language understanding along with second culture understanding. Few are positioned at the extreme end, but rather on the line between the two extremes.

Kruger and Tomasello (1996) argue that cultural learning is not simply learning how to act but learning how to think. They say, “In cultural learning children learn not just about affordances of the inanimate environment but also something about the intentional states of adults-what they intend to do in performing certain actions or, perhaps, the strategy they are using or thoughts they are thinking” (p. 371). To develop second culture competence in the target language, the students may learn to understand about the “intentional state of [native speakers].”

In other words, people can develop second culture competence only up to a certain level of being able to appreciate and understand the target cultural products. They may be able to learn to open their minds to embrace the differences, but they cannot feel the same way that the native speakers feel. Lantolf’s (1999) argument about second culture acquisition is that students can become successful second language learners, but they can’t really come to think and act like native speakers (p. 43). Lantolf (1999) insists that people from two different cultures can’t understand each other because they may have different conceptual systems and different cognitive perspectives. If it is not different conceptual systems and different cognitive perspectives, it may be that students are “unable or unwilling to adjust their values even when they cognitively understand them” (Bacon, 2002, p. 638). Even though students learn and cognitively understand the “rules” in the target culture, they may not want to or not be able to think and act as native speakers.

In terms of bilingualism and biculturalism, Kuiper and Lin (1989) say that one can be bilingual, but this does not mean one is bicultural. They studied Singaporeans who grew up speaking both English and Chinese. They found that these Singaporeans have problems in communicating with other native speakers of English from other nations such as the United States, England, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The reason is that “they command two linguistic systems, but only one cultural system” (Kuiper & Lin, 1989, p. 281). Their suggestion indicates the importance of cultural aspects of language learning. They say, “We doubt, given the complexity of the cultural information which is coded in formulae, that anyone can become truly bicultural after early childhood and therefore that anyone can become a native speaker of a second language after this time even if they sound

as though they are” (p. 304).

### *Intercultural Conflict*

When two different people from two different cultures meet, intercultural conflict is inevitable. When situations in the target culture are new, the students who have learned the target language in their home country may experience some difficulties applying their previous linguistic and cultural knowledge to various situations in the target culture. Mauranen’s (1994) study shows that Finnish students encounter discourses in British university classrooms that are culturally different from in the classrooms in Finland (Freed, 1995, p. 15). Gardner and Lambert (1972) report that American students who study in France have “pejorative and biased images of typical representatives of the ethnolinguistic group whose language they are supposed to master” (p. 140). They say that the negative stereotypes the students have make it difficult for them to acquire the language.

#### *Misunderstanding and miscommunication.*

Even though one may turn a miscommunication or misunderstanding into a learning opportunity, it must be a very hard way to learn the second language. Banks, Ge, and Baker (1991) define miscommunication as “speech performance errors, such as slips of the tongue, omissions, substitutions, and dysfluencies [. . .] that interfere with the smooth ongoingness of interaction” (p.104). Robinson (1985) talks about three areas in which people from different cultures have difficulties in communicating with each other: (a) “different cultural assumptions,” (b) “different ways of structuring information,” and (c) “different ways of speaking” (p. 55).

Miscommunication and misunderstanding can occur in various situations. Wilkinson’s (1998) study shows that as misunderstanding of experiences accumulated, the American students in her study seemed to rely increasingly on the other American students for support and encouragement. When the language learners make errors outside the classroom with native speakers, sometimes their low proficiency in not being able to understand the native speakers linguistically or culturally/contextually can really embarrass the learners, or their misunderstandings can result in inconveniences or sometimes in

serious consequences, as found in Tarone and Kuehn's study (2000).

Tarone and Kuehn (2000) show that misunderstanding can result in severe disadvantage. In the study, a non-native speaker had difficulties understanding the native speaker in a social service interview. The authors point out that this kind of misunderstanding resulted in a lack of providing proper evidence about her/his social and financial status. The miscommunication could have resulted in a non-native speaker's failing to gain eligibility for financial aid, or her/his being declared fraudulent. Whether the reason is linguistic failure or cultural differences, misunderstanding or miscommunication happens. For native speakers, it can be silly, but it is definitely embarrassing and even a loss of something important, such as financial aid in Tarone and Kuehn's (2000) study, for language learners.

*Native speakers' avoidance.*

Wilkinson (2002) argues that native speakers may avoid interaction with language learning students because of failure of conversation. She asks questions in this way: "Will their native speaking interlocutors begin to perceive them in negative ways (e. g., dumb, perplexing, rude, uncomfortable to talk to)?"(p. 168), and "Will these native speakers eventually prefer not to engage in conversation with these students?" (p. 168).

According to Gass and Varonis (1991), there are two types of non-engagement; one is "noncommunication" and the other is "communication breakoff" (p. 123). They report that a native speaker, an American university student, avoided her non-native conversation partner when she was tired. She did not want to engage in "difficult and stressful conversation" (p. 124) with a non-native speaker. Gass and Varonis (1991) also report that a native speaker who lived on the east coast traveled to San Francisco, and he avoided a bank teller who looked non-native to the English language. The reason he avoided the teller was that "he feared communicative difficulty" (p. 124). The second type of non-engagement is "communication breakoff," which means an abrupt termination of communication. The authors give an extreme example of "communication breakoff" as a native speaker hanging up the phone immediately when s/he hears foreign accent.

In the situation when native speakers avoid non-native speakers, non-native

speakers' willingness to learn the target language outside the classroom is almost in vain. Therefore, I agree with Johnson (2004) when she discusses how the native speakers need "to be educated and encouraged to provide appropriate assistance to the second language learners to become an active participant" (p. 176). Johnson (2004) says,

Becoming an active participant in second language sociocultural life should therefore be regarded as beneficial for both the native speaker and the nonnative speaker, since becoming an active participant may contribute to the native speaker's and the nonnative speaker's cognitive growth and to the coconstructing of the native speaker's self and nonnative speaker's self. (p. 176)

Considering the equal benefits of two parties from different cultures, "sharing purposes," as Rogoff (1990) says, and "sharing responsibility," as Vygotsky (1986) says, must happen.

#### *Adaptation*

When conflicts happen, the students try to adapt to the target culture in many ways. Kim (2001) says, "Adaptation occurs naturally and inevitably even when strangers do not plan or actively seek for it to happen, have no intention of participating fully in host social communication activities, and confine themselves to mostly superficial relationships with the natives" (p. 183). Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) explains that adaptation is flexibility, and it can lessen the problems. She says that adaptation is "modifying or tailoring our behavioral styles," and "[polarizing] views on the conflict content problem" (p. 195).

In this study, adaptation to the target culture does not mean that either acculturation or assimilation has occurred because the participants in the study will be Korean study abroad English-learning students in the United States who have recently arrived or have not stayed longer than one year in the target language country. In addition, Lantolf (1999) argues that "at issue is not acculturation, that is, learning to function in a new culture without compromising one's own identity or world view" (p. 29). Kim (2001) suggests the term "functional fitness," that is, when someone is well adapted "this person is capable of carrying out everyday-life activities smoothly and feeling comfortable in a particular environment" (p. 185). Some functional fitness can be found in the language learners'

interactions and communications over time in their social settings. However, they may show their struggles with functional fitness at the beginning of their sojourn experience, rather than capabilities or comfort in the target language.

*Definitions of acculturation and assimilation.*

Kroeber (1948) was the first scholar who described acculturation as:

Changes produced in a culture because of the influence of another culture, with the two cultures becoming similar as the end result. These changes may be reciprocal, which results in the two cultures becoming similar, or one-way and may result in the extinction of one culture, when it is absorbed by the other. (Kroeber, 1948, p. 425)

Acculturation is, according to the *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (1996), the process of acquiring culture traits as a result of direct contact. King and Wright (2001) say that foreigners who learn language and culture in the target culture are in some degrees of the acculturation process. The study abroad students in this study may be in some stages of acculturation since they have direct contact with the target culture through adaptation.

On the other hand, differently from acculturation, assimilation does not take place until a person enters a social, political, economical, and educational position that is standard in the target culture. When the person becomes an integrated member of standard culture, s/he will be assimilated. It is not always easy for a person to adopt certain ways of life of the people in the target culture. King and Wright (2001) further explain that a person remains acculturated if s/he cannot be assimilated in every aspect of life of the target culture.

*Intercultural Communicative Competence*

From a communicational perspective, adaptation or fitting to function in the target culture can be explained as acquiring intercultural communicative competence or interactional competence. Irwin (1996) says that, once one acquires the competence, s/he will be capable of applying it in all interactions. When Johnson (2004) describes interactional competence, she provides an example by saying, "Once the individual

acquired the interactional competence to participate in a formal interview, the individual will be able to transfer this knowledge to interactive practices in which formal interviews take place” (p. 97). Recent studies have determined that one of the most important domains of the communication competence is relationships (Irwin, 1996). In other words, students can develop competence through interactions and relationships. Irwin (1996) explains communication competence as “being able to appropriately adapt to a variety of different (contrasting) people and different (contrasting) communication situations or contexts” (p. 27).

The process of learning the target language and the target culture must include interactional competence. This will help students be better able to interact and form relationships with native speakers of the target culture. Kim (2001) says that second language learning students develop intercultural identities through this learning process. He advocates the following:

Having internalized an increasing level of host communication competence and integration into the host social communication processes, strangers are better able to manage the dynamic and dialogical interaction between the original culture and the new culture. They are also better able to experience different cultural worlds with increasing ease, with a greater capacity to make deliberate choices of actions in specific situations rather than simply following the dictates of the prevailing norms of the culture of childhood. (p. 192)

### *Cultural Understanding*

Studying the target language and culture does not mean “embracing it or following its sociocultural customs, nor does it mean losing one’s own culture. In fact, learning another culture can in fact help one appreciate and understand one’s own culture more” (Liu, 1999, p. 207). In learning the target language and culture, students should first develop understanding of their own culture, and then they will eventually “increase their awareness and openness to people who speak other languages and who may view the world from a different perspective” (Foreign Language Standards Learning for Virginia Public

Schools, 2000, p. 3).

### *Summary of Literature Review*

I looked into two areas of the literature to construct this study: (a) second language acquisition and (b) second culture acquisition. These are not separate areas; instead, they overlap and interrelate with one another. First, in second language acquisition, I learned that scholars' views on language learning have evolved over time, from seeing it as an individual's cognitive development, to seeing it as sociocultural development. Researchers trained to be linguists often "view [second] language learning as an individual achievement," while other researchers, those influenced by sociocultural theory, view it as "a collaborative achievement within a community of learners" (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). Shrum & Glisan (2005) say, "Our understanding of language learning continues to develop as additional explanations appear and are tested" (p.1).

In this chapter, I also discussed communicational and interactional competence models. In this discussion, I listed and briefly explained four communicational competence models by Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980), Bachman (1990), and Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995). Their models look different in terms of the focus of the models on what the proponents think is more important than other variables. However, they all demonstrate that there is something more than linguistic ability that explains one's communicative competence. As an alternative framework of language teaching and testing, Hall (1995, 1999) and Young (1999) introduced interactional theory. Like Hymes' (1972) communicative competence model, it includes sociocultural competence; this concept is heavily adapted from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory.

Many second language acquisition researchers are currently interested in sociocultural theories and approaches. In this section, I discussed Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and the notion of interaction and communication as mediated actions. Language learners have potential development and actual development areas, as seen in Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. Interactional and communicational acts are considered to be mediated actions that elevate students' development levels. I believe

that a sociocultural perspective in second language learning will guide me to understand the social and cultural development of Korean study abroad students.

Second, I reviewed the literature on second culture acquisition. Like second language acquisition, second culture acquisition is discussed in depth by many scholars since language learning and culture learning are inseparable. I researched the argument that culture should be seen not only as information but also as process. The Korean study abroad students learn about the target culture in the classroom, and they also process the target culture, to act appropriately outside the classroom. Some scholars in communication studies call this process adaptation. It appears that many scholars agree that second culture learning is not like any subject learning. Knowing the culture as a native person is virtually impossible.

In this section, I also included literature about misunderstanding and miscommunication because this happens in students' interpersonal communication during their interaction with native speakers in the target culture. This is easily found in recorded dialogues between novice language learners and native speakers. Language-learning students make mistakes while producing oral speech to convey and negotiate meaning in many obligatory settings, and to express their feelings in many optional settings in their unfamiliar social and cultural environments. Misunderstanding and miscommunication sometimes hinder students' learning processes effectively and emotionally. Researchers talk about the fact that some native speakers may avoid non-native speakers for fear of misunderstanding and miscommunication. The literature on miscommunication and misunderstanding helped me to analyze the students' real dialogue practices outside the classroom when I collected data from the field.

In this chapter, I focused on conceptualizing how language-learning students in study abroad contexts process their social and cultural learning through their actual communication and interaction outside the classroom. By reviewing the literature, I have gained insights into what other scholars have said about students' language learning experiences. The literature served as the basis and the boundaries of my fieldwork. I encountered the theories and the concepts that I learned about in the literature during my

fieldwork. As Bakhtin (1981) says, half of what we speak and write comes from someone else. I quoted, rephrased, and borrowed the ideas that I learned from other scholars in the areas of second language acquisition, second culture acquisition, and sociocultural theory. I incorporated others' ideas into the structure of my thinking process and to my ways of understanding. All these efforts came from my endless striving to understand how people learn a target language and a target culture.

## CHAPTER 3

### Qualitative Methodology

#### *Introduction*

This study is of a qualitative nature. The main concern in qualitative studies is “understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants’ perspectives” (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). Rossman and Rallis (2003) affirm that the eventual goal of qualitative studies is “learning” (p. 4). The purpose of this study is to gain some insights about students’ “learning process” of the target language and culture. Therefore, understanding and learning about the Korean study abroad students’ learning from their perspectives was my aim in this study. In addition, through qualitative methodology, I have tried to find answers for my research question; how do Korean study abroad students learn the target language and culture outside the classroom? I have also tried to show the process of development and the process of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Second Culture Acquisition (SCA) in the frame of sociocultural theory by analyzing data about participants’ social interactions and communications.

My understanding and learning was also guided by the framework of various communicative competence models, interactional practices, sociocultural theory, and cultural learning processes that I have reported on in the literature review. With qualitative methodology, I hope that I have successfully combined my understanding from the literature and the participants’ perspectives of their actual learning process. I believe that the qualitative research methods gave both my participants and me opportunities to understand and learn their processes of language and cultural learning while they are living in the United States. Through this study, I hope that insights were gained about what really goes on under the surface of both spoken language and behavior.

As I spent time in the field, I developed my role in the group of people I studied. Then I was able to start to investigate their social and cultural lives in depth by participant observations and interviews. I participated in their activities, observed their interactions in various settings, asked questions and talked to them, followed them around town, and

collected their oral communications in various settings outside the classroom. Recording and analyzing actual speech has been a part of the methodology in this study (Johnstone, 2000). Johnstone (2000) argues that sociolinguists consider data from actual conversation as the “best” data, and that knowledge about the culture is inevitably embedded in speech (p. 84). Therefore, the study of communication is strongly related to the study of the culture. Strauss and Corbin (1994) say, “Knowledge is, after all, linked closely with time and place” (p. 276).

### *Site Selection*

#### *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)*

Virginia Tech is located in Blacksburg, in mountainous Southwest Virginia. It has a population of 32,000 that includes a student population of 24,000 and a Virginia Tech salaried personnel population of 6,000 (see Virginia Tech’s Personnel Services home page, <http://www.ps.vt.edu/employment/blacksburg/>). Virginia Tech is one of the state’s largest universities, but the town is often characterized as small, caring, friendly, and relaxed. Especially for the participants in this study who come from Seoul, a metropolitan city with a population of 12 million, Blacksburg is comparatively a very small town. One of the participants from my previous work said, “You know, the grass, the nature, less people, less pollution... It’s not like a metropolitan city, Seoul.”

#### *The English Language Institute (ELI) at Virginia Tech*

The English Language Institute (ELI) has been at Virginia Tech since 1992. It is run through Virginia Tech’s Continuing Education Program/Office. It is located in its own separate building, two blocks away from the Virginia Tech main campus. On the first floor of the ELI, there are the director’s office, the secretary’s office, a teacher’s room, and a classroom. Most classrooms are located on the second floor along with a student lounge with a microwave, white boards, posters, audio and video equipment and materials, games, and complimentary coffee and snacks.

The ELI placed the students in the different classes according to their placement-test

results. The students could choose some of their classes, but the ELI teachers strongly recommended that the students take classes at the levels of skills that they need to improve. The webpage of ELI Virginia Tech (<http://www.eli.vt.edu/classes/classes.html>) shows the typical classes that ELI offers. In Table 3.1, I rearranged the classes by levels of 200, 300, 400, 500, and 600.

Table 3.1

*Classes at the ELI*

Levels	Vocabulary/ Idioms	Listening/ Speaking	Grammar/TOEFL	Reading/ Writing	English for special purposes
200	Vocabulary building	Listening & Conversation	Comprehensive Grammar & Conversation		
200 - 600					Orientation on to Life in Blacksburg
300			Comprehensive Grammar & Conversation	Reading & Writing	
300 - 400	Idioms in English				
300 - 500		Pronunciation and Listening Conversation & culture			
400			Comprehensive Grammar & Conversation	Reading & Writing	
400 - 500		Academic Listening	TOEFL prep	Newspapers: Reading & Discussion	English for Business & Management
400 - 600					College Application Process
500			Comprehensive Grammar & Conversation	Bridge to Academic Programs	
500 - 600		Oral presentation for Graduate Students			
600		Advanced Conversation & Debate			

On the ELI's home page (<http://www.eli.vt.edu>), the best grasp of the atmosphere in the ELI is in the pieces of students' writing in the newsletters. In the on-line newsletter for April 2004, students from Korea, El Salvador, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, and Mongolia wrote about the places they enjoy in and near Blacksburg. During my fieldwork, the majority of the students at the ELI were Korean: 21 of the 60 students. Other nationalities marked only a single digit number enrollment, according to the director of the ELI (J. Snoke, personal conversation, April 14, 2004).

The ELI was the entry point of my study and the place where my participants met other Korean students, international students, teachers, and native speaking students inside the classroom, and also outside the classroom during the break and lunch hours. It could be both an instructional and practical place for the language learners. The full time ELI students spent six hours at the ELI from Monday to Friday. After 3:00 p. m. when students finished their classes, they scattered out to their individual living places and individual daily routines where no one except themselves really knew what they did or what their experiences were like.

### *Participant Selection*

The type of sampling that I used in this study was purposeful sampling (Merriam, 1998, p. 62). "Purposeful," or alternately termed "purposive," sampling is not a random sampling. Rather, it means that I chose participants who fit the purpose of the study. I selected seven Korean students as key participants. These seven Korean language learning students were studying at the English Language Institute (ELI) at Virginia Tech during the fieldwork period from August to December 2004. I call them the key participant group because I focused primarily on these participants by frequently interacting with them and interviewing and observing them. The rest of the participants are the people who interacted with the key participants.

In the results, various groups of people participated in my research. There were four different groups of participants, including the group of key participants. I conducted three interviews with each of them and collected two or more sets of conversation data during the

four-month period. The second group included the native speakers who had significant contact with the key participant group, such as their conversation partners and a host mother. For the second group of participants, I did one interview each with three of them, a conversation partner, a host mother, and ELI personnel. The third group included international students who were the key participants' classmates and roommates. I often spoke with them casually but did not do a taped formal interview. The final group includes the rest of the people whose conversations happened to be recorded with the individual participant with their oral consent, such as cashiers at fast food restaurants as well as another Korean student who joined the conversation with the Korean participants in the focus group meeting.

My seven key participants included four male and three female students, which was more than I had planned. I proposed to have only four participants, possibly two male and two female students. Even though the number of participants does not reflect critically in my study, I thought that the more participants I had, the greater the variety of events and incidents I could capture. Having more participants meant more cases to observe, which is good, but it also meant more data, transcriptions, and relationships between the researcher and participants as well as more conflict. Considering that I had limited time and limited labor capacities, seven was a good number.

All seven key participants were Korean. They were, by their pseudonyms, Hyeon-Oak Lee (HO), Jin-Nam Jeong (JN), Ki-Beom Ahn (KB), Lok-Yong Park (LY), Min-Gu Choi (MG), Seon-Im Kim (SI), and Yun-Pil Heo (YP). Hyeon-Oak, Seon-Im, and Yun-Pil were the three female participants, and Jin-Nam, Ki-Beom, Lok-Yong, and Min-Gu were the four male participants. Their ages ranged from 20 to 28. Their educational background varied, as did their interests and career goals. Next, I briefly list participant profiles.

### *Participant Profiles*

*Hyeon-Oak Lee (HO):* HO graduated from a four-year university in Shanghai, China with a major in Chinese. She lived in China for four years before coming to Blacksburg to study English in August 2004. She was interested in going to graduate school

to study hotel management. Her cousin and her cousin's husband lived in Blacksburg. HO lived alone in a two-bedroom apartment. She was placed in level 300 classes, on a scale of 200 to 600, at the English Language Institute (ELI).

*Jin-Nam Jeong (JN)*: JN graduated from a two-year college. He participated in a professional dancing team throughout his college years. He was injured while practicing dancing and had to quit the dancing team, and he joined the Korean Marines. He arrived in Blacksburg in March 2004 with his friend MG and enrolled in the ELI. He began level 200 classes. By the time I met him he was taking level 300 classes. He used to live in a dormitory but moved in with an American family.

*Ki-Beom Ahn (KB)*: KB majored in Computer Science. He quit graduate school in Seoul, Korea, to come to the ELI. He hoped to study in a graduate program in the United States. He needed to improve his speaking and grammar ability in English to go to graduate school in the United States. He chose Blacksburg because Virginia Tech has an excellent program in his major. He had just married when he came to Blacksburg in August 2004. His wife joined him later in February 2005. He had to take level 200 classes at the ELI. He had a Japanese roommate during my fieldwork.

*Lok-Yong Park (LY)*: His major in a university in Korea was Environmental Architecture. LY finished one year of college education and then joined the Korean army. After two years of military service, he came to the United States in December 2003 to study English. He started living with his aunt and her family in Northern Virginia while attending classes at the language institute in that area. He came to Blacksburg in August 2004 to seek a different environmental opportunity in which to learn English. He took classes at levels 400 and 500 at the ELI. After he finished his second term at the ELI, he transferred to a community college with MG. While he was in Blacksburg, he lived with international students in a four-bedroom apartment.

*Min-Gu Choi (MG)*: MG was a college student in Korea and had only one semester left before he graduated. He came to Blacksburg in March 2004 with his friend JN. He lived with an American family, in the same home where JN lived. MG was interested in going to a community college in the United States. He moved to another city to go to a

community college during the second term of Fall 2004. When I met him, he was already taking level 500 classes at the ELI and had a sufficient TOEFL score to apply to a community college.

*Seon-Im Kim (SI)*: SI came to Blacksburg in August after she finished a one-year student exchange program in Japan. She was fluent in Japanese and English. She was also learning French. She needed fluency in foreign languages to be a diplomat. SI majored in International Relations at a prestigious Korean women's university. She lived with her uncle, who was a faculty member at Virginia Tech. SI stayed only five months in Blacksburg while completing two terms at the ELI and went back to Korea. Her TOEFL score was one of the highest in the ELI.

*Yun-Pil Heo (YP)*: YP graduated from a four-year university majoring in Industrial Design. Before she came to Blacksburg, she worked at the design department in an exhibition company. She began the ELI in August 2004, taking level 200 classes. She lived with three American college girls as roommates in a town-house. Her father's best friend's son was a graduate student at Virginia Tech, and he was a great help to her.

Table 3.2

*Participant Profiles and Background Information*

Pseudo-noms	Education	Interests in Career	Period of stay at ELI, 2004	Level of Classes	Living Arrangement	Frequent Interaction during lunch	Gender
Hyeon-Oak Lee (HO)	4-year university China	Hotel management	Fall	300	2 bedroom apartment alone	Korean classmates	female
Jin-Nam Jeong (JN)	2-year college	Hotel management	March Summer Fall	300	Dormitory & Home-stay	Alone Nap	Male
Ki-Beom Ahn (KB)	Graduate student	Computer science	Fall	200	3 bedroom apartment with a Japanese roommate	Alone Walking home for lunch	Male
Lok-Yong Park (LY)	2nd year of university	Korean-English translations	Fall	400-500	4 bedroom apartment with international students	International students	Male

Table 3.2 continued

*Participant Profiles and Background Information*

Pseudo-nyms	Education	Interests in Career	Period of stay at ELI, 2004	Level of Classes	Living Arrangement	Frequent Interaction during lunch	Gender
Min-Gu Choi (MU)	4th year of university	Law school	March Summer Fall	500	Dormitory & Home-stay	International students	Male
Seon-Im Kim (SI)	2nd year of university	International relations	Fall	500-600	House with Korean relatives	Alone, or international students	female
Yun-Pil Heo (YP)	4-year university	Arts	Fall	200	4 bedroom town house with 3 American university students	Korean classmates	female

*Getting Started*

I began fieldwork by going to the ELI at Virginia Tech. The ELI was where my participants received formal language instruction and at the same time where they were engaged in social interaction. I went to the ELI lunch lounge during lunch hours to meet the potential participants in the beginning of the fieldwork and to observe and speak with the existing participants later during the fieldwork period. There I approached the potential participants and observed the dynamics of their networking and the atmosphere. The lunch lounge was the entry point of my fieldwork, and observing the dynamics of networking in the lunch lounge gave me an idea about how I would process meeting the participants in the beginning of the fieldwork.

Here is an example. On August 30, I had a short visit at the ELI during their lunchtime. When I walked into their lounge, I couldn't find "the girls" who were usually having lunch there. I was planning to ask these girls for participation. Instead, two Columbian students, three Taiwanese students, one Korean girl, and one student (perhaps from Eastern Europe) were playing a word puzzle. I sat on a couch and looked over the game, and decided to move to their game table to look at it more closely. I was watching the game; the students who played the game took out the dictionary and looked up words such as "lit" and "ere." Then KB and other Korean students came into the lunch lounge and

said hello to me. MG told me that he and his roommates went to a club to dance on the weekends. JN was sitting at his desk and didn't hang around in the lounge (Journal book I, p. 27). Following Nespors (2000), the ELI was for me an "entry point" rather than a "focus of inquiry" (p. 29).

Before the first day of visiting the ELI, I had already talked to the teachers and the director about my interest in Korean students' learning experiences outside the classroom. Then I asked their permission to visit their institution and interview Korean students at the ELI and observe their interaction with ELI teachers, native speaker volunteers, and other international students in the lunch lounge. Like the last time that I conducted a fieldwork for preliminary study from December 2001 to April 2002, I had support from the director and the teachers at the ELI.

As I entered the field, I looked for a role at the ELI and among Korean study abroad students in order to get to know them. Johnstone (2000) says that researchers "[develop] roles for themselves in the group," and as time passes the researchers "simultaneously [make] systematic efforts to come to understand what is going on in the group from the perspective of other group members" (p. 82). Some of the roles that I developed include providing airport pick up service to new students who arrived at the Roanoke airport, and I provided rides to any ELI student who did not have a car when s/he wanted to move around the town for shopping and eating. As my roles were established around the ELI, I began talking to the students about my interest in their lives and their English language and culture learning process. Then I asked them if they wanted to participate in the study.

I also tried to have many chances to meet them to get to know them. Here is an example. According to my field notes, on August 26, I went to the ELI to find more participants. I was waiting for 200 level conversation class students getting out of their classroom, so that I could spot some new students. On the name list that Judy Snoke, the director of the ELI, gave me, there were the names of ten Korean students. While I was waiting, I copied the names of Korean students from the note on the wall in each classroom. It was about 12:00 p.m. and I saw two female and one male Korean students, Gangju, YP, and KB, come out from the 200 classroom. I suggested that we go to lunch together.

Gangju and KB agreed to walk to Hardees', but YP said that she wanted to stay because she had a box lunch (Journal book I, p. 14).

Here is another example that shows my effort to talk to the potential participants about my research purposes and process in order to ask for participation. On August 31, I was nervous even before I talked to the girls. I was waiting for YP and Gangju to come out of the class, and as soon as I saw them, I sprang from the couch and ran to follow them. Then I asked for a favor -- to talk to them after lunch. They said okay. Two more female students, HO and Bojeong, were joining us for lunch, and they spoke in Korean for the whole time. I waited until they finished lunch for half an hour and went to their table with a cup of tea and began to introduce myself. I said:

I am a graduate student at Tech, and I'm doing my research for my dissertation. I'm hanging around here during lunchtime for my research. I started V-Tech some years ago and I have known Judy and other teachers since then. They gave me permission to do research at the ELI. I'm interested in Korean students' experiences outside the classroom which, I believe, make the experience of learning the target language different from the experience of that in your country (Korea). You probably have a reason to come to the United States to learn the language. My questions are how you're doing outside the classroom and what kinds of activities you share with whom. I'm going to interview you as a small group or individually, and it's casual informal, free talking. However, the interviews will be recorded. It's all up to you to continue to participate in the study or to drop out of the study. I can't force you to stay or drop. You're the boss who will say to continue or not. We'll share the transcription, and you'll remain anonymous. If there is anything that may embarrass you, you can simply say not to include that part. I hope to tape your English conversation with your conversation partner or other native speakers later, but also it's totally your decision. I'm interested in your interactions while you're speaking English, rather than your Korean friends' relationships or networking. I have studied a similar situation two years ago. I studied my husband's cousin while she was staying in Blacksburg with us. I was very interested in her daily learning

experiences outside the classroom. When I taped the dialogue between her and a cashier at Belk, I was watching out for what caused misunderstanding. I'm not judging your English or how your English should sound, develop, or anything else like that. (Journal book I, p. 30)

From this speech, I received permission from two students, and they became the participants in the study. YP was friendly, and the look on HO's face said, "no problem" while I was explaining the research process. Gangju was smiling all the time, but she refused to participate in the research. Bojeong did not show any interest in my research, and she even avoided eye contact. Bojeong did not want to be a part of it. I was more careful about wording while explaining the research process to the female students than to the male students. For example, I emphasized that the decision was all up to them whether they would like to be recorded or not. At the time I talked to them, I was worried because I did not know how much they understood. Despite my worries, YP said, "It's going to be fun," and "Sounds fun." I told them to think it over, and said that I would get back to them later to ask if they had decided to participate or not. I did not worry about getting male participants because all of the male students I asked for participation instantly said such things as: "Sounds okay." "It won't hurt or interrupt my life." "Maybe it will help me to improve English."

When I got approval from them, I conducted initial interviews after having them sign their consent forms. (The informed consent forms appear in Appendix A.) I asked to observe them and started to visit them regularly at the ELI and in their homes. Next, I asked them if I could follow them around by giving them rides to places they needed to go, for example, to a shopping center or a restaurant. While I collected data from the participants, I tried to meet their native speaking roommates, the ELI teachers, native speakers in shopping places or in restaurants, their international friends, and their Korean friends.

### *Data Collection*

My data collection for this study included in-depth interviews, focus group meetings, participant observations, field notes, and natural conversation taping. I

encouraged the participants to join in the practices of collecting data actively, such as tape-recording their dialogues with their conversation partners and writing e-mail responses to me. As a result, I have 21 interview transcripts that primarily include three one-hour interviews with each of the seven participants. Among the transcripts are one follow-up interview after an observation with MG, and I did the last interview with LY and MG together.

Table 3.3

*Data Collections*

Type of data	Participants	Raw data	Transcribed and typed data (single spaced)
Interview	7 Koreans	21 tapes (1 hour each, in Korean)	20 transcriptions (277 pages) & 1 log ( 4 pages)
	3 Native speakers	3 tapes (45 minutes each, in English)	3 transcriptions (49 pages)
Focus group meeting	5 Koreans	2 tapes (2 hours each, in Korean)	2 transcriptions (61 pages)
Field notes	* Hand written or typed originally, and retyped in single space when analyzing	(1) Book I from August 20 to September 20	(1) Journal by participants (2) Journal book 1 (29 pages) (3) Journal book 2 (38 pages) (4) Journal book 3 (14 pages) (5) Originally typed in computer (35 pages)
		(2) Book II from September 20 to November, and	
		(3) Book III for December.	
Recording English conversations	3 Koreans & 1 Japanese	2 shadowing conversation tapes	1 log (5 pages) & 1 transcription (15 pages, 533 turns)
	7 Koreans, 8 native speakers, & 1 Taiwanese	17 conversation transcriptions from conversation partner meetings	17 transcriptions (148 pages, 5220 turns)
	2 Koreans & 1 Taiwanese	7 conversation transcriptions from lunch talk with international students	7 transcriptions (77 pages, 2716 turns)
	JN & his host mother	3 conversation transcriptions from JN and his host mother talks	2 transcriptions (13 pages, 472 turns) & 1 log (3 pages, 44 turns)
	3 Koreans & 9 native speakers	9 transcriptions from ordering meals or checking-out occasions	9 transcriptions (13 pages, 244 turns) * These were parts of other conversations.

I have three interview transcriptions from three native speaker interlocutors each. I arranged two focus group meetings that lasted about two hours each. I selected four participants and left them with a summary of questions that I wanted them to talk about. I produced three journal books, including Book I from August 20 to September 20, Book II from September 20 to November, and Book III for December. Finally, I have two shadowing conversation transcriptions, 17 conversation transcriptions from conversation partner meetings, seven conversation transcriptions from lunch talk with international students, three conversation transcriptions from JN and his host mother's talks, nine transcriptions from ordering meals or checking-out occasions. Table 3.3 shows my data collection at a glance.

### *Interviews*

The interviews were informal, but were conducted using a tape recorder. Each interview was open-ended and non-structured. Merriam (1998) says that "open-ended questions" can allow the participants to reflect on their behavior and their ideas. Because open-ended questions are evocative and thought provoking, my participants could describe their learning experiences inside and outside the classroom. Johnstone (2000) says that the "best" interview leads to the "best" data (p. 114). The best interview is characterized as "relaxed, friendly, spontaneous-sounding, like a good conversation" (Johnston, 2000, p. 114). I followed "the basic outline of a good interview" that Smithmier (1999) suggests:

- (a) putting an interviewee at ease, (b) allowing the interviewee to answer questions without interrupting, (c) probing the interviewee for expansion on his or her answers, (d) respecting confidentiality, and (e) closing the interview with a statement of gratitude. (p. 174)

The interview guide appears in Appendix B. Before the in-depth interviews, I selected major interview questions from the interview protocols about things that I wanted to know from the interview guidelines, and I began with those questions. I designed three interview phases: beginning, middle, and end. I heavily relied on the interview guide only for the first interview in order to ask about their personal background, motivation, and

purposes for English learning and studying abroad. However, for the second and third interviews, I asked questions based on my observations. The interviews lasted for about an hour each. The places I interviewed included coffee shops, a shopping mall, their apartments, my apartment, or any other places that were quiet and comfortable enough to have conversations and also record them.

Table 3.4

*Interview Places*

	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3
HO	Researcher's apartment	Participant's apartment	Participant's apartment
JN	Participant's home-stay house	Chinese restaurant	Italian Restaurant
KB	Researcher's apartment	Participant's apartment	Western Jazz Restaurant
LY	Researcher's apartment	Researcher's apartment	KFC
MG	Researcher's Graduate Assistant office	Chinese restaurant	KFC
SI	Coffee shop at bookstore	In the researcher's car	Researcher's Graduate Assistant office
YP	Researcher's apartment	Researcher's apartment	Coffee shop at bookstore

I conducted interviews with Korean participants in the Korean language, which is the first language of both myself and the participants. I assumed that in their native language, the participants could better articulate their detailed experiences and delicate feelings. I sometimes used English to have informal interviews with the participants, but only when they wanted to speak English. In the beginning of the fieldwork, some of my participants and I tried to communicate only in English; however, we chose to speak Korean later, the language that we both felt more comfortable in and the most effective for communicating for us. I conducted interviews in English with three native speaker participants. I prepared the interview questions ahead of time. The interviews went well, but I was nervous about making linguistic mistakes as a non-native speaker of English.

*Transcribing the interviews.*

After tape recording the interviews, I sent the tape by air or electronic files by

uploading at web-hard to have Korean university students transcribe the interviews in Korean. Before transcription, the transcriber signed the consent form for transcribers. (Appendix C). When they finished transcribing, they sent the files by e-mail or uploading at the same web-hard. Once I got a transcription, I asked them to discard the tapes and erase the interview files. For three English interviews, I used a professional transcribing company that I found in the internet. It took about two weeks, but the cost was high, at \$ 1.50 per a minute. When I got the transcriptions, I saved them on my personal laptop and stored the documents in a file box in my house.

While I was waiting for the transcriptions to be done, I used a logging technique when I listened to the tapes. Logging is similar to a transcript but it does not require typing or writing down every word. According to Abel and Glass (1999), “the key is: you want to take notes on what is on the tape without ever stopping it” (p. 15). I found the technique useful since I could go back later to the places that I really needed to transcribe or use in the final writing. The logging technique also shows me when I needed rather exact transcriptions, especially of the participants’ English conversations with native speakers to analyze the changes in the patterns of their oral communications.

### *Focus Group Meeting*

Focus group meetings were added as a data collection method later during the fieldwork. Originally I did not plan to have focus groups when I made the proposal for this study, but I arranged for them twice, in November and December, with Korean participants. In the focus group meetings, I expected that the participants would say more about their experiences only among peers, when the interviewer was absent. I made a list of questions and left the list with them to talk about without me. They seemed to be comfortable sharing their experiences casually among peers.

For the first meeting, on November 24, 2004, I invited four participants for lunch and a talk for one Saturday afternoon. They agreed to record their conversation. In this group meeting, the participants talked about (a) their differences in living styles, (b) the best scenarios vs. worst scenarios for studying abroad, (c) suggestions for other students

who prepare to study abroad, and (d) what their stumbling blocks were in understanding the American culture and the English language. The meeting lasted about two hours.

For the second meeting on December 11, 2004, I invited four participants again, but this time I changed one male participant because he rarely talked during the first meeting. During the second meeting, the participants were left by themselves in my apartment about three hours after a lunch treat. I prepared a list of topics. The topics included their experiences and processes in living in the target culture, developing relationships with native speakers, being afraid of speaking English and misunderstanding the intentions of native speakers, and speaking opportunities. These two focus group meetings appear as diagrams in Appendix D.

### *Participant Observation*

Jones (1996) gives tips about when researchers should consider doing observations for their studies. He says that a researcher should use observations “only when [s/he] genuinely wants to learn what is going on in a setting, only when [s/he] can approach the setting with an open mind” (p. 69). Hammersley (1983) even suggests that “the researcher’s own actions are open to analysis in the same terms as those of other participants” (p. 3). It is important how a researcher puts her/himself in the society s/he studies. Yates (1987) points out that “the strategies and tactics of the researcher in the field are governed by [her/his] own sociability expressed through the aim of constructing ethnography” (p. 68). Once I got in the field, I tried to build some types of social relationships with the participants. I made efforts to gain access to the participants and the data when I conducted an observation.

Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) list four potential stances a qualitative researcher can take in participant observation: “complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, and complete participant” (p. 248). I practiced some of these different types of participant-observer roles in different field situations. For example, when I participated in interactional activities with native speakers, I became a complete participant, studying myself. Then I wrote a journal entry about my thoughts, feelings, and observations. In the

situation in which I give the students rides to shopping centers, I became a participant as observer, who was going shopping with other participants but also was going to record and observe our interactional communication. When I was invited to a party to which my participants were invited, I could observe the site and the participants as a participant in the party. Then I became an observer as participant. Finally, during the moments that I sat on a couch in the lunch lounge and observed the participants at the lunch table, I could be a complete observer. I think that more than one type of participant observation may be suitable in some situations, and then it was more likely that I was practicing all of the roles that I describe in this paragraph.

*Giving a ride for shadowing.*

Being a participant observer is not an easy task. In this study I followed my participants from one place to another to observe them and sometimes to tape their natural conversations with native speakers in natural settings, such as at the mall, in grocery stores, or in participants' homes if they lived with American roommates. I found that following them to tape and observe their ways of communicating was worthwhile. However, even though I knew that I could learn a lot just by following a person, it was really hard to initiate this because I felt as if I was just jumping into and invading someone's ordinary, everyday life in the name of doing research, and following that person like a shadow.

Shadowing needs prior time to get to know the participants and build trustful relationships with them before I ask if I can follow them as a shadow. Jones (1996) points out that a participant observation may be appropriate if "[a researcher can] really get to know the people involved in a reasonable period of time and that [those observed] are willing to put up with [a researcher's] presence" (p. 68). Merriam (1998) notes that "participant observation is a schizophrenic activity in that the researcher usually participates but not to the extent of becoming totally absorbed in the activity. While participating, the researcher tries to stay sufficiently detached to observe and analyze" (p. 103).

For shadowing, I chose to give the participants a ride to the places they needed to go. When they wanted to go shopping, I was willing to take them to the mall, the shopping

centers, and grocery stores in and out of town. I also planned a shopping trip and asked my participants if they wanted to join. By giving a rides, I made opportunities to observe them closely when they shopped, checked out with cashiers, and dined out. At the same time, I was able to help them buy necessities.

*Cooking.*

In addition to giving participants rides in and out of town, I cooked several meals for them. I cooked and served Korean lunch and dinner in my apartment before or after interviews. When I arranged international conversation meetings, I prepared lunch in order to record their talk at the lunch table. I did the same for Korean participants' focus group meetings. I also invited one participant and his conversation partner and partner's fiancé for traditional Korean dishes in a way of thanking them for participating in the research. I also invited the participants in groups of two, three, or four to just have dinner and casual talking.

Cooking was not easy for me, but it was worth trying because I learned that when we took meals together, especially Korean meals, the participants and I became more related and acquainted. While I was cooking, I was planning the next step of the fieldwork. For successful fieldwork, I worked hard to learn cooking and best serve them delicious foods that they like. Also it was a way to show my appreciation for their participation in the research process.

When I needed to record a conversation at a table, I asked them permission first and showed them where the recorder was. An almost natural conversation was created while eating even though they were aware that the tape recorder was on. If I did not use the recorder, I was in a hurry to write a field note as soon as the meeting had ended because the participants tended to talk about their concerns and problems more concretely at the dinner table. Besides, I was able to see the relationships among the participants by looking at their behavior at the table. I was eager to write down my interesting and exciting findings in the journal.

*Field Notes*

Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) emphasize the importance of keeping field notes and say, “the sense that field-notes get in the way of intuitive understanding and deeper analytic insight reflects a theoretical commitment to grasping the ‘big picture’ and to identifying broad patterns of activity rather than to tracking day-to-day routines and processes” (p. xii). Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggest that “the sooner [the researcher] can complete the notes, the fresher [her/his] memories are and, thus, the richer and more accurate the field notes” (p. 257). However, as has been my experience, it is sometimes hard to take notes while observing. In this fieldwork, I tried to write field notes as soon as I found the time and place to do it.

To write reliable field notes of relevant and important data from the field, it is important for researchers to train their eyes and ears (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). As Rossman and Rallis (2003) say, “the sensitive eye and ear” will catch patterns of important elements (p. 255). For this reason, qualitative researchers become a research instrument themselves, and their field notes play an important role in data analysis. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) point out that “through trial and error field researchers evolve distinctive practical styles for writing jottings” (p. 20). In this fieldwork, I generated typed journal entries and three journal books of hand-written field notes. I typed all hand-written field notes and saved them as files on the computer. While I was doing this, I learned to find significant ways to use language and “key expressions and terms” in the field (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 20).

I have three sets of field notes by period since I divided my fieldwork into three phases: beginning, middle, and end. Book I includes field notes for the beginning period of fieldwork from August to September in 2004. Book II includes notes from October and November. This journal book has significant sections marked by different colors, and I used them as an indicator of a participant. I matched the colors and participants as Table 3.5 shows. Finally, Book III includes the notes from December. The information in the field notes was categorized and coded by participants and themes for writing results in the findings. I learned that color-coding was useful when I categorized and organized the data.

Table 3.5

*Color and Participant Match*

Participant	HO	JN	KB	LY	MG	SI	YP
Color	Orange	Light green	Blue	Yellow	Green	Gold	Purple

In Rossman and Rallis' (2003) words, the information that should go into the field notes includes descriptions of settings, people, activities, dialogue, and emotions, and the researcher's impressions and commentary (p. 256). Field note taking provides resources and proofs of witnessing. Kleinman (1999) emphasizes the importance of witnessing by saying, "I want to know if [the researchers] saw or heard what [they say they did]" (p. 27). She says that she would not use the first person in describing an event unless she witnessed it. Both witnessing and putting observations in the field notes are important acts because they make the writing more alive.

*Recording Conversation*

Studying language use is what sociolinguists do, and what they do is expressed using several different terms such as "ethnography of communication," "interactional sociolinguistics," or "discourse analysis" (Johnstone, 2000, p. 2). Those sociolinguists work mostly on observing, reading, and listening in the social and cultural context. Johnstone (2000) says, "Many well-known studies are based on tapes of 'everyday' or 'ordinary' conversation, the kind that goes on as people eat in groups or sit with friends" (p. 105).

I recorded the conversations that Korean study abroad students had with their interlocutors in English since I was looking at their second language development through their interactional communication. These real and natural conversations functioned as detailed examples to support the themes in my final writing. They provided evidence of students' ways of using English and interacting with native speakers of English and other international students of the ELI. Tape recording helps complete analysis (Johnstone, 2000). It also helps a researcher to "notice and take seriously things that happen only once, or

rarely in real-time observations we tend to notice things that are repeated” (Johnstone, 2000, p. 104). By demonstrating the conversational data from recording, I could make clear points about how language-learning students actually communicate with their interlocutors in the target language. Bloomfield (1933) says, “The analysis and recording of languages will remain an art or a practical skill” (as cited in Johnstone, 2000, p. 14).

I had several different types of recording conditions. The first one was when I was present, participated, and recorded. I have two shadowing observations: one at a restaurant and the other at the dinner gathering at my house. The participants were Koreans and a Japanese student. On those occasions, I showed them that the tape recorder was on and that our conversation would be recorded. The second type was that I was present but not participating in the conversation. The participants had the recorder with them while I was sitting at the next table to observe their conversation. The first time when MG and YS talked at the Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) restaurant for recording, I was there for observation. However, I stopped following them to a lunch place after the first meeting. Instead, I gave them my recorder so that they could take it freely with them. This was the third type of recording condition. Most of conversation events were recorded this way. My participants recorded their conversations with conversation partners and their host mother by themselves after asking permission. Table 3.6 is the summary of types recording conditions.

Table 3.6

*Types of Conversation Recording Conditions*

	Researcher(s)	Recording Person(s)
Type 1	Present, participated in the conversation	Researcher(s)
Type 2	Present, only observed from a distance	Participant(s)
Type 3	Not present	Participant(s)

I asked each participant to fill out a consent form that included the purpose of the research, procedures, risks and benefits, anonymity, freedom to withdraw, approval of

research, and participants' responsibilities and permission. Before I got formal consent forms signed by the participants, I usually got informal verbal consent casually. I agree with Johnstone (2000) who says that casual noticing through surreptitious observation "gives rise to research topics" (p. 41). However, at the same time this observation raises the ethical question of "surreptitious recording" (Johnstone, 2000, p. 41). She warns that surreptitious recording may not be a good idea because it can be illegal.

Along the same lines, the difficult part of getting consent in this study was to ask for consent from the native speakers who were involved in the conversations with my participants in natural settings. One reason was that sometimes conversation occurs spontaneously. Another reason was that I might interrupt their ordinary work routines by explaining the reason I wanted to record their conversation with participants. Since I did not know who the native speakers were going to be in the natural settings, each time just before I recorded their conversations I had to get an oral permission. I found that most office workers or cashiers did not mind when I asked if I could tape their conversations with their customers who were non-native speakers of English.

When I gave my tape recorder to my participants for their conversation partner meetings, I asked them to get permission for recording from the partners and also from any native speakers with whom they happened to talk during recording, especially cashiers at restaurants and supermarkets. Here are two excerpts of one of my participants, MG, getting consent for voice recording from fast food restaurant cashiers. (MG: Korean participant, YS: Taiwanese participant, CS: cashier, MR: manager)

### Excerpt 3.1

#### *MG's Getting an Oral Consent at KFC I*

1. CS: Right? Thank you. Can I help you?
2. MG: Before I order, can I ask you something? I'll record our voice because I'm studying how I improve my English. [The researcher] wants to listen to our voice and it's like conversation. So maybe record your voice. It doesn't matter about you?

3. CS: OK, I don't understand. Say it one more time please. (She called a manager or someone who was in charge and asked her to listen to what MG was going to say.)
4. MG: Uh. She is my friend. She is researching our conversation. How we improve our speaking English. So maybe in this record tape maybe record your name or it's like your voice. So, it doesn't matter about you? You don't mind. Can I record your
5. MR: Record?
6. MG: Yeah. Yeah your voice?
7. MR: Yes. Huh Huh (MR and CS, looking at each other and giggling)
8. MG: This is research.
9. CS: OK. (MG, 10/4/04)

### Excerpt 3.2

#### *MG's Getting an Oral Consent at KFC II*

1. MG: Excuse me, before I order, can I ask you something?
2. CS: Uh-huh.
3. MG: We record your conversation. Maybe we are researching our conversation. So we can record your here your conversation sure xx.
4. YS: Can we record when we order?
5. CS: Ah, I'm not sure. Lisa [Manager]!
6. MG: Hhhh. Hello!
7. YS: Hello!
8. MG: Yes, we're recording your conversation. Hhh. Sorry.
9. MR: Hhhh. (MG, 10/26/04)

#### *Transcribing the conversation.*

After getting recorded conversation tapes, I listened to them several times and transcribed them. Transcribing took much longer than I thought it would. For me, it took

about an hour per page when it was typed with single spacing. I developed 253 pages of transcripts of the conversations. It took about 32 days, averaging 8 hours of working every day. It was a long and hard job, but worth doing because listening to a conversation over and over actually helped me to analyze the data.

### *Summary of Data Collection*

As Creswell (2003) suggests, data comes from multiple sources and by multiple methods. Each type of data collection has its limits, but it completes the whole picture as an important element. Creswell (2003) provides “a list of qualitative data collection approaches” (p. 189). I found this useful as a checklist while I conducted fieldwork. The list is shown below.

- Gather observational notes by conducting an observation as a participant.
- Gather observational notes by conducting an observation as an observer.
- Conduct an unstructured, open-ended interview and take interview notes.
- Conduct an unstructured, open-ended interview, audiotape the interview, and transcribe the interview.
- Keep a journal during the research study.
- Have a participant keep a journal during the research study.
- Optically scan newspaper accounts.
- Collect personal letters from participants.
- Analyze public documents (e.g., official memos, minutes, records, archival material).
- Examine autobiographies and biographies.
- Have a participant write her or his autobiography.
- Write your own (the researcher’s) autobiography.
- Have participants take photographs or videotapes (i.e., photo elicitation).
- Examine physical trace evidence (e.g., footprints in the snow).
- Videotape a social situation or an individual/group.
- Examine photographs or videotapes.

- Collect sounds (e.g., musical sounds, a child's laughter, car horns honking).
- Collect e-mail or electronic messages.
- Examine possessions or ritual objects to elicit views during an interview.
- Collect smells, tastes, or sensations through touch. (Creswell, 2003, p. 189)

### *Data Analysis*

I used several analysis tools: content analysis, interactional analysis, conversation analysis, and pragmatic analysis. I needed these four analysis tools to provide discussions about the participants' social interaction access and communication patterns with various interlocutors outside the classroom. I used content analysis to organize and categorize the data. Interactional analysis was useful to talk about the socialization access of the participants. Conversation analysis supported display of excerpts from conversation transcripts to examine topics of communication. Finally, pragmatic analysis provided explanations of a participant's purpose, intention, motivation, real meaning and their own interpretation of their learning through interviews and conversations. These four analysis tools were connected with each other. I used them not as an individual tool but as a whole.

### *Content Analysis*

Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) state that "qualitative research is concerned with capturing the richness, and describing the unique complexities, of data" (p. 76). Qualitative methods enable researchers to approach themes and issues holistically (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). "Themes and recurring patterns of meaning" arose while I observed the participants' interactions, wrote field notes, and interviewed the participants (Merriam, 1998, p. 160). As soon as themes arose, I analyzed the data simultaneously with conducting the interviews and observations. Merriam (1998) says that data collection and analysis are a "simultaneous process" in qualitative research (p. 155). Creswell (2003) confirms this by saying, "it is an ongoing process involving reflection about the data, asking analytic questions, and writing memos throughout the study" (p. 190).

I examined the transcripts of taped interviews, the transcripts of conversations

between the participants and their interlocutors, and the field notes. On some occasions, I interviewed or casually talked to the participant right after the observation or the dialogue taping so that I could follow up why they had said or done what they did in the actual and natural settings. In addition, the participants provided their insights by analyzing their activities, which could be more accurate since they had just finished the activity. When the follow-up talking was not appropriate at the moment, I tried to do it as soon as possible, or I asked the questions related to their conversation activities that were taped later in the regular interview session.

To analyze the interaction and communication that the participants were engaged in, data was sorted, categorized, grouped, and regrouped when the themes arose (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). They were labeled and coded into themes and sub-themes. I designated a color to a participant (see Table 3.5) and used colored paper and indicators such as markers, memo pads, and sticky notes because they helped me visualize the different participants. Rossman and Rallis (2003) say that “the descriptions you provide and the [chunks of] categories and themes you develop” is learning and also analysis (p. 271). They define “interpretation” as “the meaning you make of these chunks” (p. 271). Rossman and Rallis (2003) give tips for analyzing ongoing data:

1. Refer regularly to your conceptual framework, but be open to new insights.
2. Keep your questions in mind.
3. Modify your data gathering based on what you are learning.
4. Write all the time.
5. Talk your ideas through with people.
6. Read and read and read what others have said about the topic.
7. Be creative. (p. 273)

### *Interactional Analysis*

I looked for the events of social interaction that my participants had. I analyzed their social space, socialization access, interactional patterns, and social relationships. As adult second language learners who have already acquired a great deal of interactional

competence in various sociocultural environments in their own culture and society, they had to deal with “discontinuity between their culturally acquired knowledge and use of language” (Johnson, 1995, p. 63). I collected this kind of data from observation and interviews.

In addition, Johnson (1995) emphasizes that the learners’ discontinuity may appear in their conversation as well when she says, “the most common discontinuity concerns differences in communicative styles among speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds” (p. 63). The interactional analysis process is closely related to conversation analysis. Interactional analysis includes conversation analysis, and conversation analysis cannot be complete without interactional analysis.

### *Conversation Analysis*

I was interested in face-to-face interactions that Korean study abroad students had with their interlocutors. Verbal and non-verbal communication occurred during their interactions. Verbal communication, conversation or talk, was one of the major components that yielded rich data in this study. Conversation analysis focuses on “real, recorded data, segmented into turns of talk that are carefully transcribed” (Lazaraton, 2003, p.3). Moerman (1988) argues that conversation analysis is important because “its procedures and findings provide our best access to the features of face-to-face interaction” (p. 2).

Lazaraton (2003) says that conversation analysis “has its roots in sociology, but has recently been embraced by [researchers in second language acquisition]” (p. 3). Wilkinson (2002) uses conversation analysis to find communication difficulties and conflicts in conversations between American students studying abroad in France. Gass and Varonis (1991) also show examples of dialogue extracted from other resources as evidence of miscommunication between native and non-native speakers. Kuiper and Lin (1989) include actual dialogue transcripts of Singaporean English speakers in their study in order to illustrate that they are bilingual, but at the same time they are mono-cultural.

In my study, conversation analysis opened discussions of students’ competence and performance in the target language, and also the culture. Markee (2000) argues that “when

researchers investigate the structure of conversational practices such as sequencing, turn-taking, and repair, they are in fact also investigating processes of socially distributed cognition” (p. 32). Then he goes on to say, “[second language acquisition] studies would be greatly enriched by . . . [conversation analyses] of the sequential and other resources that speakers use to modify each others’ talk and thereby to comprehend and learn new language” (p. 32). The transcripts of the real conversations in my study serve this purpose too. In my study, conversation excerpts describe the situation for the purpose of investigating language learners’ learning processes. In this study, conversation analysis means providing conversation excerpts as examples of the themes that I discuss and showing evidence of participants’ language learning process.

### *Pragmatic Analysis*

I also included pragmatic analysis because pragmatic analysis begins with learners -- their purposes and motivations. Pragmatics is a functional perspective used to analyze the oral and written language that occurs naturally in everyday life (LoCastro, 2003). Within this perspective, the context of the language used and the intention of the language user are important. LoCastro (2003) says that a researcher may ask “how a speaker realizes an intended meaning through linguistic and nonlinguistic means” (p. 11). In other words, the question is about what the speaker wants to do by communicating, and how speakers’ intentions are accomplished through communication. Also, pragmatics dictate that a researcher should consider who the speaker addresses, what relationship the speaker and the listener have, and when and where the communication activities occur (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). With interactional analysis and conversational analysis, I think that pragmatics was useful to look at what my participants really meant by saying what they were saying.

LoCastro (2003) says that pragmatics is a different starting point from linguistic analysis because it does not focus on formal structures. According to LoCastro (2003), pragmatic analysis is closely related to conversational analysis in that it takes samples of “naturally occurring talk to achieve insights into the enactment of everyday social action in

conversational interactions” (LoCastro, 2003, p. 23). It is an analysis of the process of development, and also of one’s communicational competence. Pragmatic analysis in ethnographic studies is based on the participants’ actual interaction and communication activities and their views of the activities. LoCastro (2003) says, “Pragmatic analysis plays a role in interpreting a speaker’s meaning in the context of a culture’s specific norms and expectations” (LoCastro, 2003, p. 25). Therefore, in my study, conversation between people from different cultures was analyzed from this perspective.

Pragmatics explores meanings created and negotiated by speakers and hearers during their interactions and communication (Meyer, 2001). What a speaker intends is more important than what the speaker’s language means literally (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Therefore, many times the same words, phrases, and sentences can mean different things in various different ways “depending on who produced [them] and under what circumstances” (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p. 20). This analysis helped me and my participants understand why they had miscommunication or misunderstanding in certain conversations or situations.

#### *Trustworthiness, Credibility, and Transferability*

I certainly believe that, as Merriam (1995) puts it, “reality is constructed, multidimensional, and ever-changing; there is no such thing as a single, immutable reality waiting to be observed and measured” (p. 54). Therefore, the interviews, observations, field notes, and recorded tapes that I made with my participants were analyzed along with my standpoints as a researcher and a long time second language learner as well. However, I followed some of Merriam’s suggestions to strengthen the internal validity of the study.

*Member checks:* I showed my participants transcripts and translations of the parts from the transcripts that I used for my paper. I discussed the topic with them when I analyzed the data. I offered them the opportunity to listen to the theme and encouraged them to talk about what they thought about what I was going to write.

*Peer/colleague examination:* During my fieldwork, I talked to my advisor and committee members about my fieldwork experience, any particular topics, and concerns

about the study. I also sought discussions with my colleagues who used to be in ESL teaching professions or who were currently working in a foreign language teaching area.

### *Role of the Researcher*

Throughout the research process, I tried to be sincere with myself and to my participants. At the same time, I tried to avoid showing unusual kindness or niceness as a way to get them to tell their stories. From the previous experience, I found that being myself and being sincere worked better than an instant smile. I learned also that I needed to spend more time with my participants in order for us to get to know each other better and to build trust. To avoid being biased, I am still trying to be a better person, a humble person myself, not only when I conducted research but also in my everyday life.

### *Summary of Methodology*

In this study, I had seven key participants, four men and three women. I selected Korean language-learning students from among the international students at the English Language Institute (ELI) at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. The qualitative techniques that I used for data collection are (a) interviews, (b) focus group meetings, (c) participant observations, (d) field notes, and (e) taped real dialogues.

*Interviews:* I had three one-hour long interviews with each participant. In addition to the lengthy interviews, I did informal and casual talking with the participants without a recorder on.

*Focus group meetings:* I had two focus group meetings with four Korean participants each time. The participants talked freely about the topics prepared in advance by the researcher, but without the researcher.

*Participant observation:* I made a regular visit to the ELI during the lunch hour more than three times a week during the fieldwork period in order to observe the students' interaction in the lunch lounge. I provided transportation to the participants if they requested it. I also attended their social activities such as dinner parties and Thanksgiving dinner, when they invited me. I visited their homes to observe their living environments. I

cooked a Korean meal and invited them to my house in order to get to know them better, to record their English conversations with an international student, to interview them, and to show my appreciation.

*Field notes:* My field notes included descriptions of settings, people, activities, dialogue, and emotions; the researcher (myself); and my impressions and comments as Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggest. If necessary, I drew pictures of objects in the field or took pictures of them to be included in the field notes.

*Taped conversations:* I recorded English conversations that occurred between my participants and their interlocutors. My participants took the recorder to their conversation partner meetings and recorded conversations. Before recording, the participants asked for permission to get oral consent.

The analytical tools that I used for this study were: (a) content analysis for data from interviews, participant observations, field notes, and taped conversations; (b) interactional analysis for participant observation and taped conversations; (c) conversation analysis for taped conversations; and (d) pragmatic analysis for participant observation and taped conversations.

As soon as my IRB protocol, which appears in Appendix E, was accepted, I got into the field, met Korean study abroad students at the ELI, selected participants, scheduled and conducted initial interviews, did observations, and followed the participants around to record their real dialogues with native speakers and other international people outside the classroom, gave the participants the recorder for taping conversation, did the second interview, observed and recorded more, and did the last interview as I was finishing my fieldwork. The chart that includes research questions, the purposes of study, and implications appears in Appendix F. Data collection methods and data analysis types appear as diagrams in Appendix G.

## CHAPTER 4

### Findings and Discussion

#### *Introduction*

In this chapter I discuss the findings about language learners' social interactions and the development of their communicative competence related to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Second Culture Acquisition (SCA). The primary research question guiding this study is: how do Korean study abroad students learn the target language and culture through interactions outside the classroom? This question is based on my assumption that study abroad students actually learn the target language and culture through having various interactions outside the classroom with various people. I believe that social interactions outside the classroom can be an opportunity, a tool, and a mediation of learning and development.

The two subordinate research questions are: (a) how do Korean study abroad students interact socially with native speakers of English and other international students outside the classroom? and (b) how do Korean study abroad students develop communicative competence through social interactions? In discussion in the social interactions section, I include: (a) English speaking environments, (b) social interaction as cultural interaction, (c) active participation in interactions, and (d) cultural learning and interactional competence. Under the development of communicative competence I discuss: (a) grammatical competence and communicative competence, (b) interaction and language anxiety, (c) peer interaction and stress reduction, (d) error correction and self-repair, and (d) meaning negotiation and interactive communication.

#### *Social Interactions outside the Classroom*

To discuss the participants' social interactions in this section, I describe various activities they participated in with native speakers and non-native speakers. I found that their interactive network was not limited only to their interactions with classroom peers of non-native speakers but also included native speakers outside the classroom. They most

frequently interacted with three different groups of people: (a) international students, (b) native speakers, and (c) Korean students. The major findings that I will discuss in this section are the following:

- Living or working with native speakers did not necessarily mean that there were meaningful interactions.
- Social interaction with native speakers was challenging for language learners because of the cultural distances, discontinuity, and conflicts between them.
- Active participation in social interactions was an important factor in language and culture learning.
- Verbalizing cultural issues such as cultural differences, misunderstandings, and observations of the target culture was an indication of the learners' cultural awareness and development.

#### *English Speaking Environments*

Living or working with native speakers did not necessarily mean that there were meaningful interactions. Whether the participants lived or worked with native speakers or international students, proximity to others did not necessarily mean relationships or English practice. During their study abroad periods, the participants made various living arrangements including a dormitory, a home-stay, a town-home with American roommates, an apartment with several international students, an apartment with one international student, a single house with relatives, and an apartment alone. A diagram of the participants and their various living arrangements appears in Appendix H. When study abroad students choose a place to live, they consider that their living places can be learning places, where native speakers live in the same household or where English is spoken frequently among housemates.

Many study abroad students preferred living settings in which they were naturally interacting with native speakers or having ample opportunities to hear and speak English. The students at the ELI envied the students MG and JN who lived in a home-stay, and they often asked questions of these home-stay students such as, "What is it like to live in a

home-stay?” and “Do you have many chances to talk to your home-stay mom?” The language learning students may have thought that a home-stay would be the ideal living arrangement. However, JN and MG’s home-stay was not an ideal case. Although JN and MG stayed in their rooms most of time studying English, they were often found speaking Korean to each other, as JN confessed. MA, the host mother, also told me that JN and MG spoke Korean all the time at home. The next excerpt is from the interview with MA on September 14, 2004.

Excerpt 4.1

*Interview with MA, Host Mother of JN and MG, about Speaking only English*

1. MA: Well, I do think... the kids that have been here that are not in the same, this is the first time I’ve had people in the same country here.
2. ES: Yeah.
3. MA: And that’s a mistake.
4. ES: Oh really?
5. MA: It should be different countries. I thought of a name of my house. Box of chocolates. You never know who you’re going to get.
6. ES: Oh. That’s....
7. MA: Uh-hum, Forrest Gump.
8. ES: Forrest Gump. Yeah.
9. MA: The international house where English is spoken, so my, why I had told MG and JN when they first came here, I said “This is good, you can come, but you have to speak English.” But they have not. That’s why JN is not doing as well. If he was here with Seiko all the time and after MG leaves, he will do much better. You watch. Oh, yeah. He will.... Cause he’ll have to. No one will speak Korean and his brain will have to be in English. [...]
10. ES: So, do you hear them talk in Korean all the time?
11. MA: Oh, yeah. All the time. And I’m gonna... at first, I said “look, English, English, English.” But they don’t pay attention to me. [...] (Interview, MA,

9/13/04)

Socializing with people of the same nationality becomes a big part of the study abroad students' life. Many times my participants found a safe and comfortable zone interacting only with Korean friends, and they did activities together as a group, such as playing sports, going to parties, shopping, dining, and traveling. They helped each other to survive in a foreign country by encouraging, sharing information, and giving advice. Sometimes a group of two or more participants were more adventurous. However, they had each other lack by spending all their time together constantly speaking Korean when they could have been practicing English. This behavior could reinforce previously learned cultural interactions, and the students could unknowingly become resistant to the new culture, and the students may stay away from possible interactions outside the classroom. There is nothing wrong with a student's having a friendship with people from his/her own country, and it is rather important. However, practicing English as much as possible is important as well.

Another option for a study abroad student in choosing a living arrangement was living with native speaker students off campus, but not in a dormitory. Participant YP found a place where she lived with three American university girls. In her new home with strangers, she tried to take advantage of having opportunities to use English. At the same time, she constantly worried that her Korean food caused smells that were unpleasant to her housemates. For a long time she did not eat Korean foods with strong smells, like kimchi, in the house. YP said that if she ever needed to cook, she tried to find a time when her housemates were not in the kitchen. She never ate with them. Rather she ate alone in her room or in the living room while watching TV when no one else was around (Interview, YP, 9/5/04).

YP said that her roommates were rarely at home. They were busy studying, going to parties, and working at part time jobs. They seemed not have time to take care of their house. It was messy and dirty. YP complained about a dirty toilet and a sink full of unwashed dishes. She was thinking about complaining to them about this, but she cleaned up instead, thinking that she needed a good relationship with her housemates. She worried

about hurting their feelings by suggesting them that they clean. YP was quite cautious not to bother her housemates. These concerns hindered possible interactions between YP and her housemates. Even though she became more comfortable cooking Korean food and more understanding of their life styles later, the distance between her and her native speaker housemates was not easy to bridge.

In another case, LY lived with three international students in a four-bedroom apartment in an apartment complex where many undergraduate students reside. He found the place through the Off Campus Housing Office online. He took one bedroom out of four bedrooms; in the other rooms lived one Russian student who was enrolled at the ELI at that time and two Chinese undergraduate students at Virginia Tech. In the beginning he went out for dinner, played tennis, and went to parties together with his roommates. As time passed, he chose to stay home connecting with his friends in Korea by the internet. Here is LY's daily routine after the ELI. When he got back home, he took a nap or went to play tennis. Then he either cooked himself dinner or ate out with other roommates. Then he connected to an internet messenger with his friends in Korea, at about the time his friends started their office work. While he was doing some homework, he stayed online with them almost until he went to bed at 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. (Interview, LY, 9/4/04).

LY seemed uninterested in talking to or interacting with his Chinese roommates. They went out for dinner a few times, and that might have been the only times they interacted throughout the fall semester. He got along well in the beginning with Marcus, the Russian tennis player and ELI student (Interview, LY, 9/4/04). LY told me that Marcus used to be a professional tennis player in Russia, and he still practiced every day. Marcus was an easy going and bright person. In addition, his English was good. He was waiting for an adequate TOEFL score to enter Virginia Tech as an athlete. One day I met Marcus in front of the library. I gave him a ride home, and he invited me into his apartment where I could find LY. I thought that it was a good chance to see how LY lived in his environment. It was totally "a place for guys" who do not like to clean up. LY's room was messy, with all the books and things piled up on the floor. He was taking a nap on the mattress, the only furniture in the room, when I pushed on his half open door. Marcus woke him up, but I did

not want to bother his napping time. I left the place right away thinking that the view from his windows, a green grass playground where people enjoyed soccer, was beautiful. (Journal, 9/23/04)

The ELI students were allowed to work on Virginia Tech campus part time. Some ELI students took this as an opportunity to interact with native speakers. Among my participants, HO and YP worked at Owens Food Court for one month. Owens Food Court is one of the largest cafeterias on campus. It has 12 specialty shops serving a variety of food, including pastas, sub sandwiches, Mexican specialties, Philly cheese steaks, and stir-fry combinations ([www.studentprograms.vt.edu](http://www.studentprograms.vt.edu)). It has a huge dining area full of students during lunch and dinner times. I went to eat dinner at Owens and to see my participants who were working in their uniforms and caps. The first time I went there (9/29/04), both participants were washing dishes in the kitchen. The second time (10/16/04), I could see them working very hard in the kitchen and in the dining hall. HO was carrying the clean dishes to the hall. She seemed very energetic. YP was inside cleaning the dishes and came out to say “hi” to me.

By the time I interviewed HO for the second time, she had worked at Owens Food Court for three weeks. I asked her about the purpose of working at the food court. HO said that she had expected to improve her English because she thought she would have ample opportunities to practice English while working, but she said, “At working, I had less opportunity to speak than I had expected” (Interview, HO, 10/24/04). It was a physically demanding job, and it was not as challenging in terms of communication as she had previously thought, or maybe she did not perceive how much she was learning.

Even though the participants were surrounded by university students and open to opportunities by living and working near them, nothing happened if they did not commit to learning the target language by taking opportunities aggressively. My study proved that only having an environment in which the target language was spoken does not promise the students automatic language and cultural learning (Talbert & Stewart, 1999; LoCastro, 2003). I agree with Hall and Guthrie (1981) who said that people become the environment when they interact with each other. When people do not have actual interactions, their

environment may not be rich, authentic, and meaningful for language and cultural learning.

### *Social Interaction and Cultural Interaction*

Interaction with native speakers was challenging because of the social and cultural distances, discontinuities, and conflicts. I found that the participants were struggling to understand and to be understood by their interlocutors, especially the native speaker interlocutors who were at ease in the target culture. The struggles were many times due to the social and cultural distance, discontinuity, and conflicts between their previously acquired interactional knowledge and their newly learned knowledge. Even though these socially and culturally challenging interactions were considered as failures by the participants and others, they were evidence of the interactional patterns and structures that non-native speakers may experience in the beginning of their second language learning in the target culture.

#### *Language socialization.*

Since the beginning of the term, I had observed students at the lunch lounge and found that English reinforcement lessened over the time. At the beginning of the term, many students tried to speak English to communicate with each other, even among students who shared the same mother tongue. However, as they met over and over and began to know one another, the Korean students hardly ever spoke English to each other. It was not only the group of Korean students who spoke their mother tongue to each other, but also a group of Spanish speaking students. These two majority groups became separated as if a line had been drawn through the lunch lounge when they ate lunch. There were two big and long tables in the lounge. Usually one table was for Korean students and the other Asian student groups such as Taiwanese or Japanese; the other was for Spanish speaking students and other European students such as Turkish and Italian. There were some students who crossed over nationalities, but usually relationships remained between those in close cultures, for example, between Korean students and Taiwanese students or Korean students and Japanese students.

On September 23, I had lunch with Korean students in the lunch lounge. I had never

seen such a large group of Korean students eat lunch together in the lunch lounge that semester. They sat around the lunch table, speaking Korean freely and very loudly that day. I found something had changed in terms of the atmosphere in the lunch lounge. The motivation to force themselves to speak English had disappeared. Interestingly, only one Korean participant, SI, who was a fluent speaker of English, was quiet most of time and still used English to talk mostly to other international students, but rarely to Korean students. She looked uncomfortable with the atmosphere in which Korean language was dominant (Journal book II, p. 105).

The languages they spoke, the regions they came from, and the nationalities they shared were the categories that decided with whom the participants preferred to interact. Students grouped themselves within these categories in order to have membership and status. The participants came to the ELI and Blacksburg to study and live without memberships or statuses, except for being language-learning students or foreigners. They had a hard time attaining social membership in the local native speaker community. In speaking about the difficulties and distances LY felt when he went to a university student's party, he said:

I can't really be a part. I smiled to them. I understood little bit but didn't catch the exact meanings. They talked a lot and really fast. It was really hard to understand. I felt as if it was impossible to bond with them. Even though I spoke English very well, it would have still been difficult. First of all they look different from me, different skin colors and hair colors. For me, they looked too foreign. For them I was an alien. I got that feeling from their eyes. (Interview, LY, 9/9/04)

LY's comments were likely a little exaggerated, and these impressions could change over time as he got to know the native speakers better and found similarities and experiences in common as young people. LY's viewpoint at that time was "Korean people are the best" (Journal, 9/24/04). He meant that interactions with Korean people were the most comfortable for him. In addition, speaking Korean with Korean people could give LY and the other students membership in the Korean community in Blacksburg. Speaking English defined their identities as novice learners of the target language, and they were at

the same time novices for everything: the target culture, relationships with native speakers, and their studies too. As adult learners, it must be embarrassing to be novices even though the students knew that being novices had to be endured until they reached a certain level of competence.

*Cultural distance.*

In this study, cultural distance was obvious and predictable at the beginning of the participants' relationship-building with native speakers. The participants in the study talked about their understanding and misunderstanding of the local culture in their individual interviews and focus group meetings. They also voiced their inquiries about the cultural patterns of behavior of the native speakers in their interviews and in the transcriptions of the conversations with their native speaker interlocutors and non-native speaker interlocutors.

When I asked the focus group members to talk about the most prominent different cultural aspects, they talked about Americans' individualism first (Focus group meeting, 12/11/04). SI gave an example of her Korean friend's experience to the focus group members. Her friend bought pizza for everybody in his office. He was shocked when they gave him the money reflecting the amount they ate because he did not expect his officemates to pay for the pizza. It was his treat. Another participant after hearing SI's example said that his American friend ordered a dish while others had beers at a restaurant. The participant said that he was shocked because when the dish was served his American friend pulled it in front of him and did not share it with the others.

In their own conversation, MG and YS also talked about American individualism. Then MG expressed a strong opinion making the following statement:

Excerpt 4.2

*MG's Opinion about American Individualism*

I think kind of different culture. They cannot understand our culture, also I cannot understand their individual character. They are strong. They are very strong. Even though, MA (host mother), she is a very good person. Very kind for me, very kind

all kind of people, but sometimes I can feel about very strong individual character. So, it bothers me sometimes. I don't like it. I want to keep, I want to move out there as soon as possible. Really. I don't like very individual character. Sometimes, I bother you [YS]. I know that, but you understand about me or also you forgive me. This is kind of Asian, Asian traditional, or kind of thinking about. I don't know.  
(Conversation, MG, 10/11/04)

SI also confessed that she had a hard time understanding American culture because of her Korean background (Journal, 11/17/04). What she meant was that the Korean values of unity and similarities in people kept her from accepting differences. In the Korean culture, someone who's different from the majority is often looked upon as a stranger, a target of criticism, and an object of rumor. People try not to stand out from the majority. If you are different, you will be easily criticized by others. SI said that when she lived in a society where diversity was valued, this mentality challenged her.

Like in SI and MG's reflections, the language learners reacted rather negatively to the target culture in the beginning because "[they tended] to make assumptions and draw corresponding conclusions about other cultures based upon their own values" (*The Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, p. 48). The participants recognized the distance between the Korean culture and the American culture. I think that distinguishing differences is the first step in the learning process.

Discontinuities.

Sometimes cultural differences appeared in their communication with native speaker interlocutors in the form of discontinuity, such as awkward responses that showed different interpretations and expectations. Each party operated from a different value system, and they could interpret things differently. It is hard for language learners to convey the message that they originally intend to native speakers because the native speakers will interpret the meaning based on their own values and culture. Gass and Varonis (1991) say, "The NS (native speaker) most likely interprets the speech of the NNS (non-native speaker) according to the first language's norms" (p. 130). This resulted in discontinuity in the

conversations in my study.

For example, HO could not continue her story about her dream easily because her conversation partner often interrupted and talked about something else (12/8/04). HO initiated the topic about her bad dream by saying, “I have, last week, last weekend, week, it was very bad because I had a bad dreams.” HO continued to say that she woke up when someone knocked at her door in her dream. At this point, HO’s conversation partner asked if it was Saturday because she said, “Saturday was the HOKIE football day. ... A lot of people were going crazy.” HO tried to continue the story, but her American conversation partner (CP) wanted to talk about the football game more.

After talking about football, HO’s conversation partner came back to HO’s story about her bad dream. HO then said that a strange boy was entering her apartment. HO’s partner again tried to relate the dream to a real life as the following excerpt shows:

#### Excerpt 4.3

##### *HO’s Conversation about a Bad Dream*

1. CP: You do lock your door, right?
2. HO: Yes.
3. CP: You do lock your door, right?
4. HO: Yes.
5. CP: OK.
6. HO: So...
7. CP: In the beginning of the year,
8. HO: Uhm.
9. CP: There’s a guy going around the girls’ apartment and if there’s door unlocked, actually going in. Like kinda what happened in your dream. So make sure you lock the door.
10. HO: Really?
11. CP: You don’t need to panic about [...]. We forgot to lock the door. It actually happened twice.

12. HO: Hhhhh.
13. CP: A guy walked into the apartment in the middle of the night. (Conversation, HO, 12/8/04)

HO finally gave her partner her classmate's interpretation of the dream. She said, "Today, I, I, I told the story my classmate, so she heard my bad dream. If you, the boy didn't ran out, stay in your house, it will, it's mean, it was mean, it was meaning, it was mean, happen, happen to mean something." Her classmate interpreted the boy in the dream as bad luck. After all it was not a bad dream because the boy ran out, and that was what HO tried to say to her conversation partner. However, her conversation partner replied, "Oh. I don't really interpret dreams. I don't know. My dream, some people say dream, dream things. Usually for me, it means after watching television; it's like something [horrible] come after my dreams. That's why I don't watch scary movie. I will be whole sick that night. I have nightmares."

If HO's conversation partner was Korean, s/he would have understood what HO meant to say and why she talked about her dream. Telling a dream story and listening to it is just a fun activity. The most important thing is the interpretation of the dream. HO's dream was not a nightmare, after all. However, for HO's native conversation partner, it was just a nightmare, and she could not bear to listen to a nightmare. She tried to avoid it, but HO wanted to continue because HO had not really said anything yet in the beginning or the middle of the talk. What she really wanted to say was at the end of the story. For HO, the last line of interpretation was more important than her story. Like in this conversation, the discontinuity of communication between a native speaker and a non-native speaker is challenging and could lead to cultural miscommunication and misunderstanding.

#### Conflicts.

In the target culture, the study abroad students are expected to act differently from the cultural behavior that they had previously acquired. Many times they behaved according to their own cultural norms, and this resulted in conflict with the people in the target culture. However, through trials and conflicts, they come to understand the target

culture even though sometimes the conflicts stayed unresolved. Then the participants formed negative feelings about the target culture and the native speakers. I found that it was hard to change in a short time their ideas about how one should behave in a certain situation.

Social and cultural distance is obvious, and social and cultural conflicts exist between people from different cultures. Language and culture learning can be easier when both interlocutors work together to understand each other during interactions. Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) specifically make the following suggestions to have a good cross cultural relationship: (a) respect cultural differences, (b) develop validation, (c) have a win-win collaborative attitude, (d) maintain a sensitivity to conflict context, (e) uncover mutual-interest conflict goals, (f) uncover deeper conflict needs and assumptions, (g) maintain a collaborative or give-and-take compromising mode, (h) practice mindful conflict skills, and (i) prepare to change (p. 61). These suggestions are not only for the language learners, but also for their native and non-native speaker interlocutors.

MG had a conflict in his home-stay situation. In it, there was another Korean student, JN. MG and JN had maintained a relationship as big brother and younger brother. In this type of relationship, MG expected that JN should show respect for MG, reflecting the Korean norm. MG had a strong sense of being a big brother, and he believed that younger friends should show him certain types of respect. If he felt that he was not receiving respect from his younger friends, he would reproach them and become upset.

MG's strong personal tendency toward this Korean value did not apply to situations with native speakers, especially with women, including his host mother, MA. For example, MA thought that MG had a "strong sense of male over female" and explained how she and MG interacted one time. She called him a chauvinist guy, and then she said the following,

One day, one day we were out, I was out mowing the lawn and MG came wanting to mow the lawn. I like to mow the lawn. It's good exercise for me. So, I'm [sorry], I said "No, I want to do it." He didn't listen. "No, I'm going to do it." "No!" We were just like "no." I said, "Get away from the lawnmower!" [Laughter] I don't think he's used to that. I really don't. (Interview, MA, 9/13/04)

MG was willing to help MA, and he thought that mowing was hard work for a woman. MG

also thought that his offer would be appreciated by MA, but her refusals made him embarrassed. While MG insisted and MA refused, they did not find other ways of talking about their feelings more effectively.

I witnessed another situation with MG and his host mother. When I visited MG's home-stay on October 5, his host mother (MA), JN, and Seiko were having dinner together. MG had just gotten out of the shower, and his host mother asked him to join them at dinner. He said that he did not want to eat then and refused about five times. MA insisted more, and he started to eat a potato standing beside the dining table. MA gave me a wink and said that she needed to hit him. She slightly tapped MG on the back and said, "Pull over the chair and sit." Her ordering and hitting made MG embarrassed in front of his friends.

It was not only the problem of a cultural distance, but also a gender distance. Here is MA's comment: "The other thing I've noticed uh, MG has a stronger sense of male over female than JN does. It's my observation, right or wrong. Seems like he's stronger like that. Do you think? [...] He is... he, it's not just Korean. It's just men. Some men are, some men aren't. He is..." (Interview, MA, 9/13/04). Considering that MG was very male oriented and masculine, MA kept her kinetic distance from MG. MG did not understand, while MA acted as a mother, why she would not let him get close to her or touch her even when they were making a joke (Interview, MG, 9/3/04).

MG wanted to show MA his intimate relationship as a mother and a son. At some point, MG started to think that MA, whom he once considered his American mother, treated him differently from JN, who continually kept a good relationship with his host mother. In JN's case, as he improved his communication abilities, he had more opportunity to talk with MA. He actually said that he was comfortable at his home-stay house and with the host mother. JN did not care about MA's domination over him during conversations. MG concluded that she did not consider him as a son or a friend or anything. MG even thought that MA did not like him.

MA told me in her interview that MG did not seem to respect her because he constantly broke the rule of no smoking in the house, and moreover he told her lies about it. Here is an excerpt from MA's interview.

## Excerpt 4.4

*Interview with MA about Non Smoking Rule*

1. MA: I know they smoke. And I know when people smoke they can't, you know it's a habit. It's a horrible habit and I wish it would stop. But, they'll cheat and they think I don't know. They think that they are very slick and kinda smart and I know exactly what they're doing. [...] I went and said you have to promise me that you will not smoke in the house. Because I'm allergic and I can't, it gives me horrible headaches and I don't want to breathe it, and my mother and...you know, just look, and I shouldn't have to say, I should just say, there's no smoking in the house. Period.
2. ES: Right.
3. MA: So, when you smoke in the house, when you break the rule, what do I do? Because they're adults, it's not like children, you have to go to your room.
4. ES: You cannot spank them.
5. MA: No, I either have to say you must leave or, I mean, there's no other choice.
6. ES: Right.
7. MA: Either I accept it or they must leave.
8. ES: That's true.
9. MA: I have to trust them. I don't have any choice. I talked to JN the other day, he told, and they, you know, it's just, I have a horrible sensitivity to it. Most other things, I don't care so much about. Like I can live with, but that is something, mostly it's because I asked them not to and they do it anyway. It makes me feel there's disrespect. And that makes me mad. So I'm gonna lose my temper. [...] Oh, I get close. But I talked to JN the other day. And I said "JN, think about the answer to this question. Have you been smoking?" And he looked at me and went "yes, I have." I said "JN, can you understand, it's a house rule and you cannot smoke...", but if I say the same thing to MG and I know MG smokes in the house. And he will –
10. ES: He say no?

11. MA: You might ask him for me. I don't know. See, I don't know whether you should or not. It has to be between us, you know. I don't want him to think I'm talking about him.
12. ES: Right, right.
13. MA: But he, and he'll say no. And I know it's not true. He, and I, one time I said you're lying to me. You're lying to me. And he says, "I'm not lying to you." Then he told me, he said "yes, I did lie to you." You know, it's like they think I'm an idiot. Don't they realize that I'm forgiving it. (Interview, MA, 9/13/04)

This incident gave MA a sense of distrust of MG. These kinds of conflicts between MA and MG hindered the opportunities of communication. MG and MA had gone too far from each other. Later their relationship went drastically cold.

It is ideal when you can work out the problems and solve the cultural conflict. In her interview, MA said:

One of the things about this house that's very interesting is that, and it's like a little tiny piece of the world, people are different cultures, different expectations, understanding, and there's conflicts. But people work out, we have to figure out how to work them out. And you have to communicate with each other to understand the meaning of things you've done or your expectations. You have to convey it, because we misunderstand a lot, of each other. And, we can, we can work it out, you know, with words. (Interview, MA, 9/13/04)

However, as I illustrated above in MG's case with his host mother, the American host mother and the Korean language-learning student did not work it out with words in the real world. MG just left his host family with the problems unsolved. One early morning in November, he left what was once his home without saying good-bye to his host mother. He said that he would never come back to the house to see her. Neither his host mother nor MG intended for this bitterness to happen. I hope that MG and MA both learned from the conflict and they will act differently when they have similar situations later in their lives.

Bacon (2002) and Kuiper and Lin (1989) see that the language learners may be able to gain commend of the language and recognize the others' ways of life; however, they may not be able to or want to be at ease with practicing what they know. As an adult learner, they may come to speak the target language with their previous cultural system. Operating in the target language within their native culture is easily done for novice learners or the language learners who recently arrived in the target culture. In addition, in interactions and communications with native speakers, the language learners are the ones who have to adjust their thoughts and actions with regard to the target culture. In other words, native speakers may not even think about speaking Korean with Korean participants and learning the Korean culture. Therefore, it is only the language learners who struggle to act and speak appropriately, which should not be the case for successful intercultural communication.

#### *Active Participation in Interactions*

Even though students are aware that there are cultural challenges in social interactions in the target culture, active participation in various social activities is still an important factor in language learning. Many study abroad students are motivated learners in general because they travel so far to another country in order to learn the language and culture. In my study, however, some students looked more motivated because they participated more actively in interactions than others. My findings agree with Hinenoya and Gatbonton (2000) who say that integrative motivation, which is defined by Gardner and Lambert (1972) as "a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture," (p. 132) influence students' performance and proficiency levels. Therefore active participation in interactional activities outside the classroom is required to develop the language and cultural competence (Rogoff, Radziszewska, & Masiello, 1995).

SI always went out for the adventure of cultural and linguistic experiences. She talked about her daily routine after school on weekdays saying, "It's really simple." She hung around at the ELI for a while after all the classes had finished and then came back home. At home, she took a rest, prepared and ate dinner, went for a walk, did homework, and went to bed (Interview, SI, 9/12/04). She did everything alone except having dinner

with her uncle. Her aunt was out of town most weekdays for her business; her uncle was home only for dinner, and her cousin, who was an undergraduate student at Virginia Tech, lived in a dormitory in town. She said, “On Sunday morning, I go to church, and afternoons I do some house chores” (Interview, SI, 9/12/04).

Her daily routine could be as simple as she explained, but I saw her trying new things outside the daily routine. She took a violin lesson every Friday. She went to a women’s club meeting on campus every Thursday. She never missed the activities at the ELI, such as the Halloween party at her teacher’s house, the Christmas parade, the pumpkin patch trip, etc. She sat in a French class at the ELI that was given to school children as an after school program. She participated in the conversation group when the work-study volunteers came to the ELI. She traveled by herself to Tennessee twice and Michigan once to see her friends. She often invited her Korean and international friends, including Marcus, Tomoki, KB, LY, and me to a Korean dinner.

Another participant, KB, often showed active participation. Differently from SI who was already a proficient speaker of English, KB was a novice learner. He created speaking opportunities for himself. He did this by asking questions to native speakers. In spite of his difficulties in listening comprehension, he constantly tried speaking English by asking for directions on the street, asking about the item he was not familiar with at the shopping center, and even asking how to order at a fast food restaurant.

For example, KB went to the Subway on purpose in order to learn how to order a sandwich there because his friend told him that Subway was one of the hardest restaurants in which to order a meal. He started by asking how he could order (Line 1) and what kinds of sandwiches they had (Line 3). Then the cashier told him to choose, in order, bread, size of sandwich, cheese, meat, vegetable, and sauce. He asked for the cashier’s recommendation from time to time. Here is the part of conversation between KB and the cashier at Subway, and see Appendix I for the whole conversation.

## Excerpt 4.5

*KB's Ordering a Meal at Subway*

1. KB: Difficult choice, what... How can I order?
2. CS: What?
3. KB: What kind of sandwich?
4. CS: We have, if you looked down through, we have roast beef; we have ham, turkey, chicken.
5. KB: I choice, I choose.
6. CS: Yeah, What?
7. KB: I pay, I paid for this one? Each?
8. CS: What? You choose which kind one and that determines how much. So you can... See a specialty sandwich? If you look up here, we have a BMT, which has pepperoni, salami, and ham.
9. KB: Uh.
10. CS: Or, a club will have ham, roast beef, or turkey. Or you can just get one of these meats, you can choose that.
11. KB: First I, I'll choose from.
12. CS: Bread. Yeah, you can choose.
13. KB: I'll have what you recommended.
14. CS: What's my recommendation? Huh (Little laugh) Okay, then I'll do the honey oat. It's not here. I can't point out but Huh, Huh, Huh. Foot long or six inch? Half or whole?

This conversation shows that KB did not know how to order at Subway, but he knew what to do: ask questions. While ordering, he learned how to order at Subway with the cashier's help. It was about 3:00 p.m. and there were no other customers waiting in the line behind KB. KB took the time to ask questions to the cashier (CS) about how to order and what kinds of ingredients there were. The CS often responded by "what?" but was patiently answering KB's questions. Living in the target culture required the participants to

speak the target language in order to get by in the community. They spoke English to order a meal, to take a driver's license test, to pay for groceries, to buy cigarettes, to make an appointment, and so forth. Some participants like KB used these necessary tasks as speaking and learning opportunities.

KB lived with a Japanese roommate, Tomoki, who was actually one of the students who participated in most of the activities at the ELI. He wanted to learn about the people and the community in Blacksburg. He even went voluntarily to talk to people in churches to learn about Christianity in America; that was a different religion from his own. He believed that America was founded by Christians, and America could be understood through Christianity. Tomoki was an independent man. He did not rely on other people or wait for them to give him a free ride. He often took the two-town trolley to the next town, Christiansburg, to go to Wal-Mart which is 8-12 miles away from Blacksburg.

The language learning students may choose to learn the target language only in their language classroom where they find their instruction useful, helpful, and safe (Hall, 1999). The students may not want to experience outside-the-classroom interactions because they think that the interactions might generate "negative social and other consequences" (Hall, 1999, p. 150). However, while the students hesitate to interact with people outside the classroom, they may miss opportunities to use the target language in real life situations. They may even miss the opportunity to develop their language and cultural understanding through interaction with people other than their teachers (Kinger, 2001).

### *Cultural Learning and Interactional Competence*

According to Yong's (1999) definition, interactional competence is "a theory of the knowledge that participants bring to and realize in interaction and includes an account of how such knowledge is acquired" (p. 118). Verbalizing what they learned about cultural issues such as cultural differences, their difficulties, misunderstandings, and observations on the target culture indicated students' cultural learning. Students could develop intercultural communicative competence by reflecting on their misunderstandings in intercultural experiences. Especially in conversations about how they learned from their

misunderstandings, the language learners processed cultural acquisition by reflecting on their learning. Between non-native speakers and also among Korean participants, they shared their opinions and knowledge about American culture from their points of view as foreigners.

Through discussing of intercultural topics, interlocutors had opportunities to articulate what they observed and thought about living in the different culture. They made good topics because the language learners were able to learn the products, practice, and perceptions of native speakers and non-native speakers. Cultural knowledge can be “static products or forms that may be objectified” if the language learners learn it in the classroom, but outside the classroom with real people and speaking about their own culture, cultural knowledge can be a tool of “a process” to learn the culture and the language (Robinson-Stuart & Nocon, 1996, p. 432).

The Korean participants shared their observations of the target culture in the focus group meetings in Korean (12/11/04). They informed each other by telling their personal stories. They talked about their episodes of misunderstanding the different products, practices, and perspectives of the target culture (NSFLEP, 1999, p. 47). They got to know that most study abroad students may have more than one episode related to experiences of cultural misunderstanding. These language learners observed, faced, analyzed, criticized, or even were surprised by the target culture when they lived there. The process of observing, facing, analyzing, criticizing, and being surprised helped them understand the differences between their own culture and the target culture. Here are some of the episodes the participants talked about. By relating an episode, I want to show the learning process from “I can’t believe it,” to “That’s how they do it,” and even to “Now I’m doing it.”

An interesting episode that was shared in the focus group meeting involved a shower curtain. SI brought up the topic by saying, “I’m not used to drawing a shower curtain when I take a shower. Here I’m not supposed to spread water outside the tub.” Then KB said that he had a problem related to a shower curtain. He said that he did not know anything about shower curtains before he came here because there is a drain on the floor of the bathroom and people put on bathroom slippers in Korea, and there he did not need to be

careful about wetting his floor or the feet. One day he sprinkled quite a lot of water on the floor to clean it, but the water did not go away. He was perplexed and used a whole roll of paper towels to dry up the water. He also talked about another episode involving a shower curtain and his conversation partner when they were shopping for one on October 15, 2004.

Excerpt 4.6

*KB's Conversation about a Shower Curtain*

1. KB: All American bath, ha, have shower curtain.
2. CP: Uh-huh.
3. KB: Is it, in Koreas, we are no shower curtains. We are, we are, we have shower booth. Shower booth is a plastic.
4. CP: Yeah. Yeah.
5. KB: I, I first day I arrived in USA,
6. CP: Uh-huh.
7. KB: I showers no curtain, so water is pour my neighborhood. My downstairs neighborhood coming my house. "Wow, it's leaking, leaking the water."
8. CP: Yeah.
9. KB: Oh, I'm sorry. I don't know. I, I have no curtain. So I...
10. CP: Oh, yeah. I see.
11. KB: Yeah.
12. CP: So you had to buy one then. Okay. In Austria there were no showers.  
(Conversation, KB, 10/15/04)

KB's conversation partner did not seem to view the issues with shock like the focus group meeting members. He just said, "So you had to buy one then. Okay. In Austria there were no showers" (Line 12). The partner knew the situation of being in another culture, so he immediately showed his understanding of KB's embarrassment by giving him the example of his embarrassment in another culture. By talking about their embarrassment, KB realized that it was just that people in different cultures use different products and do

different things. Drawing a shower curtain was once a shock to KB and other Korean participants, but later it became their everyday practice while they were living in the United States.

Another episode related to shoes. Wearing shoes in the house seemed pretty strange for the Korean participants. They thought that it was one of the absurd behaviors that Americans practice. They believe that taking off your shoes when you are at home is more sanitary. SI said that she was shocked when she saw her American friends walk into her room with their shoes on when she lived in a dormitory in Japan. Then ZA responded by saying, “That’s a culture. They walk on the carpet with their shoes on. It must be hard to clean the carpet. More strangely, they sit on the carpet where they walked on shoes. Sometimes they lie down or crawl. I don’t feel home in my dormitory room. I can’t take a rest with my shoes on. It’s just a place where a bed is. It’s just not an office.” Another participant jokingly said, “They probably stink” (Focus group meeting, 12/11/04).

KB also could not understand why Americans practice such a custom. He was curious and wanted to figure it out by asking his conversation partner. Here is the excerpt.

#### Excerpt 4.7

##### *KB’s Conversation about Taking Shoes off*

1. KB: Why American people put off the shoes in house?
2. CP: Why do they wear them in house?
3. KB: In my house, Asian, most Asian people, most Korean people, when come their house, they put off the shoes. American people keep the shoes.  
Culture?
4. CP: Yes.
5. KB: American culture?
6. CP: It’s a good idea to take off your shoes, but Americans are lazy. We just leave our shoes on.
7. KB: This is, if wet, the shoes, dirty carpet. Maybe.
8. CP: Yes, it does little.

9. KB: But I don't know why American people put off the shoes. Why don't you...
10. CP: I don't know. You can take it off if you want. Do you want to?  
(Conversation, KB, 10/27/04)

KB's conversation partner jokingly said that the reason why Americans do not take off their shoes is that they are lazy, but KB did not accept that as an answer. He wanted to know the real reason. He expressed that he still could not understand this cultural behavior and asked why his conversation partner did not take off his shoes. The partner suggested that KB could take off his shoes if he wanted. In personal conversation, KB told me that he took off his shoes then, but he put them back on because everybody else kept their shoes on.

For Korean participants, experiencing these kinds of episodes made them go from "I can't understand how Americans could do that" to "that's how they do it." As KB did, it was a good strategy to talk about his embarrassment or mistakes overtly with native speaker friends and his peers. He was aware of what he was experiencing and the differences from his own culture. The learners like KB "raise their awareness with regard to perception and perspective and improve their ability to recognize" the cultural aspects in the process of learning the second language (Byram & Feng, 2004, p.156). By doing that, the learners take full advantage of their opportunities to learn and reflect on their own experiences and also increase their speaking and listening opportunities. Then they eventually raise their speaking and listening abilities.

Intercultural topics can be good sources for conversations. Christine, an ELI work-study student and SI's conversation partner, said,

Well, I love hearing about different cultures. And so I love asking questions about their own country and how things are different from America and it's just been a really good way for me to learn a lot. (Interview, Christine, 11/15/04)

Christine expressed that she enjoyed intercultural topics because she could benefit in learning international students' culture by asking them about it. Sharing intercultural topics can be beneficial not only for language learners but also for native speakers.

Intercultural communicative competence and interactional competence is part of communicative competence in Second Language Acquisition and Second Culture Acquisition. By actually interacting with people, social and cultural beings, the study abroad students were gradually able to “experience different cultural worlds with increasing ease, with a greater capacity to make deliberate choices of actions in specific situations” (Kim, 2001, p. 192). I agree with Jurasek (1995) who says learning the target language can be an ethnographic process which includes “observing, participating, describing, analyzing and interpreting” (Byram & Feng, 2004, p.156).

#### *Development of Communicative Competence*

According to *The Standard for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, communicative competence means that one knows “how, when, and why to say what to whom” (NSFLEP, 1999, p.11). Shrum and Glisan (2005) indicate that communication is not merely “exchanging information in verbal transactions,” it is rather “[developing] relationships between individuals as they use language to create social bonds, [showing] sympathy and understanding, and [supporting] each other” (p. 189). In order to find participants’ development of communicative competence, I looked into the details of conversations that the participants engaged in with various partners such as their conversation partners, international student classmates, host mother, cashiers at fast food restaurants, and so forth. My findings are reported in this section. The diagrams of various sets of the participants and their interlocutors appear in Appendix J. The major findings that I will discuss in this section are the following:

- Students believed that knowledge of grammar was an important factor for successful communication.
- Students were anxious about misunderstandings and miscommunication, and language anxiety was related to perfectionism, embarrassment in front of other people, and losing face.
- Students easily engaged in interactions with their international peers, and these were less stressful than interactions with native speakers. This peer interaction

eventually created opportunities for language learning.

- Students expected native speakers to correct their errors and to take roles as teachers of the target language even outside the classroom, but they also learned to initiate self-repairs and to ask for help.
- Engagement is the key to making a good conversation. The underlying condition for engagement is negotiation between two interlocutors to understand meanings.

### *Grammatical Competence and Communicative Competence*

Grammatical competence is important when the language learners try to communicate using the target language. However, that is not all it takes to make their communication successful. Except for Chomsky's (1965) communicative competence model includes only grammatical competence and structure knowledge of sentences, but the communicative competence models of other scholars, such as Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980), Bachman (1990), and Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995), include competencies other than grammatical competence or linguistic competence. Other elements in these models are termed sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence, discourse competence, textual competence, functional competence, sociocultural competence, and actional competence. Shrum and Glisan (2005) explain all these competences that complete communicative competence as follows:

Of great importance, they need to be able to make meaning using grammatical forms. Also, they need knowledge of the various sociocultural factors that affect communication, knowledge of how to use language to express their ideas and intent, and knowledge of strategies for how to communicate with others and compensate for deficiencies in the other competencies. (Shrum & Glisan, 2005, p. 14)

Language learning students in this study believed that knowledge of grammar was important for successful communication. Their perception of learning English was studying a well-written grammar book, or learning accurate English from experts such as their ELI teachers or native speakers who would correct their errors and explain the grammar rules. However, students should not delay actual interactions for grammar study. Heavily relying

on grammar knowledge may prevent language learners from possible face-to-face interactions for development in communicative competence.

This trend clearly appeared in the case of MG and JN. MG believed that studying his grammar book, practicing pronunciation from the dictionary, reading *Newsweek*, and studying for the TOEFL were the key to preparation for actual communication. His friend JN actually listened to MG with respect. He also believed that MG's ways of studying English were the best ways of mastering it. Like MG, JN also devoted most of his time after the ELI to studying English with a grammar book in his dormitory room in the first few months that he lived here (Interview, JN, 9/6/04). He said that he would start studying English by 6:00 p.m. after watching TV, having dinner, and taking a shower. Usually he stayed up until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. the next day (Interview, JN, 9/6/04).

Another participant, KB, always believed that grammatical competence was one of the most important factors in his English learning. He actually told his focus group members and also me in his interview that he was not confident in his grammar knowledge (Interview, KB, 9/15/04; Focus group meeting, 11/ 24/04). Actually, English grammar had been one of his weakest subjects during his school years. When he applied to a graduate school in Korea, he thought that he would not get admission because of the English test (Interview, KB, 9/15/04).

KB explained why grammar matters. He said in his first interview, I make sentences in Korean first, and I translate and compose the English sentences according to the English grammar. For example, in my mind I prepare to say, 'I have a dog.' But when I actually say it, I just mixed up the words and say whatever comes first. You know Korean grammar and English grammar are different. I'm afraid of that I would make a mistake (Interview, KB, 9/15/04)

According to Korean grammar, 'I have a dog' is 'I dog have.'

KB's concerns about grammar appeared in his conversation with his conversation partner. He tried to ask questions of his partner about specific language problems such as his e-mail writing, idioms, expressions, and pronunciation. I have included the example of his attempts to learn English expressions and grammar from his conversation partner on

their first meeting on October 15. Here is an excerpt:

Excerpt 4.8

*KB's Conversation about a Famous Baseball Player*

1. CP: Yeah. A lot of girls think Derrick Jeter is hot.
2. KB: Ah!
3. CP: But I don't think so.
4. KB: Hhhh. A lot of girls... hot, hot, hot is a verb? Adjective? Adjective?
5. CP: Adjective?
6. KB: Verb.
7. CP: It's hot. Physical, adjective.
8. KB: Yeah. So the hot is adjective.
9. CP: Hot is a... She is hot. Yeah. Yeah.
10. KB: Ah.
11. CP: Because 'is' is a verb.
12. KB: Yeah. (Conversation, KB, 10/15/04)

Sometimes, participants overtly showed their intentions to learn English grammar from native speakers. HO and JN brought textbooks to the conversation partner meetings and asked questions of their partners about some specific problems such as the usage of "used to," and the differences between articles "a" and "the". HO brought test problems to the meeting and practiced making sentences using "used to" with her conversation partner (Conversation, HO, 11/10/04). JN also took his textbook out of his backpack during the conversation and tried to get help from his partner for his classroom study. Here is an excerpt from JN's conversation with his conversation partner (CP) about the usage of articles.

## Excerpt 4.9

*JN's Conversation about Articles*

1. JN: We [studied] this part. Just we have to study here.
2. CP: Yes.
3. JN: Focus. Focus. but she did not touch. T-a-u-g-h-t. How can I?
4. CP: T-a-u-g-h-t. Taught.
5. JN: Taught. She didn't teach this part. Just if you want to exercise. But I didn't, I didn't understand almost. I was very confused. "The" "A"
6. CP: The, OK. the: you're talking about a specific thing, OK? Like this is saying, "*the* bottle." Right? Like, where did you, where is the bottle? I say, *the* bottle is right here. I'm referring this one only. You know what I'm saying. That's was the "the." If I say, where is a bottle? If I say "a," it doesn't have to be this one. You know what I'm saying? (Conversation, JN, 11/18/04)

English grammar is different from Korean grammar. For Korean participants, it is difficult to apply grammatical rules to make correct English structures. Sometimes, even though they understand the rules, they may speak English with errors. Studying grammar and knowing English structures surely improves students' communicative competence. Talking about matters of grammar with native speaker conversation partners may help their understanding. However, students often relied on grammar aspects in conversation and English learning too heavily. Students' communicative competence can also be developed while they are participating in meaning negotiation during spontaneous conversations.

*Interaction and Language Anxiety*

Being anxious is natural, especially when language-learners have to show their language proficiencies or communicative competence in front of others, or when they are faced with unfamiliar situations. As adult learners, they do not want to be embarrassed in front of other people by their mistakes as long as there is a concern about losing face

(LoCastro, 2003). According to Horwitz's (2002) study, the anxious students tend to have higher standards in terms of their performance; this relates to perfectionism. However, being anxious may cause less participation, and then it could make the participants avoid possible opportunities to improve their ability to communicate. Actual interactions over time helped the students to get over their anxiety. Most participants talked about their initial anxiety in communicating with native speakers, but they said that they were no longer so anxious in their later interviews and the second focus group meeting.

Interaction with unfamiliar people who have different communication styles, ways of reasoning, and life styles can make language learners nervous, fearful, and shy as MG described:

Speaking opportunities? I didn't get them because I was scared when I first got here. I was shy and scared. I didn't know what [native speakers] thought about me. I was so poor in speaking. I came here to learn the language, but I was so nervous about the fact that I wasn't able to speak English well. (Interview, MG, 9/3/04)

MG lived in a dormitory at Virginia Tech when he first arrived. Even though he anticipated that he would have a lot of opportunities to meet native speakers by living in a dormitory, he limited his space to his small dormitory room. MG did not seem to interact with native speakers or have ample opportunities to speak English in the dormitory.

MG said that he was afraid of situations in which he had to speak English while he was living in the dormitory (Interview, MG, 9/3/04). He was reluctant to come across students in the hall at the dormitory when he went to the restroom or the cafeteria. He was even more afraid when his native speaker hall-mates said "hi" to him. Most of time, he said, he was doing his homework, studying his grammar book, practicing pronunciation from the dictionary, reading *Newsweek*, and studying for the TOEFL in his room. He said that he never tested his ability to speak English until he moved to a home-stay house.

Another participant, KB, said that he was also afraid of misunderstanding native speakers because of his poor listening comprehension (Interview, KB, 9/15/04). When he needed to say something to native speakers, he would prepare the sentence ahead in his mind or write down the sentence, and practice several times. However, he could not prepare

for what he was going to hear. He was not even able to guess the meaning of what he heard. For this reason, he said that he sometimes just avoided situations. For example, when the telephone rang, he did not pick it up right away, hoping that the person would leave a message. Later, he could listen to the message several times until he understood it (Interview, KB, 9/15/04).

KB expressed his nervous feelings about his pizza order by phone to his conversation partner in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 4.10

*KB's Conversation about Ordering Pizza by Telephone*

1. KB: Just you and I conversation, it's Okay. I'm comfortable speak to you, but another, another person, I'm afraid.
2. CP: Yeah.
3. KB: When I ordered, four weeks ago, I ordered Fire House Pizza, pizza.
4. CP: Yeah.
5. KB: I, shook?
6. CP: Aching?
7. KB: Shake my body.
8. CP: Nervous?
9. KB: Nervous. Very difficult. You just ordered. It just one minutes ago. One minute, two minutes. I take time. It takes time, takes time, 8 minutes because I didn't hear, I said.
10. CP: All right.
11. KB: Very difficult. (Conversation, KB, 11/15/04)

KB said that he was afraid of making no sense when he spoke English. He thought that he looked unintelligent when he made non grammatical sentences. He did not want to be embarrassed by making mistakes in front of other people. He also said that many times he did not know how to respond when he did not understand. In that situation, he hoped

that the native speaker would stop asking him. He sometimes panicked when he heard a sentence starting with “how” from the interlocutor. He knew that it was a question, but he did not know what the person was asking (Interview, KB, 9/15/04). KB said that in the beginning he could not even say “hi” to the secretary at the ELI. He had to pass the secretary’s office to enter his classroom. To avoid confronting the situation, he almost ran into the classroom, pretending that he was late for the class. When he finally was able to say “hi” to the secretary later, he stopped at the door for a while waiting for her to look up. Then he would say “hi” and leave immediately before she would ask him anything (Interview, KB, 9/15/04).

An advanced learner, SI, also talked about anxiety in speaking English (Interview, SI, 9/12/04). She said that she felt speaking the Japanese language is much easier than speaking English because she had pressure to speak English well. This was how HO felt about speaking the Chinese language versus English (Interview, HO, 9/10/04). SI and HO both had experiences in studying abroad in Japan and China respectively. They took different levels of English classes at the ELI. No matter what levels their English abilities were, they both felt pressure to speak better. HO mentioned that she wanted to be able to speak polished English. For her, polished English meant perfect English with a native-like accent and pronunciation (Interview, HO, 9/10/04).

HO expressed her anxiety about speaking at work in the campus cafeteria. She usually worked at the dish washer, but once she worked at the sandwich corner. She had to take an order. It was actually her opportunity to practice listening and speaking. However, she was too shy to speak, and it became an uncomfortable conversation situation for her. She said:

I was afraid of talking to someone. There were so many people working there. I thought they would not understand me if I said something. I was shy to ask questions, so I just worked. It’s a simple job. (Interview, HO, 10/24/04)

Anxiety inhibited interactions, speaking opportunities, and then language and culture learning. Language anxiety was related to perfectionism, embarrassment in front of other people, and losing face. As an adult language learner, it is surely difficult to practice

English constantly, while monitoring one's own errors and at the same time being anxious to speak correct English.

### *Peer Interaction and Stress Reduction*

The language learners seemed less stressed when they interacted with other international students at the ELI. This stress reduction enhanced language learning. Interaction with non-native speakers could give the language learners opportunities to practice and learn English without considering forms and errors too much. As Vygotsky (1978) advocated and Rogoff (1990) later affirmed, interaction with peers is as important as interaction with native speaker interlocutors.

When the students first came, they were aware of the fact that they needed to practice English, and they tried to meet native speakers and even avoid people from the same country. While they were trying, they became highly stressed in both in mind and body. In the beginning they tried too hard and too soon to fit in, and they even got sick. After a while, they found themselves drawn to being around only Korean friends. For some language learners, speaking their native language or spending time with the people from their country was necessary to reduce their stress. They thought that speaking their native language did not interrupt their learning; rather it helped them relieve the stress that comes from the intense learning at the ELI. YP even said that if she did not have the break of speaking Korean, she might go insane (Interview, YP, 9/5/04).

Learning a second language takes a lot of effort. It is not easy as a language learner to interact with people who speak the target language and live in the target culture. It can be stressful. However, at the ELI I saw the Korean participants easily engage in communication with other international students. They jokingly tried to speak each other's language, but their main method for communication was English. Through less stressful interactions, especially with international friends, the Korean participants could still practice their English while they were actually having fun. The Korean participants explained this as being comfortable with each other. For communicating with each other, they did not have to make perfect sentences as if they were taking a test or talking to their

teachers or native speaker conversation partners.

Among international students, the Korean students had gotten used to each other's speech, and understanding or being understood was effortless. According to their recorded conversations, the participants enjoyed talking and teasing each other. Some of my participants were constantly making jokes and laughing with international students. As Gardner (1985) and Rogoff (1990) believed, communication includes emotional interactions. Sharing laughter among friends often happened at the lunch lounge, and this also increased the opportunities that the students at the ELI had to spontaneously speak English with each other.

One day when KB stayed in the lunch lounge after lunch, the news broke that he was a married man. Until then, he had not told anybody about his marriage. He said that he told the truth in the class, and his classmates were shocked since he had acted so far as if he were single. At the lunch lounge, his Japanese classmates, Seiko and Ko, made a joke about it. When Seiko, Ko, KB and other Korean students interacted with each other that day, they laughed and enjoyed expressing their feelings with a common language, English, shared with limited proficiency. They were having fun with each other. While looking at KB interacting with Japanese students, I thought that friendship had been increasing among the international students, or at least they looked as though they were closer to each other. They looked less tense when they used English, and there was much laughter. The pressure was gone, and the students began to feel more comfortable or natural about speaking English with each other.

The students shared their purposes and focuses of language learning among themselves, and this contributed to their progress (Rogoff, 1990). I agree with Kasper and Rose (2002) when they say that the collaboration "[enables] students to gradually develop their productive use of assessment and alignments" (p. 41). Conversation excerpt 4.11 shows that MG helped YS practice the pronunciation of "honey," and YS demonstrated his pronunciation later by asking for "honey" at the restaurant counter. The conversation happened between the two international students, Korean and Taiwanese, classroom peers. This excerpt serves as an example of peer collaboration.

## Excerpt 4.11

*MG's Conversation with YS about Honey*

1. MG: Do you like it?
2. YS: You what? [Hon-ni]?
3. MG: You like it.
4. YS: [Hon-ni].
5. MG: Not, [Hon-ni].
6. YS: [Hon-ni].
7. MG: No, Hhhh, honey
8. YS: Ho, honey, Honey It's right?  
MG: Honey, honey.
9. YS: [Hon-ni].
10. MG: Honey.
11. YS: [Hon-ni].
12. MG: Honey [rising voice]! Just honey!
13. YS: Honey.
14. MG: I call just honey. (Conversation, MG, 10/4/04)

Students easily engaged in interactions with their international peers -- non-native speakers -- that were less stressful than interactions with native speakers, and the peer interactions eventually created opportunities for language learning. By mingling with other international students, whose culture was closer to that of the Korean students than to the Americans, they could encourage themselves in spontaneous communication activities as they built good relationships as friends. Peer interactions with international students were meaningful for learning language, and for making friends as well.

*Error Correction and Self-Repair*

My findings here agree with Smartt and Scudder (2004), who conclude that the learners have their own will to self-repair and “the ability to speak spontaneously and to

self-repair” when the interlocutors do not interrupt them (Smartt & Scudder, 2004, p. 597). Shrum and Glisan (2005) see errors as “a natural part of the acquisition process” (p. 19). Therefore, as Smartt and Scudder (2004) argue, language learners spoke spontaneously when native speaker interlocutors allowed the learners time “to self-repair without interruption” (p. 592). More importantly, with the more proficient interlocutors or when the native speaker interlocutors were willing to cooperate with the less proficient interlocutors or non-native speaker interlocutors in their repair process, the conversation could become more interactive, and language learning was enhanced.

In a conversation with two Korean ELI students, Christine, a work-study student at the ELI and SI’s conversation partner asked, “Do you guys want, when you make mistakes, do you want Americans to correct your mistakes? They can tell you when you made mistakes. Or would you rather?” The participants said that they wanted the native speaker interlocutors to correct their mistakes, but the native speakers outside the classroom usually did not correct them. Then Christine continued, “A lot of times, they don’t correct, but would you rather be corrected? Would you rather just figure it out on your own?” Christine was surprised to hear that even a proficient speaker like SI wanted her interlocutors to correct her sometimes. Then Christine concluded, “Yeah. I think it’s good to correct sometimes as long as I’m not mean about it” (11/15/04).

In the conversation of the host mother MA, I saw incidents in which that she overtly correct in the participant’s errors. Usually, she often played a mother role in their conversations, and she often changed her role from that of a mother to that of a teacher. For example, she analyzed JN’s English and corrected his mistakes during the conversation. While JN was talking about his day from the time of getting up, MA listened for the grammatical and pronunciation mistakes JN made. JN could not really answer MA’s initial question, “What did you do?” because of her interruptions (Line 1). Here is an excerpt.

Excerpt 4.12

*JN’s Conversation with MA about Daily Routines*

1. MA: What did you do today?

2. JN: I wake up eleven o'clock.
3. MA: Yes.
4. JN: Actually,
5. MA: I woke up.
6. JN: my friend,
7. MA: I woke up.
8. JN: I woke up.
9. MA: at
10. JN: at eleven o'clock.
11. MA: uh-huh, and.
12. JN: Actually, today my friend, friend,
13. MA: My friend, friend, not [prend]
14. JN: F-R-I-E-N
15. MA: Friend (Slowly)
16. JN: Yes, friend.
17. MA: Friend. OK. (Conversation, JN, 12/3/04)

In line 7, she encouraged JN to repeat the corrected form, then in line 9, she gave him the preposition “at” to have him continue the sentence. In line 13, she corrected his pronunciation of “friend.” By doing so, JN was able to practice his grammar and pronunciation, but he was interrupted and failed to finish his story about being late for an appointment.

The next excerpt is little different from the excerpts of JN’s conversation with MA. When HO sought correction, the interlocutor gave suggestions. HO and her conversation partner worked together to correct HO’s pronunciation of the “f” sound. Differently from excerpt 4.12, this one shows that HO’s conversation partner was asked by HO to give advice about HO’s pronunciation (Line 4). HO initiated repairing activity. Here is an excerpt.

## Excerpt 4.13

*HO's Conversation about HO's Father's Job*

1. CP: What do your parents do in Korea?
2. HO: My parents?
3. CP: What do they work?
4. HO: My father is .... It's ....it's... Pharmacy? It's right?
5. CP: Pharmacy.
6. HO: My mother helps him.
7. CP: Oh, OK.
8. CP: It looks like you were saying [parmacy] but [ph] is the [f] sound, so it's pharmacy
9. HO: Pharmacy
10. CP: Pharmacy. That's how it is pronounced. I know it begins with p, but it's one of these weird words.
11. HO: Hhhhhh. (Conversation, HO, 11/10/04)

HO's conversation partner explained to HO that "ph" should sound "f" (Line 8). Her conversation partner comforted HO by saying that it was the ph-word that was "weird" (Line 10). She definitely did not want to offend HO by correcting her pronunciation. The conversation partner did not want HO to be embarrassed.

HO often repaired what she said by herself. She initiated, verbally showing the process of putting the words into the English structures and changing the forms into English grammar. Here are some of examples from her conversation with her partner on December 8, 2004:

- "My cousin, my cousin, have, my cousin, have has, sing, sing a bible."
- "I have, last week, last weekend, week, it was very bad because I had a bad dreams."
- "So I found, find, try to found, I try to found, found someone, I try to find someone."

- “In maybe living room, some boy, a boy, one standing looking at me.”
- “I feel, I felt so weird.”
- “It will, it’s mean, it was mean, it was meaning, it was mean, happen, happen to mean something.”
- “Last week, she didn’t, didn’t call me, called me, even one time.”

Repairing their pronunciation, structures of the sentences, or forms of the part of speech is many times necessary for communicating purposes, especially when the interlocutors cannot understand their language learners. Here is an excerpt from KB’s conversation with his conversation partner CP and CP’s fiancé DA. In this conversation, CP and DA tried to understand what KB meant. They finally got it and helped KB repair the word.

#### Excerpt 4.14

##### *KB’s Conversation about Pizza*

1. KB: Do you like Pizza Hut?
2. DA: It’s very good.
3. KB: Yeah.
4. DA: Domino is very good.
5. KB: Um. Still [pride].
6. DA: Um?
7. KB: [Pride]
8. CP: It still dry?
9. DA: Dried?
10. KB: It seems like to me, it’s like [pride] egg, egg [pride].
11. CP: Pride.
12. KB: Yeah. [Pride], P-R-I-E-D. P-R-Y. Right?
13. CP: Yeah. Fry.
14. KB: Fry? Fry?

15. DA: P-R-Y is pry something.
16. KB: Yeah.
17. DA: Like a nail out of the board. F-R-Y is frying eggs. (Conversation, KB, 11/15/04)

In this study, the language learning students expected native speakers to correct their errors and to take roles as teachers of the target language even outside the classroom (Wilkinson, 2002). Responding to this expectation, some native speakers explicitly corrected the learners' mistakes during the conversation whenever they heard them. However, when the students were actually treated only as language learners and constantly interrupted during conversations, they did not produce a successful conversation. The students developed their communication ability when they initiated the correction process by asking for help, repeating uncertain parts, or repairing the problematic part by themselves. Making errors and repairing them are part of the developmental process in communicative competence.

#### *Meaning Negotiation and Interactive Communication*

According to Storch (2002), engagement is the key to making a good conversation. The underlying condition for engagement is negotiation to understand meanings between two interlocutors (Van Lier & Matsuo, 2000). Storch (2002) sees forming a relationship during communication activity as important because conversations between friends are usually based on mutual interests. Learning to communicate is also learning to negotiate meanings. I believe that students gradually developed their communicative competence while they are negotiating meanings. When a language learner or the interlocutor avoids active participation, the conversation may fail, as their relationship and their learning may also do. Regarding the issue of engagement, SI said, "Sometimes when the native speaker is not interested in me and maintains a superficial talks, I can't talk or learn from her" (Interview, SI, 10/30/04).

In this section, I provide conversations to show how language learners engaged in

meaning negotiations. During conversations with his conversation partner, most of the time, KB raised questions. KB asked about the products that he was not familiar with while looking around the shopping center one day (Conversation, KB, 10/15/04). The shopping center was a good place for learning because KB could see the products and read the labels while his partner explained the products. I found that KB was able to say to his conversation partner, "I don't understand." Then his conversation partner usually explained the items until KB understood. Here is KB and his partner's conversation about milk that is a good example of meaning negotiation and engagement. I present the whole conversation to display KB and his conversation partner's (CP) patient efforts to learn about milk.

Excerpt 4.15

*KB's Conversation about Milk*

1. KB: 1% is what mean? I don't know.
2. CP: Um.
3. KB: I don't understand.
4. CP: 1%, it has 1% fat.
5. KB: Ah, 1% fat?
6. CP: Um. (Going to find milk)
7. CP: Here we go.
8. CP: See we have whole milk that you have been drinking.
9. KB: Whole milk?
10. CP: Yeah, and then
11. KB: [And then?]
12. CP: And then 2%.
13. KB: 2%? Uh!
14. CP: 2% reduced fat, and then 1%.
15. KB: Yeah. [Tell me.] 1% is taste good? Not disgusting?
16. CP: No.
17. KB: Uh.

18. CP: First I started with whole milk, and then 2%, and then 1%.
19. KB: It's, it's more good health.
20. CP: Yeah. Let's see. Yeah. So it all got 8 grams saturated 5 grams.
21. KB: 5 grams, total fat 5 grams.
22. CP: Uh-huh.
23. KB: Total fat, yeah, I understand.
24. CP: There's skim milk.
25. KB: Skip milk? Skip? No fat.
26. CP: Yeah. Let's see. Here it is.
27. KB: Ah, skim milk, skim means zero?
28. CP: Yeah.
29. KB: Wow.
30. CP: It's a lot like water.
31. KB: Ah-ha. Water? Hhhh.
32. CP: It's the very. When they make milk, they skim it. Then it comes just from the top.
33. KB: Skim? What? What?
34. CP: If you skim something, if you, see here. You have to spoon.
35. KB: Spoon?
36. CP: And you have a bowl. You just get the very top.
37. KB: Ah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I know.
38. CP: Cause the fat is in the bottom.
39. KB: Ah.
40. CP: And with the whole milk, use the [spoon] (scooping sounds: shuck) put it in there where the skim milk use the very top layer.
41. KB: Okay. Next time I'll try.
42. CP: Try 2%.
43. KB: 2%. [Drink] 2%. Okay.
44. CP: Yeah.

45. KB: Thank you. Ah, good.  
 46. CP: It stays fresh longer.  
 47. KB: 2% or 1%? Stay longer? (Conversation, KB, 10/15/04)

Excerpt 4.15 shows that the two interlocutors worked together in order to understand each other. They responded to what had just been said. In this conversation, KB simply repeated what his partner said many times, asking for clarification. He seldom produced a full sentence. Instead, KB encouraged his partner further explanations by questioning or merely repeating the unclear part. His conversation partner listened carefully to what KB wanted to know, and this made him good at explaining things. They continued to negotiate the meanings until KB was able to understand the different types of milk. Finally in line 45, he said “thank you” to his partner, showing his understanding.

Prior to his talk about milk in Excerpt 4.15, KB had already asked LY’s conversation partner about milk when KB joined their conversation meeting. (The excerpt appears in Appendix K.) Even though KB initiated the inquiry, he was not able to join in the conversation. LY and his conversation partner dominated the conversation. Differently from excerpt 4.15, this conversation shows less modification between these two interlocutors. Instead, they just talked about what they knew and wanted to say, no matter what was said previously by the interlocutor. Even though they were both conversations between the Korean participant and the American conversation partner about milk, these two conversations were different in process and results. By the end of the conversation, KB asked another participant in that conversation, SI, in Korean, “Did he say [which milk] is better?” Then SI answered, in Korean, “Nothing special” (Conversation, LY, 10/8/04).

Here is another example of meaning negotiation among five participants who joined the conversation meeting at Starbucks on November 18. They were SI, two native speakers that were work-study students, Paris and Christine, and two international students, including one Korean male student and one Taiwanese male student, ZA and YS. The excerpt below is the conversation about international dating and PDAs, public displays of affection. This conversation topic was interesting and is another good example of

successful conversation in terms of the meaning negotiation process.

In the conversation, YS misunderstood what “PDAs” mean and he had to clarify the meaning later. He thought that it was an abbreviation for Personal Digital Assistant. In line 15, YS asked, “What are you talking about?” Then from line 16 to 19, Christine, Paris, and SI took turns explaining what “PDAs” mean. Then in line 20, he stated his understanding. Then the native speakers explained it further but more briefly. Lastly, YS checked its abbreviation (Line 23), and Christine corrected it and provided a final definition of PDAs (Line 24).

#### Excerpt 4.16

##### *SI's Conversation about PDAs*

1. SI: For Taiwanese girl, how do I say, she didn't want to, how do I say, express they are dating. When they're surrounded by other people, for example, I heard she didn't like to be with her boy friend when there are a lot of people. He also didn't like, how to say?
2. PR: She didn't like PDA.
3. SI: Yeah?
4. CP: PDA is public display of affection.
5. SI: Oh, okay.
6. CP: I don't really PDA.
7. YS: PDA?
8. CP: Public display of affection like people kiss in public like on the street. I think that's too much. I don't like other PDA. I don't like holding here.
9. YS: They want maybe 200 dollars, the new, new PDA.
10. CP: Hhhhh.
11. PR: Hhhhh.
12. CP: No, no, no, no.
13. PR: Not the Personal Data...
14. YS: Oh, okay. (Everybody: Laugh)

15. YS: What are you talking about?
16. PR: Okay. PDA is like in public.
17. SI: People hug each other in front of people.
18. CP: PDA, Public Display of Affection.
19. CP: It's like displaying affection to your significant other in public.
20. YS: Okay, Okay. I understand. Kissing on the street?
21. CP: Or in here.
22. PR: Or in public. I can see you.
23. YS: PBA?
24. CP: PDA. Like people are very close each other in public (Conversation, SI, CP, PR, YS, and ZA, 11/8/04)

Shrum and Glisan (2005) say that meaning negotiation is a process of “[seeking] clarification, [checking] comprehension, and [requesting] confirmation that [the interlocutors] have understood or are being understood by the other” (p. 19). Then they assert that “equal rights in asking for clarification and adjusting what they say” is important for meaning negotiation activities (Shrum & Glisan, 2005, p. 19). In my study, throughout the interactions outside the classroom, the participants learned about new cultural products, practices, and perspectives by negotiating meanings with their interlocutors. When they are engaged in a good conversation which is full of meaning negotiation towards mutual understanding, the participants will benefit and learn about the topics of the conversation as well as communication skills. This can lead them to a development of communicative competence.

### *Summary of the Findings*

In this chapter, I have discussed language learners' social interactions and how these interactions affect their development of communicative competence. I arranged my findings and discussion into two sections: (a) social interactions outside the classroom and (b) development of communicative competence. The following is a list of major statements

about my findings.

1. Living or working with native speakers did not necessarily mean that there were meaningful interactions.
2. Social interaction with native speakers was challenging for language learners because of the cultural distances, discontinuity, and conflicts between them.
3. Active participation in social interactions was an important factor in language and culture learning.
4. Verbalizing cultural issues such as cultural differences, misunderstandings, and observations of the target culture was an indication of the learners' cultural awareness and development.
5. Students believed that knowledge of grammar was an important factor for successful communication.
6. Students were anxious about misunderstandings and miscommunication, and language anxiety was related to perfectionism, embarrassment in front of other people, and losing face.
7. Students easily engaged in interactions with their international peers, and these were less stressful than interactions with native speakers. This peer interaction eventually created opportunities for language learning.
8. Students expected native speakers to correct their errors and to take roles as teachers of the target language even outside the classroom, but they also learned to initiate self-repairs and to ask for help.
9. Engagement is the key to making a good conversation. The underlying condition for engagement is negotiation between two interlocutors to understand meanings.

In the following conclusion chapter, I will revisit the purpose of the study, the research questions and the major findings, and I will briefly discuss the findings. I will make suggestions for English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom instruction, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom interactions, and preparation for study abroad students. I will close this dissertation with a call for further research.

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusion

#### *Introduction*

Through this research I have looked into Korean study abroad students' language and culture learning in Blacksburg, Virginia. I started my research with a great interest in their particular learning process, and I was hoping to learn about their ways of learning and seeing language and culture learning. We all know that there is no "royal" way to learn a foreign language, as the Korean proverb goes. However, I hope that my efforts in investigating a partial reality of the study abroad language-learning students' lives by practicing qualitative methodology contribute to on-going discourses of SLA and SCA.

I have tried to include in this study, my participants' voices telling about their efforts to learn English and to understand American culture, but I may have misheard their voices or inferred too much so that I fell short of presenting their real voices. In constructing a discourse on their realities, I may have taken a stance that was sometimes too objective and sometimes too subjective. Those limitations and inaccuracies are all mine, and are my areas for improvement in the next research project.

In this chapter, I will repeat the purpose of the study and my research questions in order to see if I have accomplished what I planned when I designed this research. I will also briefly discuss the main findings. Then I will provide suggestions for English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom instruction, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom interactions, and preparation for study abroad students. This chapter will end with a need of further research.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The purposes of this research were the following:

- To gain knowledge about the process of second language and culture learning through the language learner's outside-the-classroom interactions

- To investigate how language learners develop their ability to interact and communicate using the target language in a target culture.

### *Research Questions*

Here are the research questions that I have tried to answer throughout this research:  
How do Korean study abroad students learn the target language and culture through interactions outside the classroom?

- How do Korean study abroad students interact socially with native speakers of English and other international students outside the classroom?
- How do Korean study abroad students develop communicative competence through social interactions?

### *Findings*

I have concluded my research with nine major finding statements under each subtitle in two sections -- (1) social interactions outside the classroom and (2) development and communicative competence -- in Chapter Four. Table 5.1 shows the organization of my presentation of findings.

Table 5.1

*Organization of the Study Findings about Study Abroad Students' Language and Cultural Learning*

Social Interactions outside the Classroom	
Subtitles	Major statements
1. English Speaking Environments	Living or working with native speakers did not necessarily mean that there were meaningful interactions.
2. Social Interaction as Cultural Interaction	Social interaction with native speakers was challenging for language learners because of the cultural distances, discontinuity, and conflicts between them.

Table 5.1 continued

*Organization of the Study Findings about Study Abroad Students' Language and Cultural Learning*

3. Active Participation in Interactions	Active participation in social interactions was an important factor in language and culture learning.
4. Cultural Learning and Interactional Competence	Verbalizing cultural issues such as cultural differences, misunderstandings, and observations of the target culture was an indication of the learners' cultural awareness and development.
Development of Communicative Competence	
5. Grammatical Competence and Communicative Competence	Students believed that knowledge of grammar was an important factor for successful communication.
6. Interaction and Language Anxiety	Students were anxious about misunderstandings and miscommunication, and language anxiety was related to perfectionism, embarrassment in front of other people, and losing face.
7. Peer Interaction and Stress Reduction	Students easily engaged in interactions with their international peers, and these were less stressful than interactions with native speakers. This peer interaction eventually created opportunities for language learning.
8. Error Correction and Self-Repair	Students expected native speakers to correct their errors and to take roles as teachers of the target language even outside the classroom, but they also learned to initiate self-repairs and to ask for help.
9. Meaning Negotiation and Interactive Communication	Engagement is the key to making a good conversation. The underlying condition for engagement is negotiation between two interlocutors to understand meanings.

### *Final Discussion*

Language learners study abroad because they want to be fluent in the target language. They choose to live in the target culture away from home for a year or less than a year. By living close to native speakers and going to a language-intensive institute, they expect that they can become fluent speakers of the target language. Once they arrive in the new environment, they find that they cannot become fluent speakers in a short time because they have problems in communicating and interacting with people in the target culture. They had assumed that they would have ample opportunities to meet native speakers and learn from them, and they would pick up the target language quickly and become fluent speakers.

However, living in a foreign country by themselves includes many other aspects in addition to learning the target language. They have to deal with emotions as consequences of their immature living skills, lives as foreigners, communication failures, misunderstanding of situations, etc. In addition, they seem not to get many opportunities to interact with and communicate with native speakers. They begin to spend most of their time with people who speak the same first language. At this point, language learners can be confused about why they have come all this way. This is a possible scenario for language learners in study abroad situations, and this was what happened to Korean participants in this study as well.

Therefore, study abroad is not an easy way to learn the target language. Before and during the study abroad, language learners should be aware of the difficulties and be prepared for those. As I addressed in the findings, the study abroad environment becomes an authentic and meaningful environment only when the language learners take opportunities actively and aggressively. Taking an opportunity to participate in social interactions is important in any situation to live, because they not only develop their linguistic abilities, but they also learn how to live in the target culture, interact with native speakers, continue intercultural relationships, and make their communication beneficial to their development in language learning.

*Language and Culture Learning*

Language and culture learning cannot be separated because language learners living in the target culture often are engaged in intercultural communication where the topics are related to cultural products, practices, and perspectives in the specific local culture. Their everyday life includes experiencing certain levels of new cultural dimensions. Their experiences with misunderstandings and their observations on differences can be good topics and can make good intercultural communication, as my findings suggest. My participants often focus on the need for understanding their own culture and various ways of explaining it to their interlocutors. To share mutual and equal benefits with their interlocutors, the participants said that they needed to know more about their own culture.

They talk about culture, and their talk is embedded in the culture. Language learners' ways of talking are related to their previously learned ways -- their own culture. Their intentions and motivation in talking may be different from those of their interlocutors. They have difficulty conveying meanings for this reason. Therefore, they need to negotiate meaning for better mutual understanding. Through language learning, students can develop intercultural competence; through negotiating meanings, students can develop communicative competence.

*Social Interactions*

Students' social interactions outside the classroom were optional and voluntary. They experienced interaction and communication outside the classroom only by making choices and taking opportunities. Opportunities definitely existed in various situations. Taking the opportunity to experience the target culture by actively participating in activities and in conversations with native speakers and non-native speakers is essential for language learners to learn the target language with an understanding of the target culture.

There are challenges in taking opportunities, however, because students have to deal with the uncertainty of unfamiliar cultural interactions with their limited proficiency in the target language. They are put in situations where they do not know what to do, and it is uncomfortable. Sometimes misunderstanding involves explanations, so they simply avoid

possible embarrassment. For the same reason, my participants were challenged to find and make opportunities to speak English outside the classroom, and sometimes the students chose to avoid seeking those opportunities.

Also, the participants' previous culturally acquired knowledge, beliefs, and styles of individual learning conflicted with the new culture and its knowledge, beliefs, and ways of learning. The participants withdrew once they failed to interact or communicate successfully with native speakers. They then tended to depend on other Korean students and spent the whole time outside the classroom only with Koreans. In the beginning, cultural adaptation seemed to be difficult. Even though they achieved a good command of English, perhaps they mastered only the language and not the culture. It was more important for language learners to learn how to respect differences than how to fit into the target culture.

However, these difficulties with social interaction can be useful and helpful for the language learners. Avoiding possible interaction does not take them to where they want to be: to be a fluent speaker in many social contexts. When tempted to avoid social interaction, they should remember that they miss opportunities to learn about that particular social interaction with that particular group of people. Once one interaction has been accomplished successfully, another may come a little easier, and the next will come much easier. Therefore, one interaction becomes a medium of the next interaction that shows a process of development (Kinginger, 2001). In my study, the Korean participants who participated in social interactions with the local people in the community outside the classroom generated more opportunities to develop their language and cultural understanding.

#### *Development of Communicative Competence*

Linguistic ability or grammatical competence is important when language learners communicate in the target language. However, I found in my study that even outside the classroom the Korean participants tended to communicate with native speakers as if they were still students in the classrooms at the ELI. They tended to see native speakers only as

teachers of and experts in the target language. They wanted to be corrected, directed, and taught by native speakers, whom they considered as experts of the structure and grammar of the target language. Some participants in my study acted like students and language learners, hoping that their native speaker interlocutors could tutor them. In outside the classroom, this expectation was somewhat inappropriate as Wilkinson (2002) notes. Interaction outside the classroom should be different from classroom interaction. Students should be aware of the possible benefits from interaction and communication outside the classroom.

Outside the classroom, interaction can be stressful because students are anxious about making errors when they speak and making mistakes in their behavior. In my study, uncertainty about the language and culture made the participants apprehensive of interaction outside the classroom. The participants became highly stressed as they made intense efforts to learn the rules and pronunciation of the language outside the classroom. However, interaction with international students seemed less stressful for the Korean participants. The participants interacted with non-native speakers without worries about making mistakes. The participants easily participated in the communicational activities with other international students, their peers at the ELI, as they formed friendships. They often mingled with other international students, especially those whose cultures were closer to that of the Korean students than to Americans.

One important thing that I found in this study is that Korean participants develop communicative competence by having conversations with non-native English speakers as well as with native English speakers. The Korean participants communicated with non-native speakers without the expectation of learning the language, so they communicated more spontaneously and in a less stressful manner. I found that the participants could share knowledge of their own culture and the target language and culture, directly and indirectly helping to improve pronunciation or expressions, talking about various topics, telling jokes, and still understanding each other's status and situation in the target culture. International peer interactions can also be a medium of learning the target language through working together towards the same goals.

My participants believed that by talking to a native speaker, they could learn English because their native speaker interlocutors would correct their English. This is often what language learners find most useful in talking to native speakers sometimes; however, soon they realize that the native speaker interlocutors do not want to be rude or offend language learners' feelings by correcting everything they say. Rarely did native interlocutors even outside the classroom want to take a teacher's role. When a native speaker attempted to correct everything was said by the language learner such as mispronounced words or ungrammatical sentences, my study shows that the participants' speech was interrupted by them. Van Lier and Matsuo (2000) say that repairs and comprehension checks are not always sufficient "to account for conversational variation, particularly for the notion of flow" (p. 267). They argue that "Indeed, frequent repair indicates conversational trouble, and more conversational trouble can mean less conversational success" (p. 267). The recorded conversations in this study indicated that language learners communicated better when their native speaker interlocutors cooperated in the process of meaning negotiating and self-initiated-repair.

### *Conclusion*

To conclude, face-to-face interactions outside the classroom are essential for language and culture learning in study abroad situations. In fact, interactional competence can be developed only from "face-to-face interactions" (Hall, 1999; Young, 1999, Johnson, 2004). I agree with scholars like Hall (1999), Young (1999), and Johnson (2004) who see interaction as a social issue. Pursuing a sociocultural approach, Kasper and Rose (2002) argue that interaction is not a mere environment of learning, but a tool for learning the second language and culture and developing communicative competence.

Even though interaction is challenging because it involves an interlocutors' culture, actual interaction over time helps students overcome anxiety. Interaction should not be considered a final test or a final performance, but an essential process of learning. Communicational interaction should not be a one time, instant result of a participant's linguistic ability. Rather, it should be consistent and continuous so that participants in

communicational interactions can become familiar enough with each other to be able to understand other's particular ways of speaking, listening, feeling, and reasoning. When continuous interaction and communication lead to a relationship, interlocutors benefit most. Through the relationship, language learners can finally interact with a great potential to grow and to develop not only their linguistic ability, but also their intercultural communication ability.

Language learners are intercultural speakers (Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street, 2001). They talk about the topics related to cultural differences no matter how great their linguistic abilities are. To share intercultural topics mutually and equally, language learners should develop their understandings of the meanings of their own ways of "doing" culture. For successful intercultural communication, they should practice ways to negotiate meaning when misunderstandings are obvious. Language learners should see a meaning negotiation process as their learning and developing process. It is important to note that only when both interlocutors cooperate and help each other to understand and to be understood by successful meaning negotiation, their potential development can be optimized.

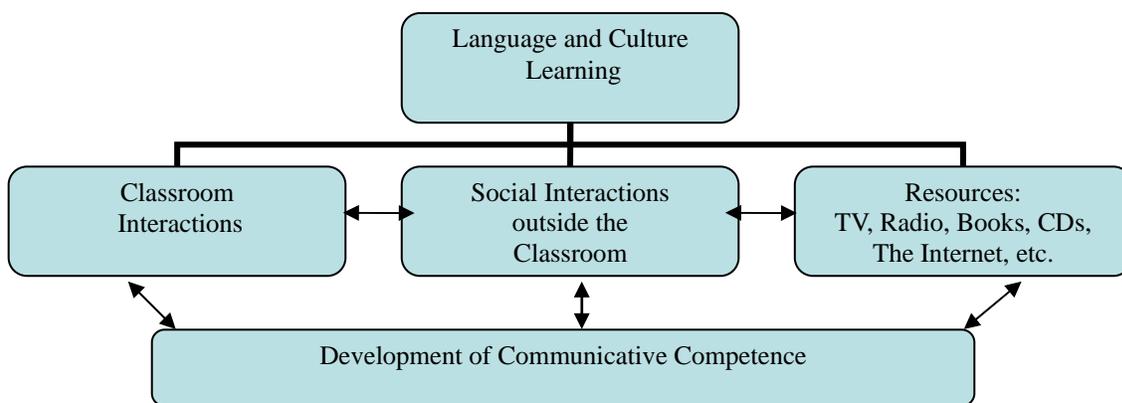


Figure 2. Three major Interactions in learning language and culture

Figure 7 shows social interaction as one important process of language and culture learning, along with classroom interaction and other resources of educational technologies

such as TV, radio, books, CDs, the internet, etc. Even though I did not say much about these two other categories, there is no doubt that they are equally important. Students' learning is enhanced when the three categories interrelate with each other. When students do not make progress or worry about their progress, they should check what kinds of interaction are missing: classroom interactions, social interactions outside the classroom, or educational technology resources that could assist their learning.

### *Implications*

#### *ESL Classroom Instruction*

I hope that this study helps educators to connect their students' outside experiences with classroom instruction. There is no doubt that classroom interactions are important. However, in study abroad situations, language learning students do not come only to take classes at the intensive-language institution. Along with classroom instruction, the students expect social and cultural experiences outside the classroom, too. Understanding that these interactions are not easy to find, the instructors may help the students explore the community and the people in it.

In study abroad situations, time outside the classroom is full of the possibility of interactions. The outside-the-classroom interaction should be valued by classroom instructors. Byram and Feng (2004) say, "It is mistaken to assume that teachers can competently provide explanations of complex issues to their students by simply drawing on text information and personal experience" (p. 156). They should consider having their students explore outside-the-classroom interactions and incorporating students' unique and particular experiences in their classroom instructions. In this way, teachers may enhance their students' understanding of the target culture that is always embedded in the target language.

The instructors can allow and help students arrange their daily schedules to make time for participating in actual outside-the-classroom interactions. They can give homework that encourages the students to interact outside the classroom and reduce classroom homework that requires problem solving on work sheets. For example, the

instructors can give students ethnographic tasks to accomplish as a group, including participant observations, field notes, interviews, and even tape recording (Jurasek, 1995; Byram & Feng, 2004; Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street, 2001). In this way, classroom instruction can develop students' communicative competence as "ethnographers and intercultural speakers" (Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street, 2001, p. 237).

Reflecting on their experiences is as important for students as having opportunities to experience. The instructors may have their students share their journals and field notes in class to give them the opportunity to verbalize their observations. Learning the target language and culture is an emotionally difficult task; therefore, the instructor may support, encourage, or just simply listen to the students' voices about their intercultural experiences.

- Here is the summary of suggestions for ESL instructors:
  - a. Help the language-learning students explore the community and the people outside the classroom.
    - Give homework that encourages the students to interact outside the classroom. For example, have them interview college students about college life in the United States.
    - Give students ethnographic tasks to accomplish as a group, including participant observations, field notes, interviews, and tape recording. For example, have them record their conversations with wait persons at restaurants several times for a two-month period to see the changes in their conversations.
  - b. Incorporate students' unique and particular experiences in their classroom instructions
    - Have their students share their journals and field notes in class to give them the opportunity to verbalize their observations.
    - Arrange an individual or group conference in order to support, encourage, or just simply listen to the students' voices about their intercultural experiences.

*EFL Classroom Interaction*

Social interactions related to the target culture outside the classroom are extremely limited in the situations of EFL. However, this limitation should not be taken as an inferior environment for teaching and learning English. Likewise, non-native speaker teachers should also not be considered as limited in terms of their various communicative competencies and proficiencies. In EFL classrooms, language learners can still value their target language learning if instructors guide them to meaningful interactions. EFL instructors may facilitate these by giving students opportunities to speak spontaneously with each other. This means that the students are allowed to make errors, repair their errors by themselves, and try to make their interlocutors understand them during classroom interactions with instructors and peers.

EFL classroom interactions are challenging among peers because students who share the same first language have much difficulty in communicating continuously in a foreign language. They may often switch the language at will (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). If the Korean participants in this study felt embarrassed, lost face, and became anxious, the students in EFL classrooms might feel the same in front of their Korean peers. Therefore, it is important for the EFL instructors to arrange “a low-anxiety environment” in their classrooms when they plan classroom interactions with a communicative approach (Shrum & Glisan, 2005, p. 15).

When the instruction goal is to develop students’ communicative competence and interactional competence, EFL instructors can consider facilitating their students the ability to talk about intercultural issues in their own culture with their interlocutors. This means that the instructors may prepare students to be intercultural speakers (Roberts, Byram, Barro, Shirley, & Street, 2001). As Roberts, Byram, Barro, Shirley, and Street (2002) suggest, one way of doing this is for the instructors to bring ethnography into their classrooms. Ethnographic classes should be designed not to be static and only informative, but to be progressive “as a way of perceiving, interpreting, [and] feeling” (Robinson-Stuart and Nocon, 1996, p. 432). Understanding that language and culture learning is ongoing and ever lasting, students will benefit from processing in learning about their own culture in

classes of English as a Foreign Language.

- Here is the summary of suggestions for EFL instructors:
  - a. Give students opportunities to speak spontaneously with each other.
    - Allow students to make errors, repair their errors by themselves, and try to make their interlocutors understand them during classroom interactions.
  - b. Keep a low-anxiety environment in their classrooms.
    - For example, have them choose their topics for conversation, and allow them to talk among themselves without grammatical requirements.
  - c. Prepare students to be intercultural speakers.
    - Facilitate students' ability to talk about intercultural issues in their own culture with their interlocutors.
    - Have them research their own cultural products, practices, and perspectives using English.

### *Preparation for Study Abroad*

#### *Recommendations for language learners.*

During study abroad, students can develop abilities “to negotiate unfamiliar situations in a foreign environment,” and “the development of these skills in one environment can prepare students to be lifelong learners of linguistic and cultural differences” (Ingram, 2003, p. 220). Here are suggestions and a check list for students who study abroad, or plan to do it:

- What to be aware of and what to do:
  - a. Interactions outside the classroom are essential for developing communication skills. Make opportunities to interact with native speakers outside the classroom.
  - b. Outside-the-classroom interactions are challenging because you have to deal with the unfamiliar cultural systems of the native speakers, as well as with

communicative difficulties. Respect the differences between your own culture and the target culture.

- c. How much you have learned about the target language and culture may not always be sufficient in some situations because there may be local differences. Do not judge or stereotype native speakers and their culture.
- d. You will be anxious about your unfamiliarity with the language and culture and become stressed. Bear in mind that it is perfectly natural to be anxious and stressed, so you just need to control your daily schedule and find time to relax. Try to find someone who shares common situations but speaks a different first language so that you can help one another as you start your new lives in the new place.
- e. You can learn how to negotiate meanings in various situations mostly through interactions. Listen carefully and ask questions. It's okay to say, "I don't understand." Talk about your difficulties with your friends, possibly in the target language.
- f. Intercultural topics can result in good communication. Observe cultural products, practices, and perspectives carefully and talk about your observation with your interlocutors, possibly in the target language.

*Recommendations for home institutions.*

Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002) suggest that "better preparation from students, home institutions, and the in-country program (and greater communication among the three) are central elements" in enhancing study abroad students' learning (Ingram, 2003, p. 220). In Korea, short-term study abroad for language learning is the students' personal choice, and most of the time students rely on their own financial sources for expenses. For this reason, students' home institutions usually are not involved with students' study abroad programs. Students rather go to private offices to arrange their study abroad instead of the offices in their institutions. However, I believe that a strong partnership between students' home institutions and their language-intensive institutes in study-abroad countries can better foster students' learning. Institutions in Korea should seek to manage supporting

systems for students who study abroad.

I also recommend that the Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development encourage the educational institutions to promote collaboration with students' study abroad programs. Short-term study abroad is popular, but at the same time it is expensive. Students need to benefit from this expensive experience. Students' successful language and culture learning can offer successful communications in international businesses in the industries and corporations that they will work for later. Supporting study abroad students aids also in developing human resources throughout Korea. Therefore, it is critical that the higher education institutions share responsibility for students' short-term study abroad language and culture learning. Governmental efforts are necessary to encourage the educational institutions to implement support systems.

#### *Further Research*

In this study, I examined how adult language learners learn the target language and understand the target culture in their early study-abroad days. I have already pointed out that a limitation of this study is that it covers only a four-month period of Korean study abroad students' lives. I borrowed the pieces of their short-term study abroad experience to understand the nature of study abroad, second language acquisition, second culture acquisition, and communicative development.

Throughout the research process, I have practiced and learned qualitative research methods. Among them, I found that the conversations I collected were particularly helpful and valuable in understanding how one learns the target language and culture. Therefore, I felt that I need to learn about in-depth analytical tools for conversation to illustrate my conversation data vividly for future research.

I would like to study how students continue to learn and develop their language ability and cultural adaptation after they have lived in the target culture for one or two years. For this reason, I call for a longitudinal ethnographic study to investigate how language-learners' first sojourn experiences influence their learning and development in the target language and culture, how learners' experience changes over time, and what their language

learning experiences in a target culture mean to them after they have lived there for many years.

In this study, one participant was an advanced language learner, but she had never lived in an English-speaking country before this time. I was interested in learning about her presentation of her own culture and her reflections on study abroad experience including learning the target language and the target culture. In the future, I would like to study more about advanced language learners and their operation of intercultural communication in order to suggest how they can be better intercultural speakers.

On the other hand, during my stay in the United States, I have seen many Korean children adjust to the English language and culture. For example, my daughter, who was five years old, developed language skills and patterns that became nearly indistinguishable from native speakers, and she could easily mingle with friends crossing nationalities. As I focused on social interactions outside the classroom in this study, I assume that young learners' social interactions must be also an important factor on their development of language and cultural awareness and understanding.

I assume that the quality of interactions may differ between young learners and adult learners. Young learners had not fully acquired their mother tongue and culture yet. Children have not developed the previous cultural knowledge that their parents have when they learn social norms in the target culture. Therefore I call for a paper on various topics related to young learners' language and culture learning inside and outside the classroom through their social interactions: with their teachers, classroom peers, friends, parents, and strangers.

I would like to learn more about the relationship between cultural learning and identity formation of language learners. I am interested in finding out what the language learners' mother culture means to them. I have some more questions related to this topic: What do language learners realize and how do they think about their own culture while practicing it? How do language learners perceive their own culture or parents' culture and how do their perceptions influence in forming their identity? How do language learners' identities change or how differently are they perceived by native speakers when they speak

the target language?

My curiosity regarding language and culture learning will never end, and I will pursue answers for the questions in my professional life as a researcher and a teacher in the field of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL).