

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English as a second or foreign language is a major international enterprise. The current status of English as the primary language in global market has turned a significant percentage of the world's population into part-time users or learners of English (Carter & Numan, 2001). The wide-spread need for English as a second or foreign language puts considerable pressure on the educational resources of many countries. In recent years, there has been a large increase in the number of international students coming to the United States. The Institute of International Education in the United States reports that there were 586,323 international students in 2002-03. The number of students enrolled in intensive English programs in the United States continues to rise, increasing from 43,739 in 1996-97 to 78,521 in 2000-01, which is an increase of 79.5 %. This rapidly increasing population of English language learners in the United States, as well as the world-wide increase, has given rise for a need to understand and value English learning experiences.

Background of problem

Every year, thousands of students worldwide leave home for the purpose of participating in an educational experience in a country other than their own. It has long been assumed that the combination of immersion in the target speech community, integrated with formal classroom learning, creates the best environment for learning a second language¹ (Freed, 1995). The strength of this assumption is so powerful that there has evolved a popular belief, one shared by students, teachers, parents and administrators, that students who go abroad are those who will ultimately become the most proficient in the use of their language of specialization. The term "study abroad" is a particularly American or European reference (Freed, 1995). As a rule, study abroad programs combine language and/or content learning in a formal classroom setting along with immersion in the target speech community. Elsewhere, similar experiences are termed "exchanges," as in the case of Australian students who study in Japan and Finnish students who study in Germany or England. According to Freed (1995), "study abroad"

¹ Second language learning defines broadly to include the learning of any language to any level, provided only that the learning of the 'second' language takes place sometimes later than the acquisition of the first language. (See Candlin, C. M and Marcer, N)

describes all these experiences and is only contrasted with spontaneous language learning in natural speech communities. Collentine and Freed (1995) also describe the term “immersion” as settings in which second language learners are surrounded by the target language on a potentially full-time basis (e.g. immersion in the native speech community, an intensive domestic immersion).

Many business people and researchers come to the United States for temporary assignments of one to seven years and bring their families with them (Claire, 1998). Their children attend American elementary and secondary schools. The term “study abroad” is used to represent these children’s experiences of learning in the United States because they learn in formal classroom settings while being immersed in the native speech community (Claire, 1998; Freed, 1995).

Through the years, researchers in Korean companies and universities have been invited to research in American universities. These persons generally bring their families and stay for one or two years. Unlike immigrants, these families live in the United States temporarily and will return to Korea when their business responsibilities have been fulfilled. The Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources refers to these children as “early study abroad students” (Kawng, 1995; Shin, 2003).

Responding to globalization, nations encourage young people more than ever to become proficient in languages and cultures of various countries (Bacon, 2002). With the realization of the economic and political importance of English proficiency in the global society, interest in learning English has been increasing (Carter & Numan, 2001). Consequently, in addition to the programs in middle schools and high schools, there are an increasing numbers of English language programs in the early grades throughout the world (Takahashi, Austin, & Morimoto, 2000).

In Korea, English is the first foreign language taught. English is officially introduced in all schools in the third grade. However, the growing trend is that parents enroll their children before the third grade in private English classes after school. Considering the fact that English is a major subject that must be mastered in order to go to high school and college, Korean parents make efforts to provide their children many opportunities to learn English outside school. If possible, Korean parents are willing to send their children abroad to English-speaking countries to learn English. A total of 10,132 individual elementary, middle and high school students left

Korea to study overseas between March 1, 2002 and February 28, 2003, reflecting the recent trend in the country toward early overseas education. According to a report released by the ministry, if students who went abroad to accompany parents immigrating or performing services overseas were also included, this figure would rise to 28,126 in this one year period. Officials from the Ministry of Education state that most of these students went to English-speaking countries to learn the language, not to settle there permanently. They added that the surge in the number of students going abroad for learning English reflects their parents' belief that children learn English better in English-speaking countries. The current fever for early overseas education in Korea urges Korean educators to explore how students learn English in English-speaking countries, and also to work to improve English education in Korean schools.

Korea, of course, is not alone in sending students abroad to learn a target language. The number of Chinese students seeking a study abroad experience has also constantly grown, increasing from 200 persons annually in 1998 to 6,000 persons in 2004, and the proportion of middle and primary school students among them has risen from less than 30 percent in the past to around 50 percent today (Guanghui, 2001). From Guangdong Province alone, Guanghui (2001) reports that more than 2500 middle and primary school students are going abroad every year. This current increase in the number of students who go abroad to learn a language reflects a common belief that living in the target language country improves second language learning.

In fact, research into the effects of study abroad on language learning support the idea that study abroad has a positive effect on language learning. Longcope (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of quantitative studies, finding that they could be grouped in three categories: 1) studies that measure subjects' gains in proficiency using some form of oral proficiency interview; 2) studies that measure subjects' gains in grammar using either a discrete point grammar test or error analysis; and (3) studies that measure gains in proficiency with regard to interlanguage change that learners acquired forms of language between their first language and their target language with respect to one or more components of proficiency (e.g., syntactic complexity, grammatical accuracy, fluency).

However, Greg (2000) claims that such studies that used test scores to measure language gains fail to explain why certain participants progressed more than others. Further, they shed little light on how individual factors such as perceptions affect second language learning. While mastering of a second language has traditionally been perceived as the biggest benefit of study

abroad, little attention has been paid to the attitudinal or cultural gains that students have while they are abroad, or to documenting the changes in their language skills as a result of an experience abroad (Freed, 2004; Thompson, 2002; Wilkison, 1998). Moreover, work by Pellegrino (1998) and Wilkinson (1998) has shed light on the fact that students in study abroad contexts do not always benefit from their time abroad. In order to make better sense of the language learning experience in immersion context, researchers need to investigate the dynamics of learner/context interactions and to explore language learning experiences from the learner's point of view.

Overseas experience for students is considered a short cut to linguistic fluency and the development of cross-cultural understandings (Clooentine & Freed, 2004; Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004; Lafford, 2004). These benefits are held to derive from the learner's interaction with others and immersion in the environment, an environment which most closely resembles the environment of the first language learner. The majority of studies investigating language learning in immersion contexts have been highly product-oriented, focusing on the measurable improvements students make in language proficiency and linguistic knowledge while abroad (Pellegrino, 1998; Thompson, 2002). Limited research considers the process of language learning while living in a study abroad context, such as the actual experiences, perspectives of learners living in a foreign country and issues related to participants' motivations, values, and preferences (Kline, 1998).

Although measuring learners' language gains using a test clearly has its benefits, the danger of focusing on language learning as a product is that the complexity of the learning experiences of language learners may be overlooked (McKay, 2000; Pellegrino, 1998). As Pellegrino (1998) points out, the quantitative second language proficiency benefits do not and cannot adequately convey the personal growth and experience of immersion in another language and culture and the impact of these experiences on language learning. Therefore, in order to understand this experience, focusing on what elementary students undergo when they go abroad, the present study investigated how learners perceive the target language learning process in an immersion context and perceptions of affects on success or failure in language learning. Specifically, this study will investigate linguistic, cultural and attitudinal changes in the participants during time spent in a study abroad setting, based on their perceptions.

The present study aims to provide insight into language learning experiences in a study abroad context - that of learning English in the United States - and to understand language learners' experiences from their point of view. For this study, the experiences of learning English in the United States by the participants will be operationally defined by the terms "immersion context" and "early study abroad context." These terms will be treated as equivalents. By exploring students' English learning experiences, the study attempts to understand what takes place in language learning and what components of the contexts support and do not support the students' language learning. The findings will help teachers of English language learners to create facilitative language learning environments in their classrooms. In addition, asking learners to directly express their opinions will add a vital dimension to the understanding of the complexities of language learning experiences and effects of linguistic and cultural immersion in language learning.

Second language learning and sociocultural theory

Surprisingly enough, a heavy emphasis in second language acquisition research has been placed on learning in a formal classroom (Dewey, 2004). Only recently investigators have looked at the effects of study abroad (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Lafford, 2004). These studies have compared and contrasted the effects of study abroad in an immersion context versus at home context by concentrating on such topics as the acquisition of listening skills (Freed, 1995; Huebner, 1995), grammatical morphemes and lexical distinctions (DeKeyser, 1997, 1991; Collentine, 2004), syntactic issues (Dewey, 2004; Huebner, 1995; Kline, 1998), measures of fluency (Freed, 1995; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Freed, Segalowitz & Dewey, 2004), and the use of communicative strategies (DeKeyser, 1991; Lanford, 1995, 2004; Regan, 1998). These studies, however, provide no evidence that one context of learning is preferable to another for all students, at all levels of language learning, and for all language skills. Furthermore, while mastery of a language has traditionally been perceived as the most direct educational benefit of study abroad, little attention has been paid to the actual experiences that students have while they are abroad.

These findings suggest an interest what facilitates in students' language learning in a study abroad context. Rather than examining linguistic skills using quantitative approaches,

research should be conducted to investigate learners' perceptions, attitudes, and other related learning in order to more fully understand how the learners reach the resulting output and how the learners' target language emerges.

Sociocultural theory allows for a focus on understanding language use in context and the processes of linguistic and attitudinal changes, as well as cultural understandings that occur during the children's stay abroad. From a sociocultural perspective, language is of interest in its functional sense, not only for communication, but for thought itself. Sociocultural theory provides a functional view of language that focuses on language as a means for engaging in social and cognitive activity. In other words, sociocultural theory views language as socially constructed rather than internally intrinsic, and as both referential and constructive of social reality. (Lantolf, 2000; Thorne, 2000).

Vygotsky (1986) was interested in speech as an ongoing human activity, believing it to be the crucial mediational tool in the development of higher mental processes in learners. Language assists the developing communicative and cognitive functions to move from the social plane to the psychological plane, or as Vygotsky stated, from the interpsychological to the intrapsychological. The movement from the social plane of functioning to the individual and internal plane of functioning requires active engagement by children in social interaction with peers and supportive adults (Lantolf, 2000; Rogoff, 1990). In social interaction, the child uses speech and gesture to regulate attention, to identify and label objects, to classify, to elaborate experiences, and to offer explanations. The opportunity to use speech as a means of making sense of experiences with other participants is a crucial step in learning to use language meaningfully, appropriately, and effectively.

Lantolf (2000) contended that a comprehensive theory of second language acquisition should incorporate principles derived from sociocultural theory. Advocating a Vygotskian approach to second language acquisition, Lantolf views language acquisition as a social semiotic construction, which is to say that learning occurs as a result of mentorship and sociocultural activity. The form/meaning associations that learners make are situationally and culturally based and the resulting symbols (i.g., knowledge of the second language) mediate conscious thought relating to those situations and cultural phenomena. Lantolf objects to the idea of language being modularized in the brain, but instead, he views it as intertwined with experiences, cultural knowledge, emotions, and self-identity. Language learning is about the understanding of learners

themselves as agents whose conditions of learning affect the learning outcome. Individuals have intentions, agency, and affect (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). In other words, the learners gradually construct their understandings and perceptions as they act and interact within the environment.

The sociocultural perspectives of language learning are pertinent in the case of studying the English learning experiences of Korean children who live temporarily in the United States. Looking at language learning in context to investigate the children's English language learning experiences makes it possible to understand the related insights of learners who construct their understandings and perceptions as they act and interact within an immersion context. As we gain more understanding about the dynamics of context-learner interactions of children during a study abroad, it will become easier to understand the potential influence of one context of learning as compared to another regarding language acquisition.

Purpose of the study

Research has confirmed that study abroad has a positive impact on the acquisition of a second language (Freed, 1995; Collentine & Freed, 2004). While gains in proficiency have been noted, there is little understanding of what study abroad looks like from the learners' perspectives and how the learners make sense of their learning. Though there is an increase in the number of children who learn English, almost no attention has been given to the learning of English by young students who study and live in the United States for a short term. Therefore, the current study is intended to help fill this gap. The children's families of the present study were contracted to serve a certain amount of time with the university by the Korean government, a Korean university, and Korean companies. Their children were attending a local elementary school and had been in the United States for from four months to one and a half years. They were mainstreamed in regular classes for most of the day and pulled out for ESL instruction. The ESL teacher arranged one or two children to teach in the ESL classroom.

This study is not to suggest that the study abroad context is superior to other learning contexts. Nor is it to imply that the study abroad context is less rich and less potentially beneficial to learning than has always been assumed. Rather, by exploring a group of Korean children's English learning experiences during their stay of abroad, this study aims to provide insight into processes involved in the acquisition of English language in the target language setting and into factors that facilitated the students' language learning. Specifically, the present

study will investigate the children's learning in terms of linguistic, cultural and attitudinal changes during time spent in a study abroad context.

The findings will lead second language teachers in the United States to a deeper understanding of the intrinsic links between the environments they create in their classrooms and the developmental consequences to which they give rise. The findings will also be useful in informing teachers who teach English as a foreign language in other countries about how to adjust classroom instruction in order to create an environment that is most conducive to English language development that not only is relevant to their students, but that also taps into their experiences of language learning.

Research questions

This study will examine Korean children's learning experiences in southwestern Virginia, in the United States. One of the goals of this study is to examine the voices of Korean students describing their experiences in English learning in the study abroad context to investigate how these experiences have affected their learning English, and how they perceive learning in the early study abroad context. Ultimately, by examining students learning English, the study seeks to find factors that facilitated their language learning. The research questions that guided data collection were:

- (1) What are Korean students' perceptions of their own linguistic proficiency associated with constant exposure to an English-speaking community?
 - How well do the children perceive that they are able to communicate in English in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing?
 - What kinds of experiences do the participants perceive to be the most effective in building their language skills?
- (2) How has the acquisition of cultural knowledge among the Korean children been affected by extensive exposure to an English-speaking community?
 - What are some of the social and cultural opportunities that have been available to the Korean children?
 - How do the Korean children describe their experiences while enrolled in an elementary school in the United States?

(3) How are the Korean children's attitudes toward learning English affected by extensive exposure to an English-speaking community?

- What are the children's attitudes towards their ESL and regular classes?
- What are the children's attitudes towards learning English?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review begins with a discussion of cognitive and sociocultural perspectives of learning. The cognitive view of learning continues to influence the field of second language learning (Johnson, 2004). More recently, a sociocultural perspective on second language acquisition has been connected with the cognitive view of language learning, and through this lens, language can be viewed as intertwined with experiences, cultural knowledge, emotions, and self-identity. (Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2003).

From the sociocultural perspective, the study of individual development is the study of the processes by which mind and external worlds are linked. It begins with the analysis of the conditions surrounding the individual and entails the study of the actual processes of interaction between individuals and their learning environments. Studies that have applied the sociocultural framework to the investigation of second language acquisition shed light on the importance of interaction in learning a second language. In this chapter, the cognitive and sociocultural perspectives on second language learning will be explained. Next, research on second language learning will be briefly reviewed and finally, related research studies on second language learning in study abroad contexts will be discussed.

Cognitive view of language learning

The cognitive view of language learning, the most widely accepted scientific tradition in second language acquisition, stresses the importance of mental processes (Johnson, 2004). In the early 1950's, Noam Chomsky revolutionized thinking about language development when he suggested that children are born with an innate capacity to develop language (Larsen-Freeman, 1991; Wells, 1985). Chomsky's view of language acquisition does not place on much emphasis on the learners' environment or the conditions of language use. Rather, the focus is on the importance of mental processes. In Chomsky's view, language is seen as a set of abstract concepts or rules which enable a speaker to construct an infinite variety of meaning bearing sentences in a language without having to accomplish the impossible tasks of memorizing all the possible sentences that the speaker hears. Chomsky views language as a set of formal properties in any language grammar.

Chomsky (1972) argued that the language acquisition process is essentially one of rule formation. According to him, children learn language by unconsciously figuring out how language works. The children internalize a set of grammatical rules that enable them to produce an unlimited number of sentences in a given language. They can do this without having heard or practiced them, which contradicts the behaviorist principles of repetition and reinforcement. His explanation is that overgeneralization of errors (e.g. "I eated it") of language acquirers could not have resulted from imitation of target language speech, but could be a result of hypothesis formation. According to this explanation, learners are seen to play an active role in forming and testing hypotheses in an effort to understand the target language rules from the target speech to which they were exposed.

This cognitive view, owing to its heavy reliance on Chomsky's linguistic theory of first language acquisition, has been adopted by the mainstream second language acquisition community (Long & Doughty, 2003). Advocate of this theory search for generalizability, the uniformity of human mental process, and the universal rule-governed mental behaviors by focusing on the linguistic notion of meaning (Johnson, 2004). Inspired by Chomsky's theory, learner errors became the main focus of many studies of first and second language acquisition that examined the innate capacity of learners to generate meaning through language (Lasen-Freeman, 1991; Richard-Amato, 1988). Second language learners were found to commit similar developmental errors across different languages, with their errors being consistent with correct grammar in the mother tongue (Cook, 1993; Ellis, 1991; Wells 1981). These findings have led second language educators to conclude that the process of second language acquisition is also one of rule formation.

The cognitive view of language learning explains second language learning using the supposition that there is an internal device which enables the learner to develop a concept or rule for the grammar or the meaning of a word. Thus, second language learning can be viewed as the internalization of linguistic knowledge in which the structures and function of the second language into the brains of individual learners (Seliger, 1983). The grammar of a language is viewed as a generative device for producing all the possible sentences of a language (Seliger, 1983). In the existing research literature more attention has been paid to the learners' process of language acquisition including grammatical understandings and their abilities than to the impact of learning context on individual linguistic development (Donato, 1994). Influenced by the

cognitive view of language learning, second language instruction tends to provide traditional grammar-based language instruction, and language learning is considered a skill for learners to acquire, with the focus being on grammar and vocabulary (Fitzgerald, 1993). Focus on form at the expense of function has led to a skill-based approach, stressing phonics knowledge in reading or usage of grammar and spelling in written language.

The information-processing version of the cognitive view of language learning is what Johnson (2004) calls the “newer version” of the cognitive approach in the second language acquisition field. In this case, language acquisition has been generalized as an information-processing activity where what gets negotiated is not contextual meaning, but input and output (Donato, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 2001; Johnson, 2004; Kramsch, 2002). The language learner is an information processor who receives input from caretakers, teachers, and peers; processes this input, and ultimately produces output of a measurable kind. An emphasis was placed in the empirical study of language learner discourse as researchers gathered data on learners and teachers as evidence of language development (Gass, Mackey & Pica, 1998). For example, Gass, Mackey and Pica (1998) explored the ways in which learners manipulated their interlanguage resources when asked to make their messages more comprehensible. They illustrated that second language syntax developed through conversation between learners and their teachers.

Krashen’s input hypothesis (1985) and Long’s (1985) interaction hypothesis influenced the information process models and the field of second language acquisition in general (Johnson, 2004). Krashen’s input hypothesis resembles closely Vygotsky’s concept of zone of proximal development (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Richard-Amato 1988). Vygotsky views learning occurs in the social interactions of the child and adult (or novice and expert) while they are engaged in a meaningful activity within the sociohistorical setting. Vygotsky’s concept of zone of proximal development explains that a child can achieve something different and/or more complex when he or she is able to accomplish a certain task independently with given appropriate assistance. Vygotsky suggested that good instruction is just ahead of development and leads to development, which is defined as the zone of proximal development. Similarly, Krashen (1982, 2003) argues that language is acquired when students receive comprehensible input that is one step beyond the current linguistic stage. He emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input over production. In Krashen’s view, second language acquisition fails to occur when the learner is deprived of meaningful language, such as engagement in classroom activities that concentrate on the forms

of language rather than on meaning. He stresses that comprehension is particularly important in the early phases of acquisition as a means of developing minimal competence for meaningful interactions. As in the input theory, Long (1983, 2001) emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input in the form of conversation in his interaction hypothesis. He argues that second language acquisition is primarily facilitated when interactional opportunities for practice and adjustment are present. He insists that learners cannot simply listen to input but that they must be active conversational participants who interact and negotiate the type of input they receive in order to acquire language. Learners make changes in their language as they interact or negotiate meaning with each other. In the classroom, this means that both parties in a teacher-student and/or student-student interaction must seek comprehension that is understood and is being understood by the other.

According to Johnson (2004), the focus of Krashen's input hypothesis (1985) and Long's (1985) interaction hypothesis is on the learner's cognitive processes. She points out, "The process of analyzing the incoming information is viewed as being mechanistic, predictable, stable, and universal. The outside reality, or social context, is acknowledged indirectly, abstractly, and superficially, mainly in the stage associated with input or apperceived input. Interaction is not viewed as a social issue but as a cognitive issue" (p. 84).

In summary, from a cognitive perspective, the brain is seen as the container of both learning processes and learning products. Language learning is viewed as being made up of various mental processes. This view contests the notion that individual learners internalize bodies of knowledge which exist independently of the situations or the persons interacting with them (Black, 2003 & Seliger, 1983). The focus of cognitive second language acquisition research explains the mental processes responsible for second language acquisition. Context or environment is viewed as less important than individual mental processes in children's development of knowledge construction.

The sociocultural view of language learning

A more recent research movement focuses on social and cultural processes and influences and is the result of some dissatisfaction with cognitive perspectives (Green, et al., 1994; Meyer, 2000; Perez, 1998; Richard-Amato, 1988; Serpell, 1993; Smith, 1994). Ambert (1987) points out that there may be other factors in the child's environment that play key roles in language

acquisition, accepting the notion that children may possess an innate ability to formulate grammatical rules. In an ethnographic study of parent-child interaction, she concluded that children used language to communicate, and a child's language performance must be analyzed within the context of the environment in which speech acts occur. This study supports the sociocultural view of language learning, which suggests that our linguistic and cognitive development is in part socially constructed.

The basis of sociocultural theory is the belief that human beings are social beings and develop cognition first through social interaction (Richard-Amato, 1988). According to Vygotsky's (1962) learning theory, cognition skills and patterns of thinking are not primarily determined by innate abilities, but are the products of the activities practiced in social institutions. In his explanation, learning and development are embedded in the social interactions of the child and adult (or novice and expert) while engaged in a meaningful activity within a sociohistorical setting. For Vygotsky, therefore, cognitive development is due to the individual's social interactions within the environment, and learning is a sociocultural activity that is situated and constituted within social and cultural practices. He stressed the social and cultural nature of the development of children's language and mental processes. For example, a young child is dependent on parents in the early stages of development. Children gradually become less dependent on parents and others because they become able to achieve more things by themselves as they grow. Furthermore, when a child is able to accomplish a certain task independently, he or she can achieve something different and/or more complex, if given appropriate assistance. Vygotsky's understanding of learning offers insight into the role of social interaction in learning, such as the idea that learning and development take place when a child is interacting with people in the environment and in cooperation with peers (Richard-Amato, 1988; Takahashi, 1998).

Unlike the cognitive perspective, a sociocultural perspective suggest that social and cultural factors are considered to be of more paramount significance in supporting second language acquisition (Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2003). The sociocultural perspective takes into consideration the dynamic roles of social contexts, individuality, intentionality, and the sociocultural, historical, and institutional backgrounds of the individual involved in cognitive growth (Johnson, 2004). This view highlights the importance of the development of linguistic skills for social interaction in a variety of sociocultural and institutional settings.

Many second language researchers argue that formal instruction focused on linguistic components (such as grammar) is not the best way to learn a second language (Anton, 1999; Boyd & Maloof, 2000; Gass, 1997). To learn a second language, traditional mechanical learning is not enough. When English language learning consists of studying the English grammar, for example, students typically have to memorize dozens of rules. These rules are presented one by one and the explanation of each rule is usually reduced to a couple of examples. With this type of instruction, Anton (1999) points out that students are not provided with the tools needed for a meaningful orientation in the implicit rules that govern each language. As a result, systems of grammar are perceived by children as a meaningless collection of isolated cases rather than as a coherent system of relationships.

The sociocultural view of language learning rejects instruction that centers on reduction of speaking, listening, reading, and writing into skill sequences transmitted in isolation or in a successive, stage-like manner and including such practices as having children sit quietly, follow mundane directions, only read assigned texts, fill out worksheets, and take tests (Bongartz & Schneider, 2003). Rather, the sociocultural perspective emphasizes the creation of authentic social contexts in which children use, try out, and manipulate language as they make sense and create meaning (Bongartz & Schneider, 2003; Tsui, 2001; Schinke-Llano, 1995; VanPatten & Sanz, 1995;).

From the sociocultural perspective, context shapes what an individual needs and what needs to be learned, when and where the learning takes place, and how the learning is perceived. The features of a particular context (operationalized as an activity setting, or the who, what, when, where, why, and how of an activity) are products of sociocultural and historical forces that play important roles in the activity of the moment and in the interactions that take place while participating in the activity. The participation in extensive and varied types of sociocultural practices is the primary source of language development. Therefore, from a sociocultural perspective, learning is a socially situated activity and language acquisition is realized through a collaborative process in which learners appropriate the language of the interaction as their own and for their own purposes, building grammatical, expressive, and cultural competence through this process (Lantolf, 2000; Donato, 1994; Moll & Whitmore, 1993).

Donato (2000) insists that framing the study of language development in a model of sending and receiving linguistic information reduces the social context to an opportunity for

interaction and is limited in its ability to explain linguistic interactions. He indicates that the cognitive approach superficially recognizes the influence of the social context on individual linguistic development. As Lier (2002) stated, the inherited biological characteristics of language constitute only the necessary preconditions for the capacity and ability to learn. The core of what gets learned and the shape it takes are defined by the environment, constituted by activities available to learners, and shaped by the learners' idiosyncratic ways of participating in them. Thorne (2000) also points out that an emphasis on individual cognition within language learning fails to account for a large number of dimensions of language use, including the roles of context, interaction, and human agency. Thorne explains that dynamic interactional environments shape both the conditions for and the consequences of individual development. Key components of this process include the specific contexts of human action and the particular opportunities provided to, or created by, participants.

Thus, from a sociocultural point of view, second language learning cannot be viewed as an immediate product of the individual; rather, it is the process by which learners engage in co-constructing their second language knowledge (Donato, 2000; Ohta, 1995; Swain, 1995). The study of individual development is the study of the processes by which a mind and external worlds are linked. The focus is not a set of rules and facts to be acquired, but ways of acting and different kinds of participation (Lier, 2000; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Second language learning goes beyond "what" the individual produces (e.g., input and output) and focuses on "how" the individual interacts with others through a joint activity.

In summary, sociocultural theory questions the common assumption that language, cognition, and intelligence are uniquely contained inside the brain, and that learning consists of various ways of inputting information there. The sociocultural view of language learning stresses the specific contexts of human action and the particular opportunities provided for or created by participants and how these contexts shape both the conditions for and the consequences of individual development. Within a sociocultural framework, learning a second language is a result of co-construction between language users and the social environment.

Second language acquisition and interaction

Researchers and educators have recognized that learning a second language poses many challenges (Freeman, 1989; Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). Learners acquire a second language in

different ways. Their second language acquisition will vary according to the student's age, language background, proficiency in the first language, individual personality, and motivational factors, among other considerations. Understanding the processes that a child goes through to learn a second language is an increasingly necessary task for teachers.

During the last ten to fifteen years, significant studies in second language development have provided researchers and practitioners with important information about how children learn a second language (Hudelson, 1984). Lindfors (2002) says, "It is an interesting paradox that the more we find out about how language development differs from individual to individual and situation to situation, the more we find out about how it is similar for all" (p.58). The child encounters language used for many different communication purposes (e.g. explaining, promising, inviting, entertaining), in many different types of events (conversations, rock songs, storybooks, letters from grandma), involving many different participants and focusing on many different topics. However, as Lindfors points out, a closer look reveals a crucial commonality; namely, that the specific language situations that children in any society encounter are all real communication events.

There has been increased emphasis on social interaction as the generative context for language mastery. Ellis (1990) states that if we view teaching as "formal instruction," we will only be concerned with whether the attempt to teach specific linguistic features is achieved. However, if we view teaching as "interaction," we will be interested in the extent to which different input and interactional features contribute to learning a language. Investigating what actually goes on during the learners' interaction in the classroom clarifies how the learners develop the resulting output and how the learners' target language emerges.

However, prevalent approaches to second language teaching emphasize syntax and the learning process in a universalist way (Hurley & Tinajero, 2000). In a typical lesson, as Anton (1999) describes, the teacher presents some grammatical structure, the students then drill on that structure, and finally, they practice it. The teacher presents material in a linear sequence of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Anton (1999) characterizes classroom teaching practice that follows this pattern as the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the passive learner.

There is evidence that the emphasis on correct oral reading and proper pronunciation in a target language inhibits the language development of students and hinders their overall cognitive development by removing significant meaning and opportunities for enjoyment from learning

(Fitzgerald, 1993; Gersten, 1996). Research findings show that the processes of writing, reading, speaking, and listening in a second language are interrelated and interdependent (Hudelson, 1984; Ernst & Richard, 1995; Williams, 2001). Second language learners demonstrate that they are dealing with and making sense of language as a totality rather than dealing with the language processes as separate entities (Hudelson, 1984; Ernst & Richard, 1995; Williams, 2001).

According to Long (1998) and McLaughlin (1985), second language acquisition best develops in ways similar to the first language. That is, effective second language acquisition takes place in contexts where there is negotiation of meaning and language exposure is real, extensive, and anxiety free. A number of studies revealed that interaction is a major variable in a second language learning process by assisting language learners in their need to obtain linguistic input and to modify and adjust their output in ways that expand their current language capacity (Chaudron, 1988, Ellis, 2000; Gallaway & Richard, 1994; Rivers, 1987; Shrum & Glisan, 2000; Wells, 1981). In order to input to gain access to the learners' thinking, Krashen (2003) emphasizes that learners' affective filter (anxiety) should be low.

Language develops best in a variety of settings that promote talk and interaction. Talk and interaction not only help students understand new concepts, but also provide a scaffold for learning through the other language modes of reading and writing. Through talking and listening to one another (not only to the teacher) and working on activities involving reading and writing (not only their own), learners are able both to develop increasing facility in all language modes and increasing control over social interaction, thinking, and learning.

Researchers representing the different paradigms focus on a variety of recommended interactional practices. Researchers have examined comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985), focus on form (Doughty & Varela, 1999), negotiated output (Swain, 1995) as well as task type and negotiation strategies (Long, 1985; Pica, 1994). Most studies of interaction have centered primarily around the mechanism of the interaction such as the number of utterances and the number of turns taken by communicators (Takahashi, 1998).

For example, Long (1983), in his study of modifications in native speaker input to nonnative speakers, claimed that the interactive modifications were facilitative and necessary for second language acquisition. Interactive modification occurred when nonnative speakers and native speakers had difficulties in message comprehensibility. The comprehensibility was achieved as native speakers repeated and rephrased for non native speakers. Mackey and Philip

(1998) report that using the target language as a tool for social interaction affects both the rate and quality of second language acquisition. Similarly, Tsui (2001) also found that learners who maintained high levels of interaction in the second language, both in the classroom and outside, progressed at a faster pace than learners who had limited interaction in the classroom.

Many researchers also documented the natural pattern of modifications in teacher-learner interaction to understand how input from a teacher becomes comprehensible through the negotiation of meanings (Chaudron, 1988; Gass, Mackey, & Pica, 1998). According to related studies, teachers used simple syntactic structures and made lexical, phonological, and grammatical modifications in their utterances to make input comprehensible to the learners (Chaudron, 1988; Ellis, 1984; Wesche, 1994). Chaudron (1988) examined teachers' questioning behavior and found that teachers' questions constitute a primary means of engaging learners' attention, promoting verbal responses, and evaluating learners' progress. Teachers use more display questions and comprehension checks but fewer referential questions, confirmation checks, and clarification requests. She concluded that because lower level questions were the primary focus during instruction, there was little negotiation of meaning in the classroom setting and as a result, there was little comprehensible input.

Recognizing that simply counting conversational adjustment in search of understanding the process of input and output may paint an inaccurate or partial picture, researchers recently have shifted their attention from psycholinguistic approaches to the social-cognitive perspective (Donato, 2000; Ohta, 2000; Lantolf, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Lier, 1996, 2000). These researchers argue that interactive negotiation through individual input and output modifications does not provide sufficient conditions for acquisition of and proficiency in a second language. Rather, they insist that language learning goes beyond "what" the individual produces (e.g., input and output) and focuses on "how" the individual interacts with others through a joint activity.

Pica, Lincoln-Porter and Linell's (1996) study of learners' interactions supports the notion that interaction in the classroom creates opportunities for learners to use language, and through practices, learners are motivated to engage in further communication when they produce the target language under real conditions of communication. An example of the importance of interaction comes from Takahashi (1998), who observed a Japanese-English program, focusing on young learners' development of classroom interaction. He found that the learners were able to participate in classroom activities in a more dynamic, student-centered manner in which they

collaboratively scaffolded for one another, and that the learners' learning and development were largely influenced by the social interaction established in the given classroom environment. Gallaway and Richard (1994) share a similar conclusion in their study of cross-cultural language development by explaining that children acquired language more effectively when they were exposed to meaningful content and interaction. They suggest that integrating language learning with meaningful and interesting content provides a substantive basis for language learning, and interaction provides a real social context for learning the communication functions of the new language.

Donato (1994), Ohta (2000), and Swain (2000) analyzed the collaborative dialogues of second language learners and found that through collaborative interaction, students accurately co-constructed a structured form of the target language. The findings indicated that negotiated interaction in pairs resulted in learning the new structure. The learners were at the same time individually novices and collectively experts, sources of new orientations for each other, and guided one another through a complex linguistic problem-solving process. That is, learners develop a diversified set of abilities as they work with teacher and peers. This cooperative relationship is particularly important to second language teaching because it requires meaningful interaction between the teacher and learners, students and other students, and students and texts.

To conclude, sociocultural research demonstrates that interaction is a major variable in second language learning processes which assists language learners in their need to obtain linguistic input and to modify and to adjust their output in ways that expand current language capacities (Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2003; Ohta, 2000; Seliger, 1983). These studies underscore the need to explore the role played by the social context in second language development and explain social interaction beyond a simple description of the input received by individual learners. The actual quality or basic nature of the interaction, what is said by whom for what purpose and in what context, affects the learners' learning. By understanding more about the processes that occur in learning a second language, teachers can be in a better position to plan classroom experiences that are conducive to second language learning.

Language learning in a study abroad context

There is a growing claim that second language acquisition theory should accommodate the variables defining the learning context (Cummins, 1989; Collentine & Freed, 2004; Freed,

2004; Lier, 2000 ; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). The importance of the role that contexts play in supporting the development of language proficiency has been the focus of considerable research (Lafford, 2004; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004). Much of this research identified the features of contextual factors such as setting, participants, and the purposes of interactions that served as a guide for learning opportunities.

Freed and Segalowitz (2004) insist that contextual differences promote perceptible, identifiable, and significant differences in the acquisition of a language. Collentine and Freed (2004) categorize three learning contexts: (a) the formal language classrooms (in country or at home); (b) immersion settings that integrate formal classroom (content or language oriented) and out-of-class learning opportunities, and (c) study abroad contexts with potentially unlimited opportunities for use of the target language.

The effects of a study abroad context on the acquisition of a second language have attracted much attention among second language scholars in recent years (Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Lafford, 2004). The supposed superiority of the study abroad context has been founded in the assumption that classroom drills cannot substitute for extended experience communicating with native speakers in natural settings about real-life matters. This general impression has been reinforced by students returning from abroad who frequently demonstrate significantly improved language skills (Wilkinson, 1998). It is clear that students who go abroad to learn a target language have the chance to acquire many aspects of a second language which are more difficult to acquire in the home country environment where learning is restricted to the classroom (Shtesta, 1998). Most study abroad students participate in instruction in class as well as being immersed in the natural environment.

Language educators, second language researchers, and language program administrators have been more interested in investigating the concrete effects of study abroad programs on the linguistic abilities of students. Empirical studies have used various data sources to determine the value of the study abroad context as a second language learning context (Freed, 1995; Collentine & Freed, 2004). One major focus has been on the level of language gain produced in the study abroad context as evaluated by a set of pre-and post-program measures as compared with gains from second language study in other contexts. Much of this research has addressed similarities and differences in acquisition between those whose learning has been limited to the formal language classroom in their home country as opposed to those who have acquired a second

language in a study abroad setting (Dewey, 2004; Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004). Generally, this research has found support for greater levels of second language learning in the study abroad (Collentine & Freed, 2004).

For example, Lafford (2004) compared and contrasted the Spanish language abilities of students who study abroad with those who stay at home to assess the effectiveness of the study abroad experience in students' communication strategies. Based on analysis involving role-play situations, he found out that the study abroad group had a far broader repertoire of communicative strategies for initiating, maintaining, expanding and terminating a communicative situation than did those whose learning had been limited to the formal language classroom. Similarly, students who had studied abroad spoke with a faster rate of speech and utilized more repairs in their speech in Freed's (1995) study of fluency. In an examination of students' grammatical and lexical abilities between learners of Spanish in a study abroad and in a domestic context, Collentine (2004) found that the study abroad context was an especially important agent in the acquisition of vocabulary. His results indicated that in an examination of discrete grammatical items and a count of unique lexical items, the study abroad context facilitated more lexical-grammatical growth.

Two large-scale multidimensional studies of study abroad (Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1995; Lapkin, Hart, & Swain, 1995) reported that students made significant gains in reading during study abroad. Although these reported gains were not as great as those for oral and aural skills, learner self-assessments indicate that students felt more confident about reading after study abroad. Differences in attitudes toward learning to read were also reported in Huebner's (1995) study of English-speaking students learning Japanese. Huebner reported that study abroad learners demonstrated greater gains in reading abilities than learners at home. Members of the study abroad group were anxious to learn to read and felt greatly inhibited by their inability to read. Thus, they were motivated to try to gain this skill while studying abroad. On the other hand, members of the domestic group expressed frustration with the burden of having to learn two syllabaries-namely, hiragana and katakana.

In reviewing a collection of current research on study abroad, Freed (1998) suggested that the linguistic benefits for learners included ability. This review integrated various aspects of second language learning in study abroad contexts in French, Spanish, and Japanese, and Russian. He states:

[Such students] speak with greater ease and confidence, expressed in part by a greater abundance of speech, spoken faster rate and characterized by fewer dysfluency-sounding pauses. [Such students]...display a wider range of communicative strategies and a broader repertoire of styles...and their linguistic identities extend beyond the expected acquisition of oral skills to a new self-realization in the social world of literacy (p.50).

Several researchers point out that by investigating the effects of study abroad contexts using students' test scores, questions have been raised that need to be explained (Brecht, Dan, & Ginsberg, 1995; Lapkin, Harl, & Swain, 1995). For example, Lapkin, Harl, and Swain (1995) reported ceiling effects on their study of exchange students' linguistic gains. Students who initially had lower language proficiency scores made greater gains in an immersion setting. This issue of ceiling effects is directly related to measurement issues that fail to effectively capture the progress made by more advanced students. Further, there are findings suggesting that, at least for more advanced learners, that significant second language changes do not take place in the study abroad context (Ginsberg, 1995; Regan, 1995; Huebner, 1995). In addition, Bacon (2002) points out that how much students benefit is influenced by many variables including students' initial level of language proficiency, knowledge of culture, degree of adjustment, and satisfaction with instruction.

The assumption has been that language learners go abroad to really learn a language, and that learners can "pick up" the language with greater ease because of the availability of opportunities to interact with native speakers. It is safe to say that what most differentiates study abroad learning contexts from other learning contexts (e.g. formal language classroom, intensive domestic program) is the availability in study abroad contexts of opportunities to interact with native speakers in many different settings. High levels of contact can be expected to provide practice leading to various types of language gains. Given this unique exposure to a wide range of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic phenomena in these settings, what students see as potentially learnable is noteworthy.

Researchers have focused considerable attention on the learner's interactions in the study abroad and there is evidence that the degree of interaction is important for learner's second language development (Bacon, 2002). Freed (1995) shows that activities and interaction of a social or oral nature seem to provide greater benefit to students at the lower level of proficiency. Siegal (1995), Lapkin, Hart and Swain (1995), Regan (1995), and Lafford (1995), all find, to

varying degrees, that the amount of interaction with native speakers is an important factor in the acquisition of sociolinguistic and sociocultural knowledge. For instance, Cambell (1996) attributed her successful acquisition of German during study abroad to her close and frequent interaction with native speaker friends. Through her interaction with the German friends, Cambell reports improvements in automaticity of speech and her sense of social salience as a member of a German social group.

Recently, assumptions about learning a second language in a study abroad context have been challenged because the effects of individual factors on second language learning have not been taken into account (Greg, 2000). Study abroad students may or may not have rich interactions with native speakers in a variety of social situations, such as visiting homes, eating out in cafes, going to the park, shopping, and attending cultural events. For example, Wilkinson's (1998) study of four students learning French in France proved that certain kinds of contexts in which the learners interacted helped learners to develop the target language. Wilkinson argued that increased interaction outside the classroom in the target language and miraculous linguistic gains are not inevitable. Some of her interviewees reported that they had a hard time meeting native speakers for conversations. Unexpected problems also discouraged the participants from engaging in their learning context. In addition, Wilkinson's participants chose to speak their native language over the target language whenever possible. Wilkinson highlights what she calls the "language myth," the number of hours students spend simply exposed to the language naturally led to learning. She claims that understanding language learning in study abroad cannot be achieved without studying how the individual and the context work together to facilitate and constrain learning.

Numerous social, cultural, and psychological factors may cause the participants to avoid using the target language and reject opportunities to speak. Bacon (1998) found that one explanation of such avoidance behavior was cultural adaptation. Bacon examined the participants' adaptation to Spanish culture and reported that the participants' experienced breakdowns in their relationships with Spaniards, difficulty communicating in Spanish, negative attitudes towards native speakers, and feelings of isolation. These feelings led the participants to reduced second language use and stunted their understandings of the target culture. As a result, the study abroad participants had limited success in language learning in the study abroad. Similarly, Miller and Ginsberg (1995) analyzed a sample of student narratives about the

language learning process in a study abroad context. Among their discoveries was the fact that the perceptions and beliefs of the students about the language and culture affected all aspects of their language learning while abroad. Unique interactional opportunities for acquiring a target language afforded by a study abroad context are sometimes ignored by learners. For instance, some students in the study were sometimes unwilling to take risks in learning to experiment with language, an important opportunity provided by study abroad. The students often ignored productive learning situations which they think did not qualified as language learning (Miller & Ginsberg, 1995). Pellegrino (1998) explains that when learners perceive threatening behaviors from interlocutors, such as insulting feedback or harsh correction, they are more likely to avoid interaction.

Study abroad contexts have the potential to create opportunities for social interactions for learners that can lead to second language learning. Yet, it is important to recognize the dynamic and idiosyncratic features of interaction that allow individuals to change and be changed by this particular context. Pellegrino (1998) states that students' perception of the target language, their own learning, and the study abroad experience hold great value for understanding language learning in the context of the social behaviors of students immersed in study abroad. Learners develop their own ideas about how languages are learned and themselves as language learners, and these ideas lead learners to make choices about their language use and learning behavior that affect their ultimate success in language learning.

Miller and Ginsberg (1995) contend that participants' learning environments influence learners' beliefs and expectations that in turn arises from relational interaction between the learners and environment. Despite the participants' strong assumption that the most efficient way to learn another language is in a study abroad program, their need to negotiate their identities with regard to educational expectations, peer-group influences, and personal connections led them to create and miss opportunities for language learning.

Thompson (2002) examined the learning processes of public school teachers during time spent in a study abroad context in Spain. The participants in his study experienced considerable changes in their opinions about themselves, the target language, and the target culture. They reported feeling more independent, more confident, and more accepting of cultural difference than they had been before studying in another country. Regardless of limited quantifiable changes in their second language knowledge, they all reported great satisfaction with their

language development during study abroad and all perceived themselves to have improved on all language measures. Similarly, Rissel's (1995) study of the overseas experiences of teachers demonstrated that they felt more confident teaching Spanish because they had been exposed to Mexican culture. The target culture experience enhanced teachers' enthusiasm for teaching. Studying students returning from overseas experiences, Davis and Mello (2003) also reported that the students perceived benefits beyond acquisition of a target language. The students in their study reflected on their personal growth and cultural awareness. The findings indicated that learners gradually constructed their understanding and perceptions as they acted and interacted within the study abroad environment. Huebner (1995) found more positive perceptions toward the acquisition of Japanese literacy expressed in interviews and journals by students who studied in Japan even though the learners were not more statistically superior in language knowledge to those who studied in a formal language classroom. The students' perceptions about reading and writing in Japan changed as they had chance to meet local people and learned about Japanese culture.

These studies show that students develop certain attitudes, conceptions, and perceptions towards learning target languages during the stay abroad. This has a strong impact on learners' use and ultimate acquisition of the target language (Bacon, 2002; Wilkinson, 1998). Therefore, understanding the complexity of study abroad cannot be achieved by studying the level of second language contact or the level of second language learning. Research is needed that considers the variability of activity (e.g. learner's perceptions and goals) that leads to learners' behaviors in investigating the effects of the study abroad. As discussed, social interaction is more than the action of one person delivering information to another. Rather, it shapes and constructs learning opportunities. The focus should be, therefore, on how the learner's participation in interaction provides the learner with opportunities to hear and produce the target language in ways that go beyond the role of simple input.

The research into the effects of study abroad context on language learning that was discussed in this section provides contradictory findings about language gains. There is no extensive research that explores learners' social interactions that do and do not lead to language gains in study abroad contexts and related learner's perceptual changes while abroad. There is much to learn about how students actually spend their time while abroad and how their experiences contribute to language learning and attitudes toward learning a target language.

The theoretical framework guiding this study is the sociocultural perspective on second language acquisition. The sociocultural perspective takes as a starting point an understanding that the origin and structure of cognition are rooted in the daily social and cultural activities in which people participate. This view of learning English as a second language makes it possible to account for the social aspects of language learning, emphasizing the social and functional features of language acquisition (Ellis, 1991; Gumperz, 1996; Hansen, 1979; Perez, 1998).

From a sociocultural perspective, the learner is immersed in an environment full of potential meanings. These meanings become available gradually as the learner acts and interacts within and with the environment. Learning is not a piecemeal migration of meanings to the inside of the learner's head but rather the development of increasingly effective ways of dealing with the world and its meanings (Bongartz & Schneider, 2003). Therefore, to look for learning is to look at the active learners in their environment, not at the contents of their brains.

Keeping the sociocultural perspective of learning in mind, language learners are active conversational participants who interact and negotiate the type of input they receive in order to acquire language. The present study explored second language learning as the understanding and communication of meaning rather than the learning of a body of linguistic knowledge by copying the structures and function of the second language into the individual learners.

As many studies show, what happens to learners while they are abroad influences their perceptions toward a target language and culture (Davis & Mello, 2003; Freed, 1995; Wilkins, 1998). Such perceptions are, in many cases, different from those that would have been developed had these students not come to the host country (Wilkins, 1998). Therefore, without viewing the learners' language learning experiences from their point of view, it is not possible to the learning and perceptions that are the result of these experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Overview

Research questions that this research focused on were:

- (1) What are Korean students' perceptions of their own linguistic proficiency associated with constant exposure to an English-speaking community?
 - How well do the children perceive that they are able to communicate in English in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing?
 - What kinds of experiences do the participants perceive to be the most effective in building their language skills?

- (2) How has the acquisition of cultural knowledge among the Korean children been affected by extensive exposure to an English-speaking community?
 - What are some of the social and resources that have been available to the Korean children?
 - How do the Korean children describe their experiences while enrolled in an elementary school in the United States?

- (3) How are the Korean children's attitudes toward learning English affected by extensive exposure to an English-speaking community?
 - What are the children's attitudes towards their ESL and regular classes?
 - What are the children's attitudes towards learning English?

The present study examined five Korean elementary students' learning experiences in the United States. By examining Korean students' experiences while they were living in the United States, the study aimed to explore what the students themselves thought about regarding what they had learned while living in an English-speaking community and the students' perceptions of how these experiences influenced their English learning. The study described how the children who had been introduced to some English vocabulary in Korea but did come to speak English, became able to read and write English as they learned to speak it in their early study abroad

classrooms and in the community. Specifically, the study investigated the linguistic, cultural, and attitudinal impact of living temporarily in the United States on Korean elementary students.

To understand what happened when the children learned English as second language when they came to the United States, qualitative case studies were used. As Merriam (1998) describes, “a case study is a particularly suitable design if a researcher is interested in process” (p.33). Interviews with the children provided insights into the students’ experiences from their points-of-view. Five elementary students were the primary participants in this study. Interviews with the participants’ parents, regular classroom teachers, and an ESL teacher were included for supplementary information. One visit to the children’s classroom was conducted to understand the classroom contexts.

Preparing to Conduct the Study

According to Seidman (1998), a pilot study helps researchers reflect on their experiences and revise their research approaches based on what they have learned from their pilot experience. By doing a pilot study, researchers can refine their data collection plans with respect to both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed (Yin, 2003). This study was piloted using a preliminary interview guide with four Korean elementary children. The children’s parents were visiting scholars. The children attended an American school and went back to Korea when their fathers’ sabbatical years ended in 2003. The study examined how the children perceived their learning experiences in their regular rooms and their ESL classes. The children were interviewed one time. The focus was on comparing the children’s ESL classes with their regular classes. By comparing those classes, the intention was to explore the experiences the children had in each context and learn about their learning preferences.

As I interviewed the children about their preferences, however, I found that the children liked to talk about their learning in the content across areas such as science, as well as the ESL class and their PE classes. Whether it was reading, science, art, or PE, the children perceived that they acquired language more effectively when they were exposed to meaningful content and interaction that provided a substantive basis for language learning and a real social context for learning the communication functions of the new language.

While completing the pilot study, I became aware of the fact that learning takes place in a variety of contexts – school, community, and home. To fully understand the students’ learning

experiences in the English-speaking community, it was inappropriate to concentrate only on their school lives or on one class, ignoring the many other aspects of the experience. Through the pilot study, I learned that it would be more productive and meaningful to examine the learner's experiences in the school and classroom, while at the same time investigating the students' personal, social, and cultural experiences from their perspectives.

The children in the pilot study showed that they learned more than simple linguistic knowledge about English. They also were actively engaged in various events and negotiated meanings in order to communicate with others. The children developed their English abilities as they acquired increased opportunities to use them in authentic contexts for real purposes. This initial stage led to further inquiry on how this happened; what did their teachers do to make this happen, and would exploring further indicate how the children learned English more easily than when they attempted to learn English in their Korean schools.

The pilot study shed light on the importance of social aspects of language learning, emphasizing the social and functional features of language acquisition and helped identify on a theoretical framework for examining English language learning experiences. The sociocultural perspective suggests that contexts shape what an individual needs and wants to learn, when and where the learning takes place, and how the learning is perceived (Gan & Humphreys, 2004). Looking at language learning from a sociocultural perspective in order to investigate the language learning of Korean children who began studying English in their native country and then lived in the United States provided the opportunity to develop a better understanding of the processes of learning and development that language learners undergo and the importance of context in learning.

Further, the pilot study helped develop relevant interview questions to investigate how children interact in the new environment and how this new environment influences their feelings and thoughts towards English language learning. The interviews for the present study contain questions regarding the children's community activities, as well as their school lives. Through the lens of the sociocultural perspective, this research focuses on what features of the English-speaking community have influenced the children's language learning and how the children perceive their English learning experiences in the English-speaking community.

Research design

Numerous statistical studies attest to the value of investigating study abroad experiences for older students in terms of proficiency outcomes (Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser, 1997; Freed, 1995). These studies also show that students' gains in a target language during a study abroad context vary depending on a variety of factors, such as their own previous language experience, overall linguistic ability, and their understanding of and their experiences with the target culture. Effects of early study abroad experiences on children are not known.

The fundamental goal of this study was to provide insight into early study abroad experiences for Korean children in an English-speaking community. The study explored the children's perceptions of their experiences in school and classroom contexts, as well as their personal, social, and cultural experiences. Another goal was to investigate the children's experiences in the English-speaking community as they related to perceptions of second language development. Thus, it was expected that the result could inform second language teachers and program developers. Specifically, the study examined perceptions of the linguistic, cultural and attitudinal impact of living temporarily in the United States on Korean elementary school students. Ultimately, by examining perceptions of these experiences, the study sought to find factors that facilitated language learning.

The social context, such as the environment in which the learning takes place and the social interaction in which the learners are involved, cannot be separated from what and how they learn. Yin (2003) explains that case study is suitable to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially if boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Therefore, to investigate the children's learning experiences in the English-speaking community, as well as the context where such experiences occur, a multiple case study was used in this study.

Interviewing was the primary means of collecting data for the study. In order to explore the students' learning experiences from their points-of-view, it was reasonable to ask the children directly about their experiences. Pelletier (1998) states that giving children the chance to speak about their experiences can best capture their experiences and make it possible to understand the meanings their experiences have in their lives. The students described their experiences in the English-speaking community and reflected on how these experiences influenced their English learning, their attitudes toward English learning, and their cultural learning. These data was

supplemented by a short survey and relevant documentation about the children's learning, such as samples of the children's schoolwork. In addition, interviews with the children's parents provided additional information about their children's English learning experiences. Interviews with the school principal, the regular classroom teachers, and the ESL teacher provided information about the school and the curriculum in which the children have participated. Observation of the children's classrooms provided the learning contexts.

The Context of the Study

Community. The study was conducted in a rural college town located in the southwestern part of Virginia, USA. The topography was hilly with rivers nearby. The community was home to a major land-grant university and thus has a relatively sophisticated population. The community was primarily agricultural with a growing high tech industrial base due to the university. The population included students, faculty, and permanent residents. The community can be characterized by academic and cultural diversity. There were many cultural activities in this town of fifteen thousand permanent residents and twenty-seven thousand students. For instance, every spring, an international festival was held for a week. International students and families exhibited their representative cultures downtown, and many international events were held. In the summer, there was a farmer's market as well as food and craft fairs, and outdoor concerts. Many of these events were sponsored by the university or the town. The town provided an English language program for the international residents for free and also provided a tutoring program for English language learners who attend local elementary and secondary schools. The town recreational department provided sports programs, such as swimming, soccer, dancing, baseball, basketball, and art.

School. The Green Hill Elementary School [pseudonym] for the present study was one of four elementary schools in the immediate community. Students attending this elementary school were primarily children of the faculty and staff employed by the nearby university or the business community, or they were the children of graduate students, some of which were international. The population of the school tended to be transient and significantly international because of the university. As the number of international graduate students increased, there were also increasing numbers of children from families that speak other languages at home. According to the ESL teacher, approximately ten different countries were represented in the student

population of the elementary school. The school website subtitled, “A basic school serving a diverse community.” When entering the school building, one could not miss international children’s pictures that were posted on the wall, identified as, “Our International Community.”

The school website provided basic information about the school. Approximately 470 students through K-5 attended, with a pupil-teacher ratio of 19.6 to 1. The school was inspired by a child-centered approach that encouraged each student to understand and enjoy the learning process (Green Hill Elementary School/Student and Parent Handbook, 1994, p.4). All parents were welcomed to visit Green Hill Elementary school at any time, and the school encouraged parent and community involvement. The children’s parents could take part in the school volunteer program.

Curriculum. Green Hill Elementary School/Student and Parent Handbook explained the instructional program. The curriculum spanned across traditional boundaries and the celebration of diversity and commonality. The curriculum had been developed based on six concepts: relationships, communication, exploration, discovering, change, and diversity. A sense of global awareness was enhanced by extensive classroom libraries. Students were involved in cooperative learning, such as fifth-grade learners being buddies to kindergartners. Language arts (including reading, spelling, writing, language, and listening) and mathematics were the most emphasized content areas, accounting for up to three and one-half hours of each teacher's daily instructional time. Other subjects included science, social studies, and health. Students leave their regular classroom to take part in music, physical education, art, and library classes taught by specialists in these fields. The kindergarten curriculum was designed to help children learn to work and play with other children and to prepare them for the academic needs of first grade. Emphasis was placed upon socialization, number recognition and counting, alphabet recognition, phonics, and beginning skills in handwriting. The school provided pull-out ESL instruction to language learners in grades K through five. Although ESL children received ESL services, they were mainstreamed in regular classes for most of the day. Depending on the children’s level of English proficiency, the child received instruction from an ESL teacher for twenty to thirty minutes, one to three times per week (Green Hill Elementary School/Student and Parent Handbook, 1994 & Boyer, 1995).

Participant Selection and Participating Children

Selecting participants included purposeful and snowball techniques. The pilot study had been conducted in order to analyze the plausibility of conducting the present study and to gain a grasp on research methods that support the development of understandings of the children's learning experiences. The pilot provided the opportunity for informal conversations with the children's parents and access to other Korean parents and their children in the community. Through initial contact with one Korean parent, I used a snowballing technique where I asked the parent to refer me to other possible participants who they thought might be willing to participate in cases for my study. Merriam (2001) refers to this as snowball, chain or network sampling, meaning that people who know others are asked to recommend possible participants who meet the study criteria.

Because the study investigated the linguistic, cultural, and attitudinal impacts of living temporarily in the United States on Korean children, the criteria for participants included a sample of boys and girls who had learned English in their home country. In this way, the children's perceptions about learning English in two different settings could be compared and their perceived linguistic and attitudinal changes and cultural knowledge while abroad could be explored. Learners' perceptions varied over time and across situations, and they gradually construct their understanding and perceptions while interacting within this environment (Greg, 2002). Therefore, in addition to understanding how the children experienced schools, community, and the early study abroad context in general, the stage of the participants' stay in the United States was a factor given attention in choosing the participants.

Using purposeful and snowball techniques in selecting participants, five Korean elementary students were selected for the study. All of the children were born in Korea, and they had not traveled or lived in another English-speaking community before coming to the United States. They all went to Green Hill Elementary School. Since the community was university based, Green Hill Elementary School had a number of transitional Korean children who arrived at diverse stages of their education at any given year. The children in this study all had studied English in and out of school in Korea and they had been in the United States for from four months to one and half years. Two children (Jeewon and Jeewoo) had spent two semesters, and two children (Minsoo and Namhoo) had spent one semester in the United States. One child (Eunhee) had been in the United States only three months. The two children who had spent two

semesters were brother and sister. Two of the participants were girls (Jeewoon and Eunhee), and three (Jeewoo, Minsoo, and Namhoo) were boys.

The children were mainstreamed in regular classes for most of the day and had pull-out ESL instruction. Jeewon and Namhoo only went to ESL class if they had questions, such as questions about their writing. The other children, Geewon, Eunhee, and Jeewoo, received ESL instruction for about twenty minutes to thirty minutes three times a week. The children answered many questions about their previous English learning experiences, and their current English learning experiences in the United States.

The children’s parents all had college degrees from Korean universities. Although the children’s parents were fluent in English, they spoke Korean almost exclusively at home. The children’s fathers were a graduate student at a local university, a visiting scholar, a visiting researcher sponsored by the Korean government, and a visiting researcher sponsored by a Korean company. Table 1 shows participant profiles for interviews.

Table 1.
Participants’ profiles for interviews

Child	Age	Grade level	Amount of time in U.S at the time of study	ESL instruction	Father’s job
Jeewoo	6	1 st grade	One and half years	3 times a week	Visiting research staff
Jeewon	11	5 th grade	One and half years	When needed	Visiting research staff
Minsoo	9	3 rd grade	Six months	3 times a week	Graduate student
Namhoo	10	4 th grade	Six months	When needed	Visiting scholar
Eunhee	11	5 th grade	Four months	3 times a week	Visiting research staff

All the children’s parents were interviewed and were asked to answer about their children’s English learning experiences and their perspectives about learning English in the English-speaking community. Teacher interviews and classroom observations were conducted with those who gave permission. Minsoo’s teacher and Jeewon’s teacher declined to participate in the present study. Minsoo’s teacher stated that she didn’t have time for interview, and Jeewon’s teacher was sick at the time of study. More detailed information about the school was provided by the school website and the School Student and Parent Handbook, and an interview with the principal was conducted.

Methods of Data collection

Central to this study was an attempt to explore English learning experiences of Korean children in an English-speaking community. According to Davis (1995), socioculturally-oriented qualitative research takes a semiotic approach, which considers the immediate and local meanings of actions, as defined from the participants' point of view. Through a sociocultural framework, the study investigated the following questions:

- (1) What are Korean students' perceptions of their linguistic proficiency associated with constant exposure to an English-speaking community?
- (3) How has the acquisition of cultural knowledge among the Korean children been affected by extensive exposure to an English-speaking community?
- (3) How are the Korean children's attitudes toward learning English affected by extensive exposure to an English-speaking community?

The data sources for this study, as Table 2 shows, were of multiple types: interviews with students, parents, a principal, and teachers, as well as relevant documents, class observations, a survey and field notes. The use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues (Yin, 2003). Furthermore, any findings or conclusions in a case study are likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on multiple sources of evidence (Merriam, 1998, 2000; Yin, 2003).

Table 2.

Overview of sources of data

Interviews	Three individual interviews with the children. One individual interview with the regular room teachers. One individual interview with the ESL teacher. One individual interview with the principal.
Documents	Student assignments, objects in the classroom, official grade reports and school reports, student school work, and so on.
Observation	One field visit to ESL and regular classrooms.
Survey	Completing a five-item Likert scale that assessed the children's perceptions about English learning in Korea and in the United States.
Field notes	Comments about interviews, observations, and documents.

Interviews were the main data source for this study. Yin (2003) insists that an interview is one of the most important sources of case study information. The strength of interviews is that we can come to understand details of people's experience from their points of view. Merriam (1998) explains further that interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behaviors, feelings, or people's interpretations of the world around them. Therefore, the main purpose of an interview is to find out what is "in and on someone else's mind" (Merriam, 1998, p. 71). By interviewing five Korean children, the present study described their experiences as they were perceived by the children. The children's experiences provided an understanding of how each child made sense of their language learning in a new environment and insights about the children's perspectives of language learning. Moreover, throughout the interview process, the interconnections among the children who were living and going to the same school in the English-speaking community were discovered.

Each student was interviewed three times during the study period. Mishler (1986) insists that arranging a one-shot meeting with an interviewee is not optimal to explore the meaning of a participant's experience because a researcher can hardly know the context of the participant's life. A series of interviews with each participant allows the interviewee and participant to plumb the experience and to place it in context (Seidman, 1998). In order to collect further information about the children's learning, parents, teachers, and a principal were interviewed one time. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted approximately 45 minutes. The semi-structured interview provides a solid qualitative framework, because it poses distinct questions and issues to be explored but provides flexibility in the order and wording of questions (Merriam, 1998). All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. An interview guide was used to guide the conversational interview. The interview guide questions for the children are included in Appendix A.

Interview questions for the children, parents, a principal, and teachers were developed by the researcher and approved by committee members, and university IRB and local School District officials. Questions were open-ended, and participants were asked to answer about the facts, as well as their opinions. The researcher used a list of topics to assist in guiding the interview toward a description of a specific experience.

For the children, interview topics included participants' perceptions of their linguistic proficiency, their acquisition of cultural knowledge, and participants' attitudes towards learning

English. Each participant was asked to describe how he or she had negotiated language learning since the first time he or she encountered the English-speaking community. The children reflected on their previous English learning experiences in Korea to compare their language learning experiences in the English-speaking community. The children were asked to talk about kinds of activities they did inside and outside of school, as well as at their home. To investigate the learning contexts and effects on their language learning and perceptions, the students were asked to describe what particular activities they liked most and how they thought these particular activities helped them learn English. The data from the first interview was used as the basis for further inquiry in the next interview. Therefore, subsequent interviews built upon one another to develop a more integral understanding of the participant's experiences in their classrooms and out of classroom in the English-speaking community. If necessary, subsequent interviews were focused on certain topics that had not been fully explored during a previous interview.

In order to obtain details of their experiences, each participant was invited to share any written materials, schoolwork, or artifacts that they wanted to share with the researcher. Merriam (1998) points out that the use of visual representations offers a qualitative avenue for people to share their experiences. By bringing something that was meaningful to them, the students were able to share their feelings, thoughts and experiences of learning English. Moreover, according to Yin (2003) and Merriam (1998), documentary data play an explicit role in data collection during case studies. Documentary data (such as the children's work at home, and the children's files in their classrooms) were a product of the context in which they were produced and were, therefore, grounded in the real world; thus lending contextual richness to the study. These written documents were copied for later analysis during this study.

Interviews with each child's parent (Appendix C), a principal (Appendix D), ESL and regular room class teachers for each participant (Appendix E) were used to supplement the main interviews. Careful listening as the children's mothers (both during interviews and during informal conversations) expressed their thoughts and feelings was another important source of data to understand the children's learning experiences. Data from the children's interviews were used to determine some of the questions for the parents' interviews. The purposes of interviews with the principal and teachers were to gather information about the school and instruction and to ask how they helped the children for whom English was not their first language. Teacher interviews and class observations were conducted with those who gave permission.

The purpose of conducting observations was to provide some knowledge of the classroom contexts. By observing classrooms, some relevant behaviors or environmental conditions were obtained. Observations were focused on the physical setting, activities and interactions that were of interest in the present study.

A simple Likert scale survey was designed and used to elicit the children's perceptions about their English learning and attitudes towards learning English. (See Appendix, B) Some children in this study responded to questions about their perceptions of linguistic proficiency and attitudes toward learning English with, "good" or "bad," and "like" or "hate." Their perceptions about their English abilities were based on how well they could communicate with others. However, to generate more detailed information about their perceived linguistic proficiency, a short survey needed. Each child completed a five-item Likert scale that assessed the children's perceptions about English learning in Korea and in the United States. Each item had scores that range from 1 (very bad) to 7 (very good). The children were asked to circle a smiley face among seven different stages of emotions that they felt described their feelings.

Interviews with the children revealed that the children perceived certain linguistic areas improved better than other areas. For example, Jeewon and Namhoo, said that they didn't have any problem in talking with English speakers, reading books, and understanding TV programs. Yet, they perceived that their writing needed to be improved because they sometimes had difficulty in expressing their ideas in writing. Therefore, the children asked to answer their abilities of communication in four linguistic areas such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

While collecting data, field notes with comments were kept in order to clarify the effects of my own experiences and values on the proposed study. The observer comments comprised subjective reactions during interviews (Holliday, 2002). These comments, therefore, helped to discern how the researcher might be influencing the direction of the interviews, and contributed to subsequent interviews. According to Yin (2003), field notes are a result of an investigator's interviews, observations, or documents analysis and take a variety of forms. In this study, field notes were handwritten in the form of a diary on index cards.

All participants were assured of confidentiality, and those with any concerns were invited to follow the IRB procedure for getting more information. To ensure full understandings by Korean children and their parents, the interviews were in Korean, the participants' native

language. One child switched to English. A pseudonym was chosen for each participant and the pseudonyms were used on all study documents to assure confidentiality

Study Procedures

The researcher initially contacted the children's parents by calling them. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and asked permission to interview the children for the purpose of collecting information. The researcher then met the parents and offered more detailed information about the study. During this first visit, the researcher explained that additional information might be needed in order to understand their children's learning experiences and asked if the parents were willing to be interviewed. The parents and their children were then asked to read and sign informed consent and assent forms. They kept one copy of the consent and assent forms, and the researcher retained another for the record.

When all consent and assent forms were completed and any and all questions had been answered, a schedule was set up to interview the children. Since the data from the children's interviews determined questions for the parent interviews, interviews with the children's parents were scheduled after finishing all interviews with the children. The individual students were interviewed three times during the period of the study and the parents were each interviewed. Korean conversations were tape-recorded, then transcribed and translated as necessary.

To interview the children's teachers, permission was obtained from the school district, the principal, and teachers. After getting approval from the school district, the researcher contacted the principal by visiting his office. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and asked permission to interview the teachers for the purpose of collecting information. The researcher then met with the teachers and offered information about the study. The teachers were asked to read and sign an informed consent form. They kept one copy of the consent form, and the researchers retained the other for the record. In order to protect their identities, all participants were asked to choose a pseudonym that was used throughout the study.

Data analysis

In a case study, the goal of the data analysis is to convey an understanding of the case (Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1998) notes that a multiple case study needs two stages of analysis – the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis:

Within-case analysis treats each case as a comprehensive case. Data are gathered so the researcher can learn as much about the contextual variables as possible that might have a bearing on the case. Once the analysis of each case is completed, cross-case analysis begins. The researcher attempts to build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases even though the cases will vary in their details (p.194).

Thus, the analysis of data for this study began with organizing a description of each case, then, analyses were constructed to construct themes that cut across the data, and these themes have been utilized to generalize about what significant experiences constituted the development of English as a second language. The analysis was conducted first with each student individually. This ensured the integrity of the data as accurate representation of the perceptions and experiences of the individual students before attempting to look for broader generalizations. The data analyses used in this process were based on the principles of ethnographic semantics in which the meanings that children gave to their verbal expressions were the primary focus of investigation (Mishler, 1986).

In order to integrate the data, constant comparisons were made within and between cases until themes were formulated. Developing themes involved looking for recurring regularities in the data (Merriam, 1998). Themes that emerged from each case were identified, compared, and then coded into conceptual categories. This process, a process of discovering themes in the data, was used in accordance with the methods outlined by Allen (1989). It included reading and rereading the data in a careful and thorough manner. Theoretical memos and comments were written regarding discoveries that the researcher was making with the data. Then, a cross-case analysis was carried out to uncover the common themes in the children's experiences. This involved identifying commonalities among conceptual categories across the children and drawing generalizations.

To analyze documents, content analysis procedures were used. The goal of content analysis for documentary data was to understand the communication of meaning, as well as to verify theoretical relationships (Merriam, 1998). Once documents were located, a system of coding and cataloging collected documents was adopted. The documents were used as part of the process of building categories.

Validity and reliability of the study

The present study makes no claim that these students and this site provide typical representations of the experiences of Korean students in the United States. The study may not be easily generalized or replicated, and thus may be seen to be limited in both external and internal reliability. Regardless of the type of research, however, validity and reliability are achieved through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which the data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the ways in which the findings are presented (Merriam, 1998).

Validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality. Since qualitative research seeks to understand the perspectives of those involved in the phenomenon of interest, validity is achieved by uncovering the complexity of human behavior in a contextual framework and through a holistic interpretation of what is happening. Merriam (1998) lists several methods for enhancing validity. For the proposed study, triangulation -- using multiple sources (interviews with the children, parents, teachers, class observations, and documents) of data to confirm the emerging findings -- contributed a holistic understanding of the participants' experiences.

Reliability refers the extent to which research findings can be replicated. In the case of qualitative research, reliability is problematic because human behavior is never static, and there are many interpretations of what is happening based on people's understanding of reality. Therefore, Merriam (1998) suggests that reliability in qualitative research is not whether findings will be found again but whether the results are consistent with the data collected. Richards (2003) points out that theory is expected to help researchers of any persuasion clarify and explain what they are doing. The theoretical position provides a guide for collecting and analyzing cases in systematic and disciplined ways. To enhance reliability of the study, the researcher will describe how categories were derived and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry. This process will ensure reliability of the study.

Limitations of the study

Epistemological and ontological understanding reflects and influences the ways in which we see the world and research. Each researcher brings to a setting a highly individualized

background, and a set of experiences and perspectives, which in turn affect not only what and how he or she observes but also his or her personal reflections and interpretations.

My personal experience of learning English matched those of my participants. I studied English in Korea, then in a study abroad context. My personal experience was indeed a strong impetus for this research project. As an international student from Korea conducting research about the experiences of a group of Korean children who had been living in an English-speaking community, my way of knowing both informed and affected the type of questions asked, the choices made, and the interpretation given in the research process (See appendix A).

In addition, the following limitations were occurred while conducting this study:

1. Access to all teachers was not available.
2. The number of class observation was limited.
3. The children who participated in this study were from upper middle classes and highly education families.
4. Since the study was for an English-speaking dissertation, the decision was made to translate Korean to English.

Summary

This chapter has reviewed cognitive and sociocultural perspectives of language learning, the role of interaction in second language learning, and the role of social interactions in study contexts.

There is heated debate between cognitive and sociocultural theories of second language development with regard to learning processes (Kroll & Sunderman, 2003). Each theory defines the language learning process by different criteria. The former places an emphasis on the cognitive processes occurring in the brain, whereas the latter sees social and contextual processes as having a greater influence on learning. The field of language acquisition has been dominated by the view of language acquisition as an information-processing activity centered on input and output (Donato, 1995; Larsen-Freeman, 2001; Krashen, 2002).

The sociocultural view of learning has been gaining substantial attention. Within a sociocultural framework, learning (including the learning of second languages) is a semiotic process attributable to participation in socially-mediated activities. Language is viewed as socially constructed rather than internally intrinsic.

The sociocultural theory focuses on the social nature of language learning and development and the role of learner's interaction in learning. Currently, second language researchers have turned their attention on the sociocultural learning processes that affect what and how children acquire second languages. There has been increased emphasis on interaction as the generative context for second language mastery (Krashen, 1984, 2003; Long, 1983).

In investigating language gains during the study abroad, studies discussed in this chapter found general support for the positive role played by in-country experiences for language gains. These studies focused on specific linguistic areas such as grammar, morphology, or vocabulary. On the other hand, there are questions that arise about the relationship between study abroad and second language learning. Researchers found that students' benefits are influenced by many variables such as students' level of language proficiency, knowledge of culture, degree of adjustment, satisfaction with instruction, and the amount and quality of interactions.

Moreover, findings measuring learners' linguistic gains have been challenged by the issue of using only test scores, which provide limited information about the actual linguistic benefits of the study abroad learning context. More research is needed on learners' social interactions that may or may not lead to language gains in study abroad contexts. Further, more

research is needed on learner's perceptual changes while abroad. Finally, the need for research that explores early study abroad contexts is needed.

Although thousands of children accompanying their parents in living in other countries and learning new languages each year, there is no research based on the effects of these early study abroad experiences. While it could be expected that these early study abroad learners may share some commonalities and differences with other study abroad students, research has not explored this phenomenon. The current study represents an initial, exploratory investigation into the experiences of early study abroad Korean learners. This study aims to explore perceptions about linguistic, cultural and attitudinal changes in early study abroad participants. In particular, the study will question how perceptions social interactions arising from the early study abroad context influenced perceptions of second language development and the cultural and attitudinal changes of Korean children during their stay abroad. Insights to be gained from the present study have the potential of indicating how learning contexts may be made more effective for promoting language learning.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Case studies and Case Analysis

The purpose of interviewing the children was to discover how they learned English in an English-speaking community and learned about their perceptions of their learning in the new setting. The findings first present five individual case studies and then offer a cross-case analysis leading to the main themes that emerged from the interviews. The findings from the parental interviews as well as the teachers and the principal interviews, followed.

Case Study One: Jeewon²

The daughter of an engineer and oldest of two children, Jeewon was cheerful and talkative. Jeewon was 10 years old when her family moved from Korea to the United States and was placed in fourth grade. She had taken two English learning programs after school, as well as English class in her Korean school. Jeewon's Korean school was private school, called the Christian Elementary School. Unlike other Korean public schools where English was introduced to third graders, Jeewon's school provided English instruction beginning in first grade, and the English teachers were American missionaries. According to Jeewon's mother, Jeewon's school was more of an "Americanized school" compared to other Korean schools. She indicated that an "Americanized school" provides more interaction in the classroom and a friendlier classroom environment.

Jeewon, a lovely girl with beautiful long hair, giggled while being interviewed and responded positively to learning English. She was a fifth grader at the time of this study, had been in the United States a year and half, and was going back to Korea in three months. She liked to talk and interact with her friends socially. When I met her the first time, she was wrapping a present for her American friend's birthday. Wearing a girly ruffled white T-shirt, pink striped pants, and a pink hairpin, Jeewon talked a little about her friend, Alisa, whose birthday party she was attending. Alisa was one of her best friends and introduced Jeewon to Hillary Duff, Jeewon's favorite celebrity.

² Jeewon: The child's name is a pseudonym.

Jeewon's after school schedule was full of activities, such as doing homework, learning the violin, studying with a tutor, a Bible study with American kids, independent reading, and watching TV. During the weekends, she was often invited to her friends' parties and went to her friends' houses for sleepovers. During the time spent in the United States, she became more comfortable speaking, reading, and writing in English. Her English improved enough for her to teach her younger brother, who also participated in this study (See Case Study Six). Jeewon spoke in Korean when we first met, but soon after, she switched to English for the remainder of the interview process.

At the first interview, she showed mixed emotions about going back to her Korean school:

I sometimes want to go back to Korea. You know, here is kind of boring. There's no fun place and cute stuff. If you want to go to a fun place like Disney Land, it's too far away. Last year we went there. It took about 17 hours. In Korea, it takes only about one or two hours to go Ever Land. I miss my friends, too. But, I don't read and write well in Korean...I was a very good writer, but I guess I forgot how to write in Korean as I was learning English. And, my friends might think that I am perfect in English, which I am not. But, that's their problem, you know. Even American kids make mistakes when they write and can't explain grammar. (Translated from Korean)

She worried that her Korean friends might think that she was supposed to know all about English grammar. But, she didn't worry much about how she was going to learn reading and writing in Korean and study of other subjects when she goes back to Korea. Her perception possibly reflects a part of her character, as she described herself as a "positive thinker."

Her positive attitude seemed important for her in learning English. Although she remembered her English class in a Korean school as boring, she remained positive toward learning English, and English was one of her favorite subjects. She described her English learning experience this way:

My English class in my school [in Korea] is kind of boring, you know, easy stuff, like learning *dog* and *cat*. My school had a native speaker. She spoke very slowly so we could understand. She brought worksheets and sometimes CDs. Now I think those CDs were for American preschoolers or kindergartners. It was too easy. When the kids in the CD say 'Hi,' we repeat 'Hi,' too. Something like that...I wanted to learn English because I

thought speaking in a different language was cool. I might learn Chinese someday. Anyway, I kept my interest. I joined CCA. It means Christian, something, Academic. I used to know this but I forgot. They have A and B group. I learned English there. I wasn't in the best group, A, because I couldn't speak well in English. I was with an average group. But, it was fun.

Jeewon identified herself as “average” in English as a whole and “poor” in speaking in English. Her intrinsic motivation to speak English fluently helped her transform the more negative experience she had in learning English in her Korean classroom into inspiration when her family came to the United States. She remembered having some difficulty in understanding, but was happily engaged in learning English. She remembered that she tried to speak English to communicate with her American friends. She now speaks English to her teachers, friends, and even to her mother. When asked how she tried to improve her English speaking ability, she simply said that she tried to talk and listen more. She wanted to become a part of the community, and she expected to reach that goal through interaction within the community. Jeewon described this perspective by saying that she would learn English “by listening to other people.” She later added,

You'd have to talk, too. When I came here, it was difficult because I didn't understand any of words. I only knew 'hi,' 'How are you?' And, everybody talked so fast and I couldn't understand what they were talking about. Then, I realized that I had to speak out and tried to speak more, like an American. And, you got to have lots of friends to do this. Sora is my first friend here. She is a Korean, but she was born here and grew up here. I forgot her English name. Anyway, she taught me a lot of things. She taught me how to pronounce 'square' and told me what 'who cares' means. I didn't understand what she was saying. Um, sometimes I did. Then later I started talking in English more.

As shown in this conversation, the first, and possibly most significant condition supporting Jeewon's language learning was her desire to interact. This was encouraged by her mother. Her mother described herself as a zealous mother for her children's education and shared her way of helping her children to learn English:

The first thing I did for my children to learn English here was having them interaction with American children. It was summer when we came here. So, I looked for camps. Swimming camp... I don't remember all. Oh, there was a tutoring program at the library.

It must be stressful for my children because they didn't understand at all. But I think it was worthy. When Korean parents ask advice to me, I always tell them to find out many activities that their children can do with American children. (Translated from Korean)

As Jeewon interacted within the contexts of her neighborhood, school, and extra-curricular activities, a supportive environment evolved that provided opportunities for Jeewon to explore and develop understandings of many aspects of her new world. Jeewon emphasized that it was a lot easier to learn English from friends than a teacher. Jeewon met Sora, her Korean friend, on the school bus. They immediately became friends by sharing their common heritage, Korea. However, she and her American friends became best friends by doing schoolwork together:

Alisa, she is one of my best friends. She was the one who helped me when I came in my American class. She talked slowly for me and corrected my pronunciation. She showed me around the school. She even invited me to her birthday party.

Interaction with her friends in school and out of school seemed to contribute to her speaking and listening abilities in English. Jeewon came to view English very practically, as a tool to be used in her daily life for overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers. When asked how she studied English when she came here, Jeewon reported that reading books helped her learn English. The first books she read were *Clifford: The Big Red Dog* and *Arthur the Aardvark*, and she recommended those books for someone who wanted to study English:

I would suggest that they watch TV and read books. *Clifford* and *Arthur*. Those are the books I read when I came here. They are really easy. But the stories are fun. I watched *Arthur* in Korea. So when I saw *Arthur* in an American bookstore, I just read it. It was good. *Clifford* was easy, too.

Jeewon stated that the American school and Korean school were basically the same. The only difference, she said, was the speaking in different languages. She explained that they were learning the same knowledge just using a different language. When asked if she felt any difference other than what she was supposed to learn in both schools, she said, "American teachers are more nicer."

Jeewon stated that she still made some mistakes in writing and received help from her ESL teacher when she had questions on her writing assignments. Jeewon, however, perceived that she could communicate very well in English. The most significant factor affecting Jeewon's acquisition of English was her informal involvement with English-speaking peers. Although

Jeewon heard English used and had opportunities to use it in many other settings (e.g. school, violin lesson) Jeewon's desire to find friends and participate in and sustain relationships supported her acquisition of English.

Therefore, for Jeewon, the key to learning English involved both making friends and maintaining relationships with them. With her English speaking peers, Jeewon tried to use English, learned meanings of new words and received specific feedback from her English-speaking peers (such as regarding pronunciation). Interaction with her friends provided Jeewon a real social context for learning the communication functions of English.

Case Study Two: Minsoo³

Minsoo, a sweet boy who loves sports, seemed worried when we sat together the first time. His younger brother showed more interest in the interview and asked me if he could be interviewed after his brother. Listening to his brother, Minsoo playfully said to his brother, "Then you do it. I don't want it." The first interview with him was really listening to Minsoo, saying "I don't know" to most questions. I put in effort to make him comfortable with talking to me by calling him during the week and bringing a snack to the interview. I thought that he responded "I don't know," simply because he wasn't comfortable in talking with me. However, as I interviewed him and talked more informally, I realized that he really meant that he didn't know. He had many difficulties in his American classroom.

Minsoo's father is a Major in the Korean Air Force and was studying aerospace engineering at the expense of the Korean government. His mother said that the family had to move to another Air Force base every three years in Korea. She recalled that Minsoo didn't have any problems in making new friends at the new schools in Korea, so she didn't worry about him adjusting to the United States and an American school. She described her son as "outgoing and opinionated."

With me, Minsoo was not talkative. He sometimes avoided eye contact with me and distracted himself by playing with a pen or a desk radio. Though his mother told me that he learned English in Korea in his school, as well as in an English learning program after school, Minsoo only remembered the learning experience in his school. He didn't mention any setting other than a formal classroom in relating his English learning experiences in Korea. He described

³ Minsoo: The child's name is a pseudonym.

his English class as “listening to the tape and memorize it.” Though his mother remembered that her son enjoyed learning English in the private English learning program, Minsoo could not recall any positive memories from his English learning in his Korean school. He remembered very little from his English class because it was “uninteresting,” as he put it. He didn’t like learning English at all: “I hated English. I remember we had to listen to the tape and memorize it every time. Because I hated English, I didn’t study. So, I didn’t know anything.”

When the family decided to stay in the United States while Minsoo’s father was studying in a doctoral program, his mother hoped that her son would learn English better in an American school. Her mother believed that, if her son lived in an English-speaking community, he would learn English naturally and effortlessly. Despite his mother’s hope, Minsoo didn’t really have any excitement about living in the new environment and learning English:

Interviewer: What did you expect living in the United States?

Geewon: I didn’t think.

Interviewer: Were you excited when you heard that your family was going to go to the United States?

Geewon: No. I was worried because American people only speak English and I am not good at English. (Translated from Korean)

Minsoo was starting the second semester of third grade at the time of this study. He had lived in the United States for six months, which was the same length of time as one of the other children in this study. Despite his limited English proficiency, Minsoo was placed with his same-age peers in twenty minutes to thirty minutes of ESL instruction three times a week. Minsoo said that sometimes ESL class was cancelled if they had special events at school, such as a bowling day. Minsoo’s frustration continued in his class in the United States. He mentioned that his ESL teacher came in his regular classroom at times and pointed at “right answers” when he didn’t know what to do.

During the interviews, Minsoo wasn’t willing to talk about any learning experience in his American school. When questions were asked about his English learning experiences, he didn’t pay attention to the questions and played with his sleeves by repeatedly pulling them out and putting them back. It seemed that he was trying to avoid the questions.

When asked if he liked his American school, Minsoo clearly stated that he did not like studying in his American school because he could not understand what was being said in class.

He added that he could not do anything if his ESL teacher wasn't with him in his regular classroom. When asked how he was completing school work without understanding what his teacher was saying in class, he replied that he copied answers without understanding and even circled random numbers on tests. He even studied spelling for a test without knowing the meanings of words. He told me that he once got five out of ten. When he practiced hard, he got nine out of ten. He said that he could recognize a few words, but could not decode unknown words; thus he just looked at pictures when he was assigned to read a book in English in class and borrowed the same Korean books repeatedly when the class had a library hour. Minsoo told me that the school library had several Korean books and he had read them already. He mentioned that those books were not funny and showed one Korean book he had at home at that time. The book illustrated Korean customs such as greetings and manners.

Minsoo's responses reflected that he experienced isolation in his class and felt helpless when he had problems:

My partner is mean. When we exchange our test papers, she crossed out the right answers.

I told her that it was right, but she kept saying, 'No it is not,' and she even scribbled something in the blank. I don't like that. (Translated from Korean)

When I asked why he didn't show the right answers to her or talk to his teacher, he looked at me and said he couldn't. The implicit message was that he didn't have a choice, therefore, he kept silent. He couldn't argue with his partner because his partner spoke better than he could, and he couldn't talk to his teacher, because he couldn't effectively explain why he was upset. It seemed that his lack of comfort in English led him not to speak English in class and this constrained him from learning English. Minsoo said, "No one helped me." Additionally, unlike Jeewon, his primary after school activity was going out to play in a nearby playground with his younger brother and Korean friends. He describes, "I am just going out. My brother and I play on the playground. Then I have dinner and watch DVD and sleep."

When asked about his homework, Minsoo remembered a math assignment and told me that his father helped him on his homework. In the first interview, I asked him if could see his homework, but he said that he threw it out. It was obvious that Minsoo did not want to show any of his school work and was not happy studying in English. He knew that he was struggling with it. On the second interview, Minsoo showed me his math homework. The homework was one page long with seven questions. Minsoo said that his father explained the questions when he had

to do homework. I asked his mother in order to get more detailed information about how well Minsoo was doing his homework with his father. Minsoo's mother said:

Usually his father helps him to do homework. I can't help him. But, he is busy and sometimes didn't have time to help him. Geewon doesn't want to go school when his homework was not done. He is like, peevish. So, I just told my husband to do his homework. (Translated from Korean)

Minsoo didn't tell me that his teacher sometimes gave writing homework. His mother continued to talk about Minsoo's writing homework:

Sometimes he brought a book and said that he had to write what the story about. His father read the book, tells him about the story and writes a brief summary in English. Then Geewon copies English summary and writes in Korean to memorize it, because his teacher asks the story. (Translated from Korean)

Minsoo's negative attitude towards English has been strengthened by living in the United States and going to the American school. He seemed overwhelmed by being surrounded by all English-speaking classmates and teachers. He said that he did not read any books and did not watch American TV programs. However, he happily talked about the movies he watched on DVD, such as *Home Alone* and *Mulan*. He asked me what American TV programs were funny. I told him that many kids love to watch *Dragon Ball* and *Yu Gi Oh* and he could watch them on Saturday morning on the FOX Channel. A week later, during our second interview, he told me that he couldn't find *Dragon Ball* or *Yu Gi Oh* but he watched *Sonic X* and said that it was fun.

In the second interview, the conversation began by asking about his school that day. Minsoo said very little about what he did or what he learned in class. He did say that he didn't like the regular classroom because he didn't do well. He felt better about his ESL class because the teacher used "easy English" and helped him when he couldn't read a book. He told me that he was reading *A Diary of a Worm* in the ESL class. I asked Minsoo if I could see his textbook. He brought his social studies book. He declined to read a sentence for me and said that he could not read. I asked him again if I could see *A Diary of a Worm*. He told me that ESL teacher kept the book in the classroom. I asked him about what the story was about:

Interviewer: Can you tell me about *A Diary of a Worm*?

Minsoo: Um, the worm is writing his diary. It's an adventure story.

Interviewer: How do you like it?

Minsoo: It's fun.

The third interview was conducted on a Friday, when his teacher always gave homework for a test. According to Minsoo, his teacher gave a test every Monday morning. Minsoo had to read two pages of the social studies book and had to solve seven math questions on a worksheet. He showed me his math worksheet. We looked at the paper together and talked about it:

Interviewer: Wow, it looks hard. OK, let's see, question number one. I don't know this word, do you?

Minsoo: No.

Interviewer: Hard seals? How many 30 ponds rock lacks about as much as 200 pound had seals?

Minsoo said that he knew "How many" in the question. Minsoo told me that they had a library hour that day. The children all had to borrow books they wanted to read and take them home. Minsoo borrowed two books. One was a book in Korean, and the other was a book in English. He explained that he checked out the same Korean book he had already read before. I asked him why he checked out the same book again. He responded, "Because I can't read an American book." The other book he picked was *Second Grade Rules*. He said that he picked that book because it looked fun. I asked him about the story. He told me that he didn't start to read it yet. I turned the pages over, and we talked about the pictures. He showed interest and guessed what the story would be about. We looked at the first page together, and I read the first several sentences. While I was reading, he responded, "I know this word. Um, this word, too." He seemed excited to find out words he could read. I asked him to circle the words he knew on the first page. He identified the following underlined words:

It is a great second-grade day

When I get to school

Ms. Light beams at me.

She says that my math work is getting better.

She helps me fix Bear Lee, my backpack.

Bear Lee loves second grade.

So do I.

I am so happy. Today is a great day.

My parents didn't yell

at each other this morning.

They've been doing that a lot lately, yelling.

He grabbed a pencil and quickly circled words. He looked at the page one more time to make sure he didn't miss any words. Here is the conversation we exchanged while he was circling words on the page:

Interviewer: Wow, you know many English words. You said that you don't know English words.

Minsoo: I don't know them well. I know only a few.

Interviewer: Are you going to read this book? It looks fun.

Minsoo: I guess.

Interviewer: If someone, your teacher or your friends, introduces interesting books, are you willing to read them?

Minsoo: Yes. I want to. But, my teacher doesn't teach how to read. (Translated from Korean)

Minsoo struggled to learn in the United States. He stated that he didn't like learning in his American school because he could not understand what his teacher and classmates were talking about. He was frustrated by his lack of proficiency, particularly when faced with homework and situations he needed to explain to someone in class. Minsoo's confidence suffered, and he avoided participation and English use. Minsoo, who loved sports, didn't participate in a soccer tournament. The availability of opportunities to interact with English speakers was limited in his life in the United States.

Further, without support and guidance from his teacher and English-speaking peers, Minsoo wasn't able to feel welcomed and become a member of the class community. He showed negative attitude towards his classmates and feelings of isolation. These feelings led him to reduced English use and generalized his understanding towards the American culture (e.g., "American people are strange.")

Case Study Three: Eunhee⁴

Eleven-year-old Eunhee arrived in the United States in October, 2004, only four months before the time of this study. Eunhee was in the fifth grade in her Korean school, and she had

⁴ Eunhee: The child's name is a pseudonym.

been studying English since the second semester of the first grade. Since Korean public school introduces English in the third grade, her mother enrolled Eunhee in a private English learning program. Eunhee's mother remembered that Eunhee first learned English by singing or playing games. However, when asked about her favorite activities of learning English in Korea, Eunhee recalled very little except learning "easy stuff." She added that, if the teachers introduced more "challenging stuff," not singing an easy song every time, she would be more interested in studying English in the class. English wasn't her favorite subject in Korea. Yet, she didn't hate it either.

As Eunhee moved to upper grades, Eunhee's mother decided to have her daughter learn English in a more academic way; learning grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Eunhee stated that she liked the speaking class most because she and her partner talked about anything:

It was fun. I felt like I was American. We used all words we knew. Now, I think me and my partner were talking in Konglish. But it felt great, doing that kind of stuff. (Translated from Korean)

Eunhee reported that English learning in her private English learning program involved the study of grammar, lists of vocabulary, and "uninteresting" reading passages. Listening and speaking activities were listening to her partner read a reading passage and exchanging prescribed dialogue with her partner. In her school, the English teachers included both a native English speaker and a Korean teacher. Both teachers came to the class in turns. Eunhee recalled that the class was easy and childish because they mostly sang songs.

Remembering when she found out that her family was going to live in the United States for one year, Eunhee said:

I was excited. One of my English teachers, she actually traveled to America, told us about America, about New York, Washington D.C. and Disneyland. She spent the whole hour talking about her trip to America. I was imagining while listening to her. (Translated from Korean)

When Eunhee's mother visited the American school to place Eunhee in class, Eunhee's mother was worried that studying in the fifth grade might be too difficult for her daughter. Her mother was going to place her in the fourth grade. Eunhee, however, insisted that her mother place her in

the fifth grade, telling her mother that she would do well there. And, she has done well. Eunhee's teacher stated:

Writing is the area of importance for her compared to her Math and you know in science and socialize in reading. I think for her, when she came in, there was no difficult transition time she know, she came in and it was just right there, she was in.

Eunhee, a smart and enthusiastic girl, seemed to enjoy her conversations with me. At the first interview, she talked about her American school, how big the bathroom was, how good the heating was, and how nice her teacher was. She told me that she was amazed when she found out that there was a carpet in class in her American school where everybody could sit together and talk about what they did during the weekends. Eunhee described her teacher as "funny." According to Eunhee, Eunhee's teacher hugged her when she came in her classroom for the first time. She felt welcomed and wasn't scared at all, even though she couldn't understand what her teacher was saying to her. Eunhee and her classmates played with their teacher on the playground during recess. Eunhee's mother stated that Eunhee had been in high spirits and she thought that was because her teacher praised her a lot. Eunhee's mother thought that her teacher built Eunhee's confidence in learning English by saying to her "How did you know this word?" or "You are smart." With the warm welcome from Eunhee's teacher, Eunhee's mother believed that her daughter was better off studying in the new school than she was in Korea.

Eunhee demonstrated to me that she had a good grasp of grammar rules and vocabulary. Eunhee believed that her existing knowledge of English helped her study in the American class. In the ESL class, Eunhee was placed with two other ESL students, one from Poland and another who was Spanish. She thought that these two children had serious problems in grammar. She was surprised at the fact that they didn't know some simple grammar rules after living in the United States longer than she had been. She was also surprised that she knew vocabulary better than some of her classmates. Eunhee described ESL class like this:

I think, during the first month, the teacher helped me to understand the subjects I was learning in the regular classroom, like social studies or science. She came to my classroom to help me. Then, me and the other two kids went to her room. We learned grammar and vocabulary. But I already learned those things in Korea, so it was easy.
(Translated from Korea)

Eunhee didn't see ESL class differently from her English class in Korea. When asked how her ESL class differed from her English class in Korea, she said that they were not much different.

Eunhee's favorite class was social studies because she could learn about American history and culture. She was fascinated with books telling American ghost stories. Before coming to the United States, she had never read narrative storybooks in English. In her reading class in the private English learning program, she had to read a "nonfiction story." She remembered that she one time read a story about the Sahara desert:

I learned reading and writing in Korea. But it's not like what I am reading and what I am writing in my American school. I didn't read books like this (American ghost). We only read a 'nonfiction' story, like Sahara. It was boring and I just didn't get into it. I don't understand. We are still young. Why we should read this kind of story. We are supposed to read fun stories. Here in my class, I choose whatever book I want to read in class. Now I like reading English books. (Translated from Korean)

Eunhee was eager to learn English and American culture. She was able to improve her English in the context of learning subject matter using the medium of English, by responding to the teacher's questions and asking questions, just as her American friends do:

The first week [in her regular classroom] was very difficult because of vocabulary. I know how to solve fractions, equations, but I didn't know the term *fraction* or *equation* in English. So I asked my teacher all the time. (Translated from Korean)

She liked the "American style" of learning in class:

The Korean classroom is stiff, but the American classroom is comfortable. Korean teachers give assignments we should do in class. They just give something we should know and have us memorize it. They just leave us alone to study in class. Here, we and our teacher are together in class. We read together. And, for example, in social studies and science class, the teacher plays a game with us so we can understand better and shows us a real experiment. (Translated from Korean)

Over the four months, Eunhee perceived that her listening ability had improved most. When asked what helped her improve her listening, she simply said that she tried to listen and understand:

Interviewer: What did you do when you didn't understand in class?

Eunhee: At first, the teacher came over to me and explained it one more time, like giving a sentence to understand the word. But I don't have any problem now, to understand...

Interviewer: Wow, you have been here only four months.

Eunhee: I think my listening has improved so fast.

Interviewer: Why do you think that happened?

Eunhee: Because I tried to listen and understand. (Translated from Korean)

Eunhee provided examples of making learning English more effective:

I think, making a cushion I did in art class would be a good example. The teacher shows you how to sew and you listen, then you can understand it. Or like in my science class, doing an experiment would be good, too. You can just start something you like.

(Translated from Korean)

Eunhee was confident in her ability of communication in English. She perceived that her listening was improved most. In Eunhee's case, interesting content provided a substantive basis for English learning. By learning subject content areas, it appears that for Eunhee the focus was shifted from learning about the English language to using English to learn and to communicate topics that were interesting to her. Through the class activities in social studies, science, art or math class, Eunhee built connections between the content she learned and the language processes that she needed in order to learn with the texts. By experiencing the value of performing meaningful tasks in her regular classroom, she learned how the English language works, as well as becoming motivated.

Case Study Four: Namhoo⁵

Namhoo, a quiet and diligent boy, was attentive. Placing his hands on his lap, he listened to my questions carefully and asked one more time if he could not understand what I asked. Namhoo was an only child. His family came to the United States because his father, a Korean university professor, had a sabbatical year. His family had been living in the United States for six months, and he was starting the second semester of fourth grade at the time of this study.

He clearly stated that in Korea he had to study English in order to pass the tests, not because he wanted to. He was a serious student and did very well in his Korean school. He understood that English is a very important subject and that he had to do his best in order to go to

⁵ Namhoo: The child's name is a pseudonym.

middle school, high school, and college. He learned English by studying grammar, vocabulary, and translation in Korea. He wasn't intrinsically motivated to learn English, but it was important to him that he did well in school. He wanted to be successful in learning English.

Namhoo recalled the study of grammar and vocabulary through drill and practice in his Korean class. He said that he looked up all the unknown vocabulary items in the English text, memorized the meanings of them, and translated each sentence into Korean. He said that studying English that way helped him get good scores on tests. However, he recalled feeling that studying English was stressful, difficult, and uninteresting. He describes his English learning in Korea this way:

It was fun when I learned English at first. Because I thought it was cool to speak another language. But when we began to study sentences and write sentences, English became difficult. The teacher read and we repeated after the teacher. (Translated from Korean)

When asked if he remembered any sentences he learned with the teacher, he said he didn't.

In addition to learning English in his school in Korea, he also learned English in three different private English learning programs beginning in the first grade. One program was offered by a famous university to help elementary students learn English. His mother had heard that the program was good and had enrolled her son in the program. Namhoo learned English for six months there. His mother told me that the program was not as good as she expected it to be. The thing she did not like most was that his son's teacher changed often during the semester. She commented that the new teachers started the class all over again by "introducing each other."

Next, she enrolled her son in an English program where teachers taught reading, writing, speaking, and listening as separate skills. She admitted that she chose this program because American textbooks were used. She remembered that her son brought home a list of vocabulary for a test and difficult reading passages for homework. Namhoo's father had to help Namhoo understand new words and translate reading passages into Korean. Namhoo's mother thought that the homework was too difficult for her son, but she didn't know what else she could do for him. Two months before the family was supposed to leave Korea, Namhoo's mother found a new English program where only stories were taught. She asked her son if he wanted to learn English there, and Namhoo told his mother that the program seemed interesting. Namhoo's mother said:

It's hard to say anything about that program because my son learned English only about two month there. But, he really liked that program. He read stories about famous Korean people, like General Son-Shin Lee and King Sejong. He just read in class and talked about stories. When he learned English in other programs, he used to say that studying English was difficult. (Translated from Korean)

After conversation with Namhoo's mother, I asked Namhoo about his learning experiences in the three different English programs. He described his overall feelings about learning English:

It was so hard, hard. The teachers read and we translated. Then we had a test. Before I came here, I went to the reading program for two months. That was okay. We didn't have to translate. We just read it. (Translated from Korean)

Even though Namhoo did well on his English homework and studied hard in school and in three different English programs, he remembered that he didn't understand what his teacher and classmates were talking about in class when he first came to his American school. His teacher arranged for another Korean student in class to help him, and Namhoo was the only student allowed to talk, by asking questions, when the teacher was teaching. He was no longer taking ESL class at the time of this study. He went to see his ESL teacher only when he needed help on his writing. Namhoo told me that he became comfortable using English in communicating with friends and his teachers in four months.

During this four month period, his parents and his friends were taking an active role in his learning. His father and Namhoo read social studies and science textbooks together and looked in the dictionary for unknown words. His father helped a lot on Namhoo's writing assignments and translated readings for him. Meanwhile, his mother found out that there was a free tutoring program in the community, held in the local community library. She applied for free tutoring for her son, and Namhoo began to study with a tutor twice a week. The tutor helped him with his writing homework, and they also read a book. Namhoo described learning English in his American school this way:

I had to study alone in my Korean school. Even if I had a question to ask about, my friends didn't know the answer, either. But, here I can ask my partner when I have a problem and he teaches me. Andrew is my best friend. He helped me when I didn't understand what the teacher was talking about. I helped him in math. When we both don't know the answer, we ask our teacher. This is a big difference and more pleasurable

than what I had in my Korean school. That makes me feel comfortable in class. And I think that helps me learn. (Translated from Korean)

The best thing about studying English in the American school for Namhoo was working with his partner. Namhoo and his partner supported each other's strengths and weaknesses in connection with the content being studied together. His negative memories of learning English seemed to be redeemed when he had a chance to work with partners in his American class. When he was studying in Korea, Namhoo thought that English was important in order to go middle school, high school or college. This view had been changed while learning with his friends. He said, "English is important because you can talk with your friends and play with them." (Translated from Korean)

Learning English in the United States was fun for Namhoo. He didn't feel that English was stressful and difficult any more. Rather, he described:

American teachers are nice. I think American teachers teach things in a more interesting way. They help me understand better and remember better. The word search was helpful to remember words. Sometimes my teacher makes a song using words that we were learning in class. The girls sang and we boys danced. And, she also gives us group work. American friends are nice. They help me a lot. The textbook is better, too. It has games, word puzzles, and pair-work in it. (Translated from Korean)

Namhoo's days in the American school were divided into activity periods, such as math, writing, social studies, science, music, reading, and on occasion, PE. His favorite class was math. He liked math because it was easy for him. He did not like writing class because they had to read stories and summarize them, but he loved his reading hour. The teacher allowed the children to read what they want to read. Even though he thought his listening and speaking had improved most, Namhoo said that the most surprising thing was finding himself enjoying reading books in English. He had developed an interest in reading books in English. He thought that the homework helped him read stories:

My teacher gives homework to read a book for twenty minutes. Every night before going to bed. The parents have to sign on the chart. This is the chart. I skip reading when I am tired, but usually I grab a book and read it on my bed. It helps me sleep well. If you are the one who reads the most in a month, you can have a discount pizza coupon from the

teacher. I got it one time and went to the restaurant with my father. (Translated from Korean)

He smiled at me, saying “it helps me sleep well,” but I could see him being proud of himself. Reading a book before going to bed was one of the activities he enjoyed most. Another favorite activity was writing his own text. Those two activities seemed to help Namhoo develop an aesthetic feeling for the English language he was acquiring. He told that he did not translate readings any more. Namhoo’s mother personally asked about translating:

Namhoo and his father used to study together until 11 o’clock. They looked words up in a dictionary and his father translated reading to him and had him translate it. Namhoo does not translate readings any more nor look things up the dictionary. I am just wondering if he understood the readings and whether I should make him use the dictionary or not. His father sometimes makes him translate readings to see if he understood the story.

(Translated from Korean)

The way Namhoo’s parents view the learning of English mirrors the ways they had learned in their schools and the approaches some Korean teachers use in their classrooms. Namhoo did not transfer positive feelings about learning English through sentence-by-sentence translation. By reading narratives such as *The House of Volcano*, *Diary of a Worm*, and the series of the *Magic School Bus* during his reading class and before going to bed, he found that reading books in English was fun. When asked if he understood the stories, he answered, “Yes. You know what? Even second graders can read English books, short stories.” (Translated from Korean)

Namhoo was a hard-working student. He kept a large pile of school work in which he got A’s. He revised his work as his teacher suggested and corrected the mistakes that his teachers marked. He said that he only kept A’s. He had a few B’s and had gotten a D in science one time. His average grade was an A-. His mother told me that he had been one of the best students in his Korean school, so his performance had not changed in the United States.

When asked how one should learn English, he answered, “Study grammar, vocabulary, and practice translation.” It appeared that his view of how to learn English had been influenced by the way he learned English in Korea. Maybe he didn’t realize that he was learning English by reading books for pleasure or working with his friends to solve math questions. When asked what activity he did in the United States that he wanted to continue when he goes back to Korea,

he answered, “I bought a lot of books, so I can read when I go back to Korea. I wish I could read these kinds of books earlier, because there are so many interesting books I haven’t read yet.”

Namhoo perceived that his reading ability was improved most because he didn’t translate English to Korea any more and enjoyed reading books in English. Namhoo learned English through involvement in a variety of classroom activities with more knowledgeable partners. He and his partner in the American school helped each other on tasks. Working with a partner or a small group in the classroom provided Namhoo opportunities for practice and interaction and helped him to learn English better.

Learning grammar and vocabulary in Korea contributed to Namhoo’s understanding of passages. However, Namhoo stated that he liked learning English in the United State. By engaging in purposeful, meaningful, and manageable activities in the United States (e.g. reading literature, writing his own story, learning vocabulary in a context) learning English became enjoyable for Namhoo.

Case Study Five: Jeewoo⁶

Jeewoo, a shy little boy, was the younger brother of Jeewon (see Case Study One) who also participated in this study. Jeewon, his older sister, described her younger brother, “My brother is an annoying little brother. He stands up to me, but not to his friends. He always makes my mom worried. He acts weird when strangers come to our house.” When I came in their apartment, his mother called Jeewoo. He came out his room, saw me, hid behind his mother, and ran into his sister’s room. Jeewoo’s mother explained that her son was shy. I brought ice cream and gave it to Jeewoo’s mother. Jeewoo’s mother called her son again and said that I brought ice cream for him. He came out from his sister’s room. Jeewoo ate two bars of ice cream during the interview.

Compared to the other children in this study, Jeewoo sometimes didn’t listen to the questions and talked about things that he wanted to tell me. When I asked a question again, he simply said, “Uh huh,” or “I don’t want to.” It was hard to get detailed information about how he learned in his American and Korean schools. Sometimes I also found contradictory statements between what his mother said and what Jeewoo said. For example, Jeewoo’s mother said, “He was crying in our car on the way [to school on the first day]. He said that the trees were too big

⁶ Jeewoo: The child’s name is a pseudonym.

and they scared him.” Jeewoo’s mother was concerned about her son’s adjustment to the American class and volunteered in Jeewoo’s class to see how her son was doing. According to Jeewoo’s mother, Jeewoo didn’t actively play with American friends. Rather, he was watching what his classmates were doing. However, Jeewoo stated that he wasn’t scared when he first came to the American class because “I had many friends.”

When Jeewoo said something to me, he talked in Korean, but he used English words such as “teacher,” “school,” and “homework,” instead of using Korean words for those. He learned basic reading and writing in Korea and had a half year of schooling in a Korean kindergarten and a half in the United States. He attended first grade at the time of this study. He learned how to speak, read, and write English in his American kindergarten and first grade class. Jeewoo didn’t learn English in his Korean kindergarten class, but began learning English in a private English learning program in Korea. I asked for more detailed information about his English learning in his private English learning program. Jeewoo’s mom described the class this way:

A small group of children, about five or six, were learning English together. The teacher was Korean and spoke English most times. Usually the children played with the teacher. They played hide-and-seek in class, bingo, and sang songs. So, it wasn’t like learning, you know, just enjoying the time. Jeewoo loved that time because he could meet his friends and play with them. I don’t think he learned how to read and write, or even recognize words. Just they were speaking ‘apple’ in English, something like that.

(Translated from Korean)

Jeewoo was taking an ESL class with two other children at the time of this study. He started his ESL class in the United States at a level he felt was too easy. He could not remember what it was like when he started his schooling in the Korean school and American school, but he did say something about his feelings:

Interviewer: How was your Korean school?

Jeewoo: Um, not fun.

Interviewer: How is your American school?

Jeewoo: Fun.

Jeewoo remembered his kindergarten class like this, “We played. My best friend is Adrian. He is Mexican and speaks Spanish. He is nice.” Jeewoo told me that Adrian was his partner in class and was nice to him. When asked what he studied in class, Jeewoo pulled out a

book and read the story to me. He read very well and missed only two words, *pretend* and *obey*. He said that his mother and his older sister, Jeewon helped him when he didn't know words. Jeewoo's favorite classes were math and spelling. He added then that he liked "activity." Here are the examples of "activity" he meant: "On Friday, play chess. Read a book, play bingo, Guess Who, a puzzle, and we have a game day."

Jeewoo liked to show me what he did in class. Regardless of what I asked him as a first question in the interviews, he began our conversation by showing what he made in his class, what books he read, and what questions he solved in math class. On the first interview, he showed me the Ninja turtles he drew and told me the story. On the second interview, he showed me his math journal and said they were learning temperatures. On the third interview, he showed a game board he made in class and explained game rules. He liked to get stickers from his ESL teacher. When asked how he was going to tell his Korean friends about this American school when he go back to Korea, he said "Um, I will say it's fun."

Jeewoo stated that he forgot how he learned English. However, when asked what he wanted to say to someone who wanted to learn English well, he replied like this:

Interviewer: What would you say to someone who wants to learn English?

Jeewoo: Tell him to listen.

Interviewer: What should he listen to?

Jeewoo: In school, listen to the teacher.

Interviewer: I know you can read a book well. How were you able to read a book?

Jeewoo: Listening carefully. I watch cartoons. Spiderman, Ninja turtles, Power Rangers.

Jeewoo's responses indicated that he learned vocabulary by watching his favorite TV programs. I asked him directly:

Interviewer: Where did you learn English words?

Jeewoo: Cartoons.

The conversation continued by asking what someone should do after watching cartoons and learning words. Jeewoo suggested reading a picture book. According to him, the picture gave a clue if he doesn't know the words. He said he kept reading and guessed meanings if there were unknown words in the book:

Interviewer: I will tell him to watch Spiderman, Ninja turtles, and Power Rangers. Then, what should I tell him?

Jeewoo: Um, picture book. So he can get clue by looking at pictures.

Jeewoo's mother told me that she read aloud to him before going to bed. Jeewoo's mother said that she started reading a story to him since she saw the Jeewoo's teacher read aloud to the children. She told me that she didn't read stories to Jeewoo when they lived in Korea. Jeewoo's mother said that she picked up a book and read it to Jeewoo at first. After a while, Jeewoo picked up a book he wanted to hear and let his mother read it for him. His mother's description of reading to Jeewoo was consistent with his statement about advice for an English language learner. Jeewoo learned English by listening to stories and he got clues from pictures that helped him understand.

Jeewoo liked learning English but he stated that writing in English was difficult. For Jeewoo, playing based activities and listening to stories seemed sources of learning English. While he was playing *Guess Who*, for example, he had to listen to other children, think about the words he already knew, and speak the words to answer. Not only had he worked on the concepts and skills related to a particular game, he had meaningful learning experience. Listening to a story, he was able to learn new words by looking at pictures and making sense of the story.

The Results of the Survey

The children's comments about their English learning in Korea were related to their perceived levels of success in English learning. Overall, the children did not perceive themselves as successful in English learning, which was due in part to limited development of oral communication ability, limited listening, difficulties in reading and writing when they were studying in Korea. Their responses during the interview did not differentiate between their Korean and American English learning experiences. In addition, the children did not perceive their abilities in English as whole (e.g., "I am good at reading, but listening and speaking wasn't that good." "My speaking was bad.").

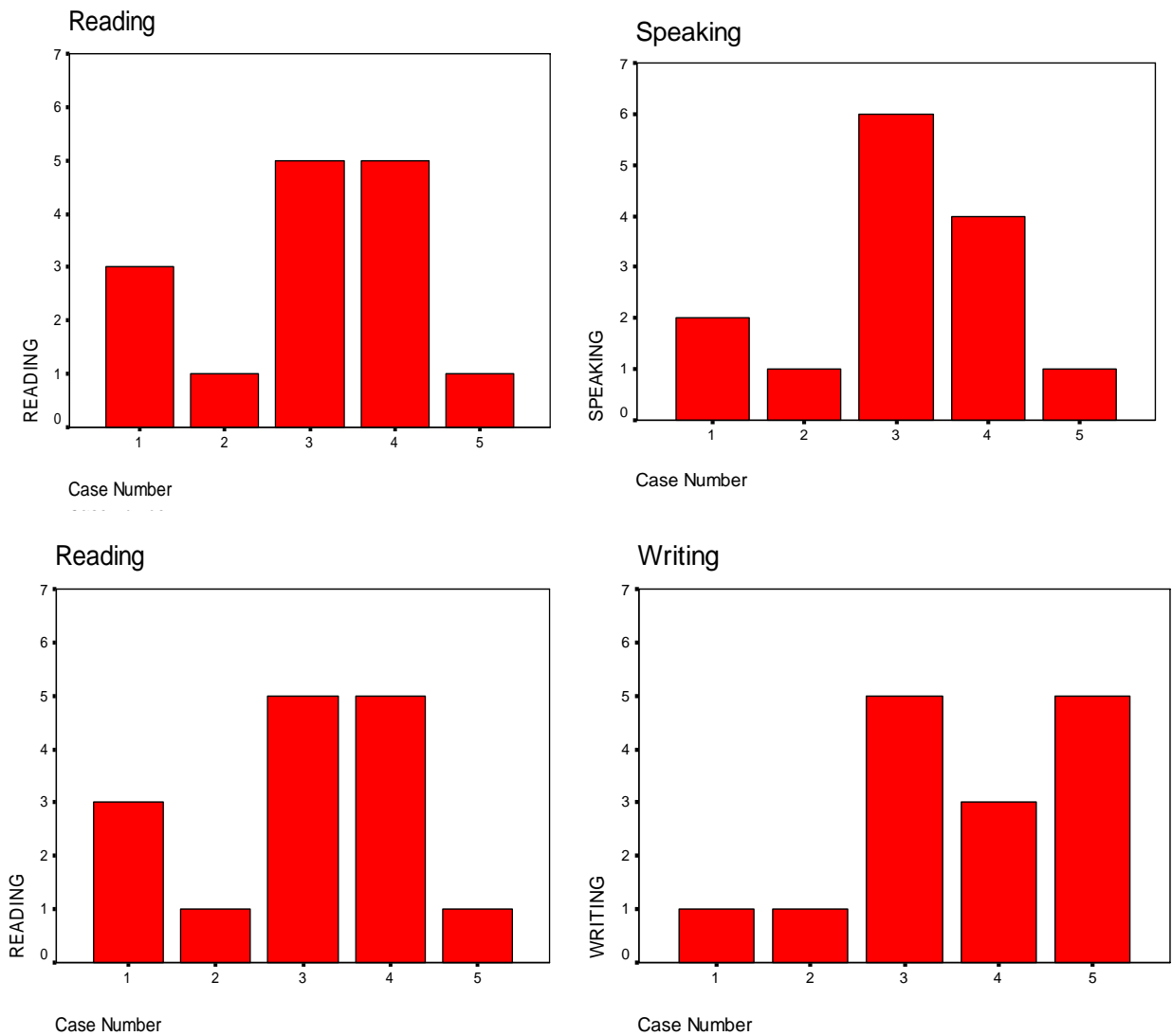
For this reason, a short survey was given to each child. Each child completed a five-item Likert scale that assessed the children's perceptions about English learning in Korea and in the United States. Each item had scores that range from 1 (very bad) to 7 (very good). The children indicated how they felt about their English proficiency by selecting different degrees of smiley faces. The children perceived their English proficiency depending on how well they felt that they

were able to communicate in English in a certain area. For example, Jeewon circled a smiley face for her speaking that indicated “very basic” while she was learning English in Korea. She stated that she said only “Hi” and “How are you?” to her American teacher. Namhoo perceived his ability of understanding spoken English as “basic” because he could understand when his American teacher in his Korean school used simple words.

A bar chart was created to visually display the children’s responses. Figure 1 shows how the children perceived their English proficiency when they were studying English in Korea.

Figure 1.

The children’s perceived linguistic proficiency in Korea



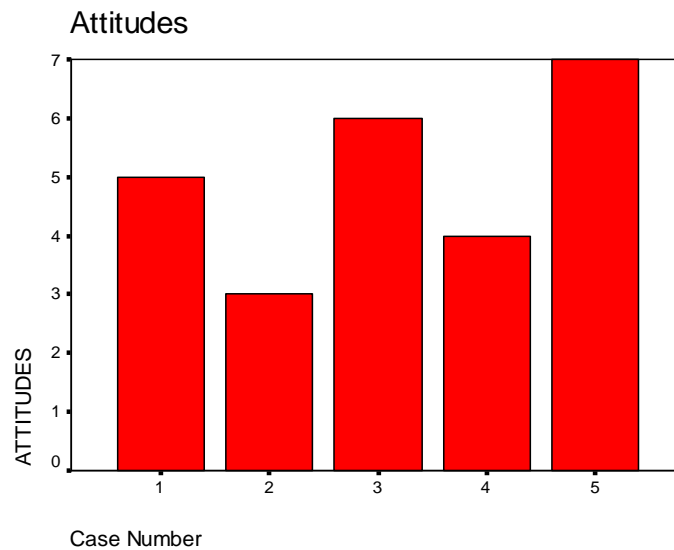
Note. Case number 1: Jeewon, 2: Minsoo, 3: Eunhee, 4: Namhoo, 5: Jeewoo

Linguistic proficiency 1: very bad, 2: bad, 3: very basic, 4: basics 5: somewhat good, 5: good, 6: very good

Figure 2 shows how the children perceived their attitudes toward learning English when they were studying English in Korea.

Figure 2.

The children's attitudes toward learning English in Korea



Note. Case number 1: Jeewon 2: Minsoo 3: Eunhee 4: Namhoo 5: Jeewoo
Attitudes 1: never 2: hardly ever 3: not so much 4: so so 5: sometimes 6:
often 7: very much

The children's responses showed individual differences in perceived linguistic proficiency in English and their attitudes towards learning English. In terms of understanding spoken language, the children's responses ranged from "very bad"(Minsoo) and "very basic" (Jeewon) to "basic" (Namhoo and Jeewoo). Only Eunhee, who reported that she liked to exchange conversations in English with her partner, rated as "somewhat good." The children's responses to their perceived speaking proficiency showed that the children had difficulty in speaking English. Four Korean children, except Eunhee, rated their speaking abilities as "very bad," "bad" and "basic." Eunhee rated her speaking ability as "good."

Eunhee and Namhoo rated their reading proficiency as “good.” Other Korean children, Jeewon, Minsoo, and Jeewoo, rated their reading proficiency as “very basic” and “very bad.” However, it should be noted that Minsoo had studied English for a year and half in Korea, and Jeewoo learned simple English words in his kindergarten in Korea. Jeewoo rated his writing ability as “somewhat good.” When Jeewoo rated his writing ability as “somewhat good” his sister, Jeewon said, “No way!” Jeewoo responded to his sister that his teacher taught how to write English words. Jeewoo felt that he could not read a story in English but could write English words. Jeewon, Minsoo, and Namhoo rated their writing abilities as “very bad” and “very basic.” Eunhee rated her writing ability as “well.”

In sum, Jeewon and Minsoo felt that their English abilities were limited in all areas when they were studying English in Korea. Namhoo and Jeewoo felt that they were doing well at least in one linguistic area, such as reading and writing. Only Eunhee perceived that she was doing well in all areas. Despite the children’s shared perceptions of perceived their difficulties in learning English, the children’s attitudes toward learning English varied. Minsoo responded that he didn’t like learning English. Namhoo perceived that learning English was “so so.” Jeewon, Eunhee, and Jeewoo’s attitudes toward learning English ranged from “sometimes” (Jeewon) and “often” (Eunhee) to “very much.” (Jeewoo)

The children’s responses to perceived linguistic proficiency and attitudes toward learning English in Korea show that the children differed in terms of how ready they were linguistically and attitudinally to benefit from the opportunities provided. When they came to the United States and went to the American school, the children were exposed to an environment where they needed English to negotiate real meanings. That is, they learned content areas through English as a medium and interacted with their teachers and classmates, using English as a tool. The five children all remembered that they did not understand what their teachers and classmates were talking about when they came to their classrooms originally. Four children, who had been in the United States at the time of study one and a half years, six months, six months, and four months expressed that they now understood in class and could communicate with their teachers and their American friends. They had a positive view of learning English in the English-speaking community and felt that their English abilities were improved. However, Minsoo, who had been in the United States six months at the time of study, was having a difficult time in his class, and his English ability had not improved much. Figure 2 shows how the children perceived their

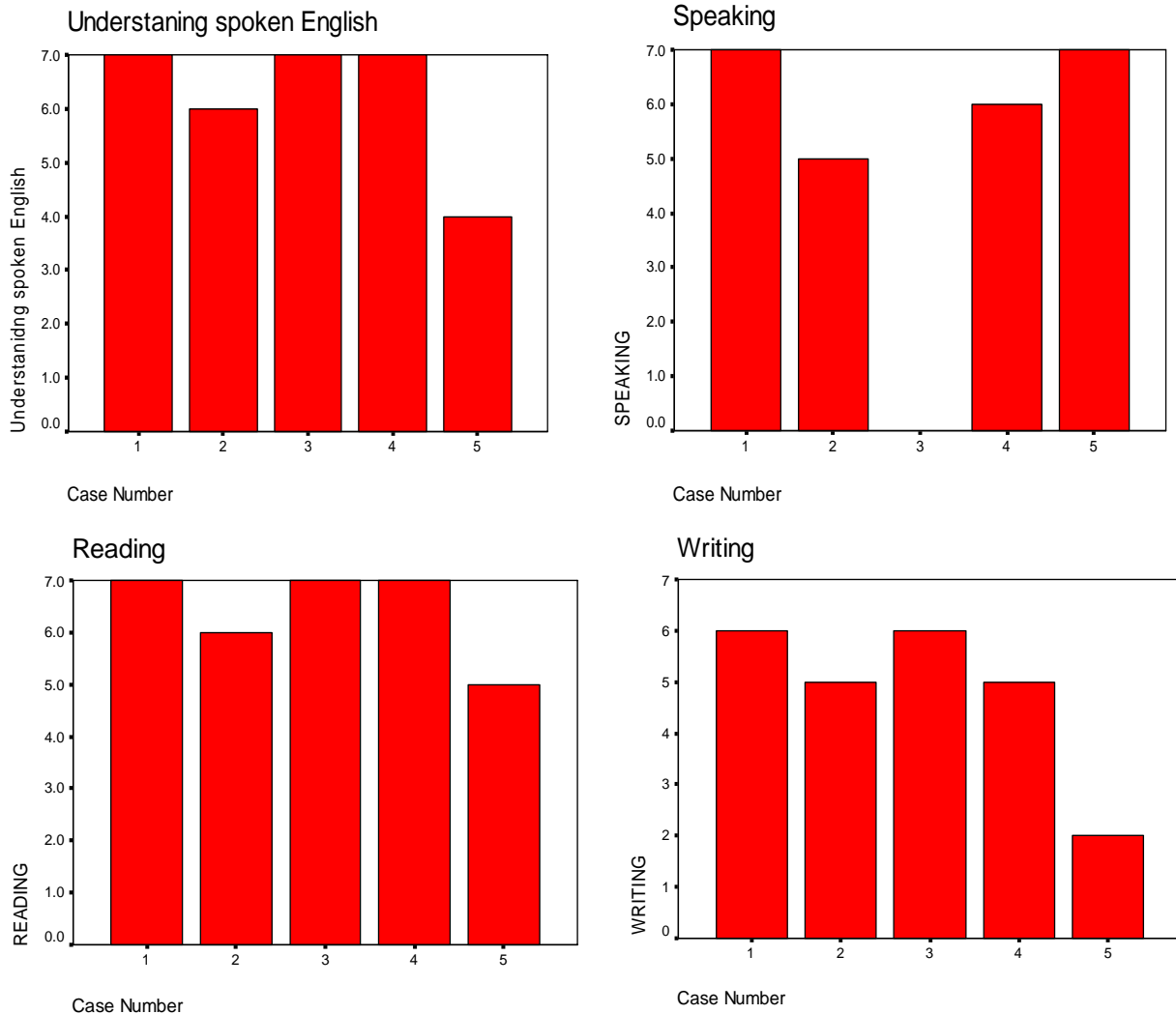
English proficiency when they were studying English in the United States and their attitudes toward learning English.

It should be noted that the survey was conducted after finishing all three interviews with each child. I was not able to contact Minsoo to do the survey until three weeks after finishing the final interview. When he filled out the survey, he had started studying with a tutor and had been working with him for a month. Therefore, it is possible that he felt much better about learning English than during the interviews.

Eunhee said that she could not decide about her speaking ability. She was comfortable with talking with her teacher and classmates, but was not confident to ask someone at a store, such as Wal Mart. Eunhee's mother told me that she asked her daughter to ask something to a person at Wal Mart but Eunhee didn't do it. Eunhee then explained to me that she asked something before at Wal Mart but couldn't understand it. Eunhee felt that people spoke too fast. Figure 3 shows how the children perceived their English proficiency when they were studying English in the United States and their attitudes toward learning English.

Figure 3.

The children's perceived linguistic proficiency in the United States.



Note. Case number 1: Jeewon, 2: Minsoo, 3:

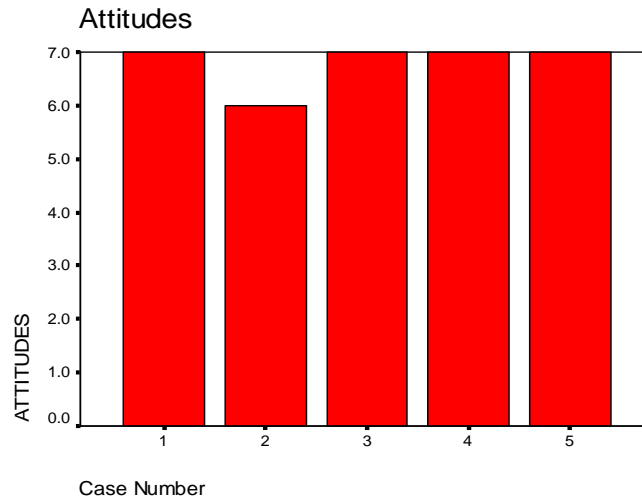
Eunhee, 4: Namhoo, 5: Jeewoo

Linguistic proficiency 1: very bad, 2: bad, 3: very basic, 4: basics 5: somewhat good, 5: good, 6: very good

Figure 4 shows how the children perceived their attitudes toward learning English in the United States.

Figure 4.

The children's attitudes towards learning English in the United States.



Note. Case number : Jeewon 2: Minsoo 3: Eunhee 4: Namhoo 5: Jeewoo
Attitudes 1: never 2: hardly ever 3: not so much 4: so so 5: sometimes 6:
often 7: very much

The children's responses indicated that, compared to their English learning in Korea, learning in the United States led the children to improve four linguistic areas and develop positive attitudes toward learning English. Jeewon rated "very good" for her understanding spoken English, speaking, and reading abilities. She rated "good" for her writing ability. She mentioned that she got help from her ESL teacher on her writing assignment. Namhoo rated his understanding spoken English and reading abilities as "very good," and speaking ability as "good." He rated his writing ability as "good." He also got help from his ESL teacher on his writing assignment. Eunhee rated her understanding spoken English, reading, and writing as "very good" and "good." Jeewoo perceived that he was doing well in speaking and reading but needed to improve in understanding spoken English and writing. Compared to his response on writing (somewhat good) when he was studying in Korea, his response, "bad" on writing showed that his concept about writing had changed while learning English in his American school. Minsoo's responses to understanding spoken English, speaking, reading, and writing were "good" and "somewhat good." However, his tutor told me that Minsoo improved his English "just a little bit."

It is interesting to note that all children's attitudes toward learning English have dramatically improved while they were studying in the United States. Jeewon, Eunhee, Namhoo,

and Jeewoo responded that they liked learning English “very much” in the United States. Minsoo responded that he liked learning English in the United States.

Cross-Case Analysis

The interviews provided insight into the children’s perceptions about the differences between learning English in Korea and in the United States and what affected their level of success in English learning and the attitudes they possess toward English learning that resulted from their experiences.

Teacher-student interactions

The children in this study who worked in environments where they believed that their American classes were supportive to their learning English made positive statements about learning English. Jeewon, Eunhee, Namhoo, and Jeewoo, who said that they liked their teachers and that their teachers helped them in class, indicated that they were engaged in their classes and had a sense of belonging. Conversely, Minsoo, who felt alienated in his class, displayed lower interest and described lower engagement.

Minsoo didn’t understand well in class when he began his studying in the American school and this was also the case with other children in this study. Namhoo, who came in the United States in the same month with Minsoo, said that he began to understand in class after fourth months and was enjoying his learning at the time of study. A notable difference between them at school was that Namhoo’s teacher arranged for a classmate to help Namwoo. Minsoo said, “No one helped me.”

The teachers played a major role in ensuring that the Korean children felt cared for and experienced a sense of belonging in the American school. How the children felt about school and their schoolwork seemed to be determined by the quality of the relationship they had with their teachers. These feelings strongly influenced the children’s academic engagement and their attitudes towards learning English and living in the United States in general.

All children in this study made statements that related to teacher-student interactions in their learning experiences. Teachers’ attention and sympathy seemed to contribute to the children’s progress and helped maintain their interest in learning English. The children described

how English classes in Korea were less supportive and more impersonal than their American school.

In one case in Korea, Namhoo's English teacher in his Korean school used hands-on activities for teaching English. According to Namhoo, she used songs to teach English and played games in class. Regarding his English teacher at his Korean school, Namhoo remembered, "My English teacher was scary. Everyone in my classroom didn't like her because she often yelled at us if we didn't follow her direction or made a noise. She even held us during the recess time to finish the task. I didn't enjoy her class." None of the children in this study referred to their Korean teachers of English as favorite teachers or good teachers. Still, a significant factor was the fact that in Korea, the children didn't need to know English in order to survive and make friends. The need for English in the United States had to impact the perceptions of these individuals differently in their American school experience.

There were similar responses from the children about why they liked learning English in the American school. The children indicated that they liked learning English because American teachers were more helpful, nice, and kind. The children were motivated to learn from teachers "who cared." The American teachers were commonly described as "encouraging" and "helpful" and were interested in the children. These teachers understood when the children had problems in class and offered appropriate guidance or direction. Namhoo said,

My teacher is awesome. When I didn't understand well, she read it from my face and came to me during the recess and explained it one more time. She tried to speak clearly and slowly to me. She is very kind and likes me. I bought a coin as a souvenir for my teacher when my family went to Mountain Lake. I wanted to give it to her and when I gave it to her, she hugged me and I was happy. (Translated from Korean)

Echoing this sentiment, Eunhee, who had been four months in the United States, enjoyed learning in her American school and talked about her teacher:

My teacher is so funny. He even plays with us during recess. He always asks me how I am doing. Every Monday morning, he said to me that he missed me during the weekend. He praises me a lot even when I did a small good thing. He also arranged one friend to help me in class. (Translated from Korean)

It was through experiences like these that the teachers supported the children in building courage and confidence that supported them in learning English. When the children's teachers showed

interest in the children as students in this study, the children were comfortable with themselves as learners and motivated to use English in class with their teachers or classmates.

The children's interest was not in language per se. Rather, they related the love, warmth, security, and respect that came from connecting to a teacher. Four of the children, who liked their teachers, said they liked learning English in the American school because of their teachers. What they liked most about their American school was their teacher, too. The disengaged child, Minsoo, noted that he didn't have help from his teacher or his classmates. He didn't go his teacher when he had a problem with his partner because he viewed his American teacher as "scary." According to Minsoo, his teacher didn't notice that he was upset or picked up the same Korean books again because he couldn't read English books. He said that the ESL class was better than his regular classroom because the teacher helped him and used easy English.

Student-student interactions

While teachers played an important role in motivating the children to learn English and feel comfortable in an American school, cooperation among children in class and out of school also had positive effects on the children's affective, social, and English development in the new setting. Cooperative work in pairs in class fostered the development of friendships and increased the children's English learning.

Interactions such as making friends at school, were vital for the children to have a sense of belonging and did indeed affect how willing they were to communicate in English in a given situation. Jeewoo, Namhoo, Jeewon, and Eunhee reported that, with the accommodations that their teachers made for them and friends who tried to help them in class, they could open themselves up and achieve satisfaction in relationships. The teachers for these four children arranged for a classmate to help them by providing personal explanations if the children seemed puzzled. The children found their best friends while they were working together or helping each other. They were able to become better acquainted with English-speaking classmates and the new culture in which they were living. The children were told about popular movies, movies stars, and books from their friends. The children said that they watch the movies and read the books that their friends talked about. It seems that interaction with other children helped the children to establish a motivating learning environment for these learners.

On the other hand, Minsoo said that his best friend was Jaesoung, a Korean who lived in the same apartment building, but who did not work with him at school. Minsoo didn't have close English-speaking friends in his class. According to Minsoo, a pair/group work was seldom used in his class. His teacher didn't arrange for a classmate to help him. Interaction with his classmates was limited, and he didn't have a chance to find his best friend by working together or helping each other. Minsoo didn't know TV programs, books, or movies that were popular among children.

Therefore, based on the children's interviews in this study, interaction with English-speaking peers served to increase the children's interest in engaging in acquiring English such as watching TV programs and reading books. The children reacted most positively when they thought friends were pleasant and supportive in their learning.

Meaningful learning experiences

In Korea, English was taught and learned in situations where the only speaker of the language was the teacher. All children in this study attended extracurricular programs after school in Korea to learn English. They had learned English from two to four different kinds of programs, depending on the child, since kindergarten. Despite their exposure to various kinds of English learning programs, the children remembered learning grammar, vocabulary study, reading passages, translation, and memorizing dialogue in learning English. They all expressed a dislike for these activities. The one exception was the story-telling classroom that Namhoo attended for two months before he came to the United States.

The children indicated that their reading or isolated skills abilities such as knowing vocabulary and grammar were "somewhat high," whereas their speaking, listening and conversational fluency were low before coming in the United States. They complained that they had to identify all unknown vocabulary in reading passages and memorize them for the tests in Korean schools. They felt that they were responsible for their achievement through the hard work of studying.

In contrast to learning English in Korea where English is a foreign language, in the United States, these children extended their learning in a societal context in which English is in everyday use. When asked why the children learned English better in the United States, Jeewon, Namhoo, and Eunhee provided answers such as "using English is the life here," "You have to

use English here,” and “Everybody uses English here,” respectively. The children’s daily life, including making friends in school, watching TV, reading books, and studying in class, was performed in English. English was not something that they were studying; it was something that they were living.

The meaningfulness of the learning experience was a key motivator for these children were learning English in the United States. The children made connections between the content they found interesting and the language processes that they needed in order to learn the content. They actively sought to make sense of what they wanted to know and put their efforts toward understanding it. This helped them learn English and they didn’t even notice that they were acquiring English. For example, Eunhee told me about how she found out her favorite TV programs:

We slept in a hotel on the first night in America. I was pushing the button on a remote control to see TV. I found the Disney Channel and the Cartoon Channel. And, one program particularly seemed funny. I didn’t know what that was at that time. After we moved in the apartment, I searched for that program. It was *That’s so Raven*. Since then, that became one of my favorites. I guessed I just looked at the pictures for a while. After I found out that our TV has a caption function, I turned on the caption because I wanted to know what they were saying and I tried to listen. After a while I didn’t need to see a caption to understand that program. (Translated from Korean)

Eunhee, who was currently reading a book called *Spooky American Ghosts*, told me during one interview that she was going to try read the Harry Potter series, saying that the movie did not show the whole story of the book. She picked up *Spooky American Ghosts* at the local bookstore because she was curious about how American ghosts would be different from Korean ghosts.

Her natural curiosity led her to read English books. Two weeks later, when I met Eunhee’s mother, she happily informed me that her daughter was reading a Harry Potter book. Eunhee’s mother expressed that she didn’t expect that her daughter was going to read the book when her daughter asked her to buy it. The mother noticed that Eunhee was reading the book slowly at first; on the first several days, she was reading a couple of pages in one hour. Then one day, Eunhee told her mother that she almost missed the school bus because she didn’t notice the bus was coming. She was reading Harry Potter, sitting on a rock at the bus stop. For her, reading English books became a source of pleasure. She mentioned at the interview that she couldn’t

understand why Korean children had to read boring English reading passages. According to her, the children at her age love to read “fiction,” not “nonfiction” that can be found in school textbooks.

None of the children said that they read English books or other English readings because they enjoyed them when they were studying English in Korea. Based on the children’s interviews, English learning became more powerful when the children studied topics of interest to them and learned skills in the process. Finding a TV program they wanted to understand, a book they wanted to read, stories they wanted to write, or problems they wanted to solve encouraged the children to use the tools of speaking, listening, reading, and writing to obtain or create meaningful ideas. The children understood words and rules when they communicated ideas, concepts, and thoughts, and the connections were made in the content.

The children in this study viewed their ESL classes as having the purpose of helping them learn discrete grammar points, correcting their mistakes in writing, or improving their pronunciation. The children explained that they worked on their “weakest parts” of English in the ESL class, and the teachers identified the areas for improvement. They considered their ESL classes helpful, but felt that their English classes in Korean schools and ESL class were similar. Their discovery of the value of knowing English came while they were studying social studies, science, and math, reading literature or watching their favorite TV programs. Similar to Eunhee, Namhoo reacted to the experience of reading for pleasure:

Each student chooses their own book to read in classroom. We can choose the book from the school library or bring the book from home. I think that’s very cool. (Translated from Korean)

Even Minsoo, who said learning English was hard, said that he found the book *Diary of Worm* interesting:

It looked so funny. Now, I am just looking at the pictures on the pages, but I want to read it. It’s like this worm was writing his diary. It is an adventure story. It just looked so funny. (Translated From Korean)

Two other children also expressed enjoyment in reading literature in English:

I like reading. It’s fun. (Jeewoo)

When I came here, I first read *Clifford*. It was easy enough for me to read and the story was so funny, too. Then I began to read *Baby Sitter* books. (Jeewon)

The children in this study had an opportunity in the United States that they didn't have when they were studying English in Korea. They chose books that met their own interests. These children saw the value of English because they were able to read about or study what they wanted to know. The children commented about the interesting topics the teacher discussed in class. The children stated that they were motivated to read when they found interesting books.

In contrast, the children's negative perceptions about English learning experiences in schools, whether in their Korean schools or American schools, were directly related to working on the development of skills. Jeewon showed me worksheets that she "hated so much." (See Appendix F). Other children complained of difficulties or boredom as follows:

It was hard to understand because the story wasn't fun. I could translate it but I really didn't get it. (Eunhee's experience in her Korean school)

When I had to read, I just didn't like it. Our teacher made us memorize it (Namhoo's experience in his Korean school)

I don't like writing class. Because. Reading is good but we have to summarize it. (Namhoo's experience in his American school).

One interview question was "What advice would you give someone who is studying English?" The children felt that reading a book on a topic of personal interest was the key to enjoying learning English:

You should find out what you like to do, and then read about that kind of thing. (Jeewon)

I would tell them that they should find out what interests them. (Eunhee)

The children also discussed interests in subject matter and personal connections. The children saw the value of English through content dealing with real subject matter that was important and relevant to them. Here are some of the children's responses about their favorite classes:

My favorite class is social studies because I learn so much new things about America. (Eunhee)

I like a reading hour. I can read whatever I want to read. (Namhoo)

I like Art and math. We make something in the art class and solve problems in the math. (Jeewoo)

I like ESL because I can do something by myself. I can't do anything in the regular classroom without ESL teacher's help. (Geewon)

The children noted personal interest in a variety of subjects and had very similar reasons for choosing specific subjects as their favorite classes.

Classroom activities

A close look at what the students did in their favorite classes provides a better understanding of the nature of the processes of learning and development for these five language learners. The children indicated that certain activities helped them to learn vocabulary and write in English. They had a clear preference for instruction that was described as “fun.”

The “fun” instructional activities could be described as active learning or hands-on and contained opportunities for authentic use of language. Eunhee liked the morning meeting when the children shared news. Namhoo liked to play in social studies or science class. Minsoo liked it when his ESL teacher played a game with him. Jeewoo liked to play games. These “helping” instructional activities can be described as cognitively challenging and connected to the world beyond the classroom. The children liked solving problems through experimenting, measuring, cutting, charting, making their own books and reading, and telling stories. This was a consistent response, emerging when the children were asked about what activities they preferred in learning English, their favorite classes, and how the teachers helped them to learn English or any subject matter...:

I like when we make a story by ourselves in a reading class. (Jeewon)

I like doing word search. It helps me remember meanings. (Minsoo)

I like writing sentences using the words we are learning (Namhoo)

I like matching stuff. (Jeewoo) (See Appendix G)

I like this. (Eun) (See Appendix H)

Jeewon’s experience of making her own book (See Appendix J) was an example of “helping” instructional activity.

We made this book, ‘My family story.’ It’s a class book. We brought pictures and talked about our families. Each student wrote his or her family story. I wrote about my family, and the teacher made comments and corrected my mistakes. I wrote it again. After we made the book, we read together in class. And I showed it to my mom and dad. This book is ‘My Korean story.’ We could make another book if we wanted to. The first book was

free but this one was not. Well, but I wanted to make another book, so I did. The teacher helped me to write.

Jeewon recalled that publishing her own book was “good” and “helpful.” In order to complete this activity, she had to develop functional vocabulary for writing about her family and write about her own family. Jeewon explored a key word, practiced how to pronounce it and how to write the new word, used the word within an oral context, and read it aloud. In short, she thought, spoke, read, and wrote in English. She learned English within a supportive context that promoted using English for message-sharing purposes.

Namhoo shared some activities he thought were helpful in learning English (See Appendix K). These activities all focused on skills that the teacher wanted their children to learn, such as studying new vocabulary or finding grammatical errors. Namhoo expressed that learning grammar and vocabulary and reading passages were hard and stressful when he was studying English in Korea. However, by going beyond question-answer type of activity in learning vocabulary or grammar in the American school, Namhoo didn’t find a skill activity stressful anymore. Rather, he stated that he would recommend these activities for his Korean friends when he goes back to Korea. In short, the children gained English proficiency in a classroom where classroom activities involved the process of negotiating knowledge, exchanging personal experiences and thoughts, and using language for authentic, meaning-making purposes.

The children described why particular types of activities worked best for them. The children mentioned increased comprehension (e.g. “understand things better,” “pay more attention,” “concentrate more”) as the reason they preferred the particular activity. This finding indicated that these children were motivated by the activities that required understanding. Working on comprehension seemed to be important for the children to view English learning as a process for thinking and responding rather than one that requires rote, repetitive tasks that do not tap higher level thinking skills.

Looking at the children's English learning experiences through the eyes of Korean parents

Many parents currently enroll their children below the third grade in private afternoon English classes in Korea. This is a growing trend and has arisen from the belief that children should begin to learn English as soon as possible. The children's parents in this study believed this notion and enrolled their children in private English learning programs before the third grade. They showed the understanding that English was essential for their children's future for higher education and thus provided learning opportunities that the Korean schools did not provide. All of these parents expressed dissatisfaction about English education in Korean schools. Their main concern was the lack of interesting materials and teaching activities, and the restricted lesson hours. The following are the parental responses on the issue of learning English in the Korean schools:

Korean school still focuses on grammar. I want my son to enjoy learning English. The school doesn't seem to teach that way. (Namhoo's mother)

Forty five minutes two to three times weekly is not enough to master a language. (Jeewon and Jeewoo's mother)

Most children start learning English before the third grade. So they already know English, but the school starts teaching basic words to third graders. The children get bored in class. The school doesn't seem to know the reality of what parents want for their children's English learning and what the children need to learn English. (Eunhee's mother)

I just think that starting (English) in the third grade is too late. Besides, every parent I know has their child learn English from the first grade. Compared to them, I was late because I enrolled my son in an English learning program in the second grade. (Minsoo's mother)

When they considered their children's learning of English, the parents reflected on their own English learning experiences. Namhoo's mother noted:

I don't want my son ending up like us. I learned English in middle and high school and even in college. Look at my husband. He's been studying English about sixteen years. But I can't carry on simple conversations and my husband doesn't feel comfortable speaking in English. And, we both sometimes can't understand what American people are talking

about. I want my son to feel comfortable talking with American people when he grows up.
(Translated from Korean)

Jeewon and Jeewoo's mother also expressed:

I want my children to speak English well. As you know, we all studied grammar in middle and high school, and even college, but still we are not good at speaking English. I don't want that to happen to my children. (Translated from Korean)

Thus, when these parents enrolled their children in private English learning programs, they had the goal of assuming that their children would learn to speak English, and further, they wanted their children to learn English in a different way than they had to learn English in their school days:

My son learned English first in the program provided by the university. It is very popular among parents. The native speakers teach English. I thought that would be helpful for my son, not to be afraid to meet native English speakers. You know, not like us...I put my son on the waiting list to get into that program. (Namhoo's mother, translated from Korean)

My son and daughter learned English in *Wonder Land* [a private English learning program] at first. That program taught English by playing games and singing songs. You know, in a more fun way. I think that it is important for the children to feel learning English is fun. (Jeewon and Jeewoo's mother, translated from Korean)

The tutor came over to my house and taught English to my son. Usually they played games together so my son didn't really think he was learning English. (Minsoo's mother, translated from Korean)

The parents viewed singing songs or playing games as making their children comfortable in initially learning English, but those games were not perceived to be for upper grade children or for achieving higher levels of English proficiency. Therefore, when their children moved into the upper grades or learned to read simple sentences, the parents had their children learn English in the more traditional grammar approach. But they felt they had no choice because alternatives were not available for their children:

I know learning English like this (learning grammar, translating) is not the best way. My son told me that English is difficult since he changed to a traditional program. But, I didn't have a choice. (Namhoo's mother, translated from Korean)

I know the best thing is for the children to enjoy learning English, like reading an interesting story book. But it's hard to find a program that teaches English like that.
(Jeewon and Jeewoo's mother)

The parents believed that immersion in an English-speaking environment would help their children learn English better and naturally. When the parents were planning to live temporarily in the United States, they expected their children to learn to speak and listen well:

Even if I provide numerous private learning programs for my children, it is just impossible for them to use English like native speakers. There is no opportunity to develop English like that in Korea. (Jeewon and Jeewoo's mother, translated from Korean)

I expected that my daughter would speak, and listen better at least, if we live in the United States because everybody there speaks English. (Eunhee's mother)

I thought my son would learn English better because everybody speaks English in the United States. (Minsoo's mother)

I hoped my son would speak English better. I thought if he achieved that goal by living in the United States, that would be just enough. (Namhoo's mother)

The parents' responses showed a common belief that children who spent time abroad in a target language community could learn English better, or could perfect using the target language.

When the children's families came to the United States and visited the children's school, the parents were surprised by the climate of the school and the classroom. They observed the walls full of the children's work and pictures. The parents saw a comfortable atmosphere with a caring teacher as the core difference between an American and Korean school. Namhoo's mother noted how different she felt when she entered the American school and met her son's teacher.

Namhoo's mother recalled:

It's so different... Most parents meet their children's teachers at the beginning of a semester. You know, just to talk about the usual stuff like my child's school life or getting to know my child's teacher. When you enter a Korean school to meet your child's teacher for the first time or second, you can't help but feel that you are looked down upon. The Korean teachers are full of authority. They are not friendly. They don't seem to care about each student. They just focus on what they teach. I don't mean that they are not very good at teaching their subjects. Some teachers in early grades have really bad reputations. We just prayed that my child won't be in their classes. I met several times with my son's

teacher [in the American school]. It's also difficult in the Korean school because you don't want to bother your child's teacher. Here, the school and teachers are very open to the parents. I didn't feel that I was looked down upon. My son's teacher is like a friend to the children. He once bought a souvenir coin for his teacher and the teacher hugged him and thanked him. My son told me that he was so happy. (Translated from Korean)

When asked what impressions the parents had when they met their child's American teacher, Eunhee's mother also commented:

When you come in to the Korean school, you can feel the authority. But, here, it was like a friendly environment. Especially, American teachers are so friendly. I didn't feel any distance from my daughter's teacher. Of course I didn't communicate well, but I knew that he cared for the parents. The teachers' attitude towards parents was the big difference. (Eunhee's mother)

The mother of Jeewon and Jeewoo was glad that she and her husband were involved in their children's school lives. She felt that she, as a parent, took a part in their children's schooling in the United States:

In Korea, parents and teachers or schools are not working together. I mean we can't be involved in any kind of decision-making process and we are not invited to the classroom. Here, my children's school always invites the children's parents.

Moreover, the parents felt that the friendly, supportive, and personal attention of the teacher and climate of the school and classroom were critical in providing an atmosphere conducive to learning. The children's parents considered the role of teacher as facilitating success in their children's learning in the American school. Positive comments about the American classroom centered on student-teacher interactions, which seemed to make a lasting impression on the parents. The parents appreciated the teacher's encouragement, especially when they took an interest in their children's success. The parents mentioned the teacher's willingness to aid students in their learning and respond to individual student needs. Jeewoo and Jeewon's mother said:

My daughter had a problem in her Korean school. Her first and third grade teachers were great. But, her third grade teacher was not really... How can I say it... Um, my daughter and her teacher were not getting along. I know that my daughter is a type of student who might ask a question of the teacher about the assignments. She sometimes states her

opinion strongly. I know that might upset or irritate the teacher. One day my daughter told me that her teacher ignored her questions. I could see that my daughter was not happy about her teacher. Here, her American teacher answers her every question. My daughter feels that she is respected by her teacher. In turn, she respects her teacher. My daughter can ask questions of her teacher even in the middle of class. You know that is impossible in a Korean school. I think American teachers provide more freedom for the students to express their opinions. (Translated from Korean)

Similarly, Eunhee's mother noted:

My daughter's teacher praises her a lot. For example, her teacher told my daughter that he was impressed that my daughter knew the words they were studying. When she entered the classroom after a weekend, the teacher told her that he missed her. I know he praises other students and tells everyone that he misses them. This really helps her feel welcomed and boosts her self esteem in learning in an American school. Also, my daughter's teacher catches when she doesn't understand teacher talk, and he comes over to her during a recess time and explains it to her one more time. (Translated from Korean)

Namhoo's mother appreciated her son's teacher for arranging a classmate to help him:

My son's teacher arranged one boy to help my son. So, whenever my son had problems and didn't understand in class, he came to that boy. And, my son also asked questions to his teacher whenever he needed to.

The parents were satisfied with the children's school and their teachers in the United States. Only Minsoo's mother expressed that she didn't feel comfortable to come to the school and meet her son's teacher because of her own lack of proficiency in English. Minsoo's mother said:

I know my son is struggling in class. He told me that he didn't understand much in class. I really want to help him and talk to his teacher. One of the Korean parents told me that if a child is having difficulty in doing homework, the teacher would give the child easier homework. But, it's hard for me to come over to the school and talk with my son's teacher. My son feels stressed and I feel stressed, too. (Translated from Korean)

Except for Minsoo's mother, the children's parents noticed their children's progress in learning English during their stay in the United States. Their comments reflected their recognition of their children's progress:

I think my daughter learned English very well. She doesn't have any problem in speaking, reading, and listening. She does still have difficulty in writing. But, as you know, writing is the most difficult part, I think. (Jeewon's mother)

Listening and speaking. My husband helped him on his homework about three or four months but my son doesn't need his help any more. Sometimes we ask him about what American people are saying. He giggles when he watches TV programs so we know he can understand well. But I think reading has been improved the most. My son seemed to be very confident in reading books. (Namhoo's mother)

Listening, of course. She used to turn on captions at first but not anymore. Besides, she is reading more books in English. (Eunhee's mother)

The parents perceived that the children's teachers helped them improve English skills and contributed positively to the children's learning English. They commented in the interviews that they found that learning in the American school to be very different from Korean schools. They were sensitive to the variation in teaching styles between Korean teachers and American teachers and to the different types of lessons:

I think homework is very helpful for my son to learn English as well as in content areas. It's not just 'finding the answer' kind of homework. For example, one day he interviewed one of his classmates and wrote about the interview. The teacher corrected his grammar and then my son rewrote his report. And, also I really like the 20 minute-reading assignment before going to bed. That helped my son improve his reading and eventually helped him find the joy of reading a book. (Namhoo's mother, translated from Korean)

According to my daughter, her teacher makes the classroom very relaxed. Sometimes, they sit on the floor to talk about some topic. Sometimes the students go out with their partners. Her teacher motivates the children to share their ideas. (Eunhee's mother, translated from Korean)

I think American teachers have more variety of classroom activities and make knowledge more real to the children. They don't teach what the children should know by writing on the board, and the children then copy it on their notebook. For example, my daughter learned plants by looking at the real ones in her classroom. If she learned just by reading it on the textbook, I am sure she is going to forget easily. (Jeewon and Jeewoo's mother, translated from Korean)

The children's parents thought American teachers tried to make their lessons engaging by providing motivating, engaging hands-on activities for their children. What they perceived of their children's American school was that teachers generally encouraged them to learn by providing opportunities to be involved.

Namhoo's mother, Eunhee's mother, Jeewon and Jeewoo's mother all hoped that they could provide meaningful reading experiences for their children when they got back to Korea:

I want to provide meaningful reading experiences for my son. I think enjoying reading books in English is the most valuable outcome of his time living in the United States. I don't know how I am going to make that happen, but that is something that I really want to continue to do for my son when we go back to Korea. (Namhoo's mother)

Reading. I saw many interesting books in a bookstore, and the school also sends a list of books that is good for the children. It's not easy to find a variety of books in Korea. Besides, they are cheap here. I am glad my daughter enjoys reading books. (Eunhee's mother, translated from Korean)

By sending my two children to the American school, I realized how reading was important. We always emphasize reading books when we learn Korean but often forget or do not realize the importance of reading books when we learn English. If a child loves to read a book in English, he or she will then learn to speak, write, and listen in English. Plus, he or she will love to learn English. (Jeewon and Jeewoo's mother)

The parents did not see their children enjoy reading books in English while in Korea, but in the United States they observed their children being motivated to read interesting books in English. The parents saw that their children's desire to read interesting books increased their willingness to learn English. They thought that their children could learn as much English by reading for pleasure as they learned when reading just for practicing structured drills.

The parents in this study concerned that children did not always produce expected language gains by living in the United States. They saw some of the children of their friends and on some cases, their own children overwhelmed by the amount, delivery, rate, and complexity of the language that surrounded them. To take advantage of living in the United States, they believed that the children's teachers played a major role in promoting the children's motivation to learn English in a new setting. Interviews with the Korean parents revealed that there were "good teachers" and "mean teachers" for the ESL children. The mother of Jeewon and Jeewoo

told the story about one Korean boy at that time and was “literally drawing pictures all the time in his class during the whole year and went back to Korea without learning anything.” The mother blamed his teacher who “give him a piece of paper, left him alone on a desk and let him spend time on drawing if he wants to.” The teacher of this extreme case happened to be Minsoo’s teacher, too. Several Korean children stated that Minsoo’s teacher was “scary” and “mean.” One child explained that Minsoo’s teacher was mean because she only cared about students who used English well. The Korean parents believed that warm and caring teachers made accommodations for ESL students and provided for student involvement by making instruction meaningful to the students, thus they made their children enjoy learning in the American school. The parents emphasized that those kinds of teacher qualities helped any children to learn in any context, whether it is an American school or a Korean school.

Three mainstream teachers' teaching strategies to help English language learners in their classrooms

Teacher interviews were conducted with those who gave permission. Five regular room teachers and an ESL teacher were asked to participate in interviewing. Three teachers were interviewed. One teacher didn't have time and another teacher was sick at the time of study.

In the interviews, all three teachers stated that ESL children needed extra help and they were willing to help them individually. The teachers said that they did not need radically alter their approaches to teaching in order to be successful. Rather, they needed to attend certain features of instruction, for instance, the selection of key vocabulary that enhanced understanding, provision of a range of assignment involving key vocabulary concepts, the careful focus on providing feedback that the ESL child needed, and assisting the ESL child using the child's native language.

Each teacher used different activities for their ESL children, and yet their activities had common strategies. One predominant activity in their classrooms was interaction-fostering activities such as a whole group meeting, student-led group work, pair work, and a theme-based project. All three teachers adjusted their instruction in order to make it comprehensible. Adjustments such as comprehension checks, contextualizing abstract concepts through the use of media such as photos, graphs or graphic organizers and using the ESL child's native language were made in their classrooms. The strategies the teachers discussed in interviews provided answers to some problems facing ESL children and the teachers who work with them.

Ms. Wood

Ms. Wood had four ESL children in her classroom. She, who was teaching first graders, stated:

There are two things – one I do what I call 'show and share or show and tell,' where they pick a day out of week that they come up in front of the class, they could bring a toy from home, they could bring a book. I know my little boy from Korea brought in a picture of the flag of South Korea and explained the flag. So they get to pick what they want to talk about in front of the class. And you know it's the beginning of public speaking, that's what I always say, you know, and how to project your voice. So they have that opportunity once a month. We also do what I called 'authors chair.' We do it maybe once

a month after they have written something they are very proud of. They get to come up and read it and share with the class and their drawings too.

Ms. Wood seemed to engage in responsive teaching by deliberately including the ESL children's cultural backgrounds and life experiences in the classroom activity. For example, she intentionally chose the topic, community, in her lesson and invited ESL student's parents to come in and share their culture with the class:

So we had people I have this little boy's mom coming in and talk about Mexico and brought things from Mexico. So this little boy here he has got his mom, he is so proud to do that. And they help out my little girl I just got from Brazil. Both her parents came in and gave the slide show. So we give these ESL parents an opportunity to come and share their culture and it makes their student feel or their child feel very proud.

Ms. Wood explained that asking the children to share their cultural background and inviting their parents in class created a comfortable environment for the ESL children and provided opportunity all members in class to talk about other countries' cultures. She reported that she had been doing this activity for five years and believed that the ESL children and native English speaking children learned from each other and respected each other. The teacher also found somebody that was in upper grade level to help her out for translating. She used a fifth grader to help her translating so the ESL children could understand, and writing notes for the ESL children's parents about homework. She allowed her ESL children time to read words or aloud and to express thoughts orally or in writing. The purpose of translating was trying to get her ESL children comfortable in the environment before she start pushing too much academics on them.

Mr. Smith

Mr. Smith had two ESL children. He said that he had eighteen ESL students in his classroom in an other school, and there were eight ESL staff members. He stated:

It's very different when you have 8 ESL staff members in school versus here where you have one. I think, the amount of involvement or at least exposure to ESL students is not quite as great as other places. So they [new teachers] need to have a little more training, be more exposed to the cultures and understand the cultures I think.

Mr. Smith believed that cooperation with an ESL teacher was important for him to help ESL children as much as possible. He identified specific areas the ESL children needed to succeed in his classroom and talked with the ESL teacher about these areas:

I identified one area and particularly [child] needs a lot of help with when she is writing. So, I talked with the ESL staff and said, this is the area of importance for her compared to her Math and science. I want with her to kind of get her to understand how English writing is so different than other languages. You can see a lot of the commonalities among Korean students, how they write is very similar; they translate to the English language and then put it in some structure very similar, so you see a lot of commonalities between them and so they can start work on correcting that to apply to writing.

To help ESL children, Mr. Smith stated that he encouraged them to talk, he conversed to them as much as possible and he made sure that he designed as many group activities so ESL children could get involved. He mentioned the morning meeting and explained that he used it as a way of exchanging meaningful conversations:

Morning meeting is chance for students to talk, to share, have conversation, ask questions about things that we've done. We do a lot of stuff for it so you know partner activity, we do games, any opportunities that kids can talk it comes up and work together so. There is always a chance to engage each other specially morning meetings were in, morning meeting for any more from half hour and 45 minutes.

After this conversation, Mr. Smith displayed boxes that contained pair work, group work, and games for studying social studies, science, math, and writing. Many of those games were for partners to play. The teacher used many activities where the children worked with partners or in small groups and got involved with one another. He believed that working with a partner or in a small group made learning more personal and allowed for more interaction rather than large group activities.

Mr. Smith seemed to make balance between challenging his ESL students but not frustrating them by using different strategies to help them:

We try not to give them books that are you know really-really down or below grade level. We do try to provide books that are on grade level. We do a lot of one on one instructions so when you know for example [child] just read 'Tuck Everlasting' it's a challenging

novel but using a small group setting, using what's you already can do with reading help her through those books, now.

Mr. Smith did not choose to use simple and did not use books that were too easy for the ESL students. Rather, he provided reading materials that were relevant and meaningful. He always checked ESL students' comprehension about the stories they were reading. If students had difficulty in understanding stories, the teacher met individually with the child for discussion:

We sat down together read a chapter together because she said, 'I read this chapter and didn't understand it.' So I read it with her and we just sort of discuss each little part where there might have been misunderstanding. There's a lot of, its more like the wording, you know, but we provide anything they need, you know, and so far looking at her success, I mean it's been.

Ms. Taylor

Ms. Taylor had two ESL children in her classroom. She mentioned that she had many ESL students including Korean children in the past. Ms. Taylor valued the relationship between her and her students. The teacher stated that the children can come and ask anytime they have a question or a problem. She stated:

A lot of my kids in class call me all the time and [child], do you know [child], he is in my classroom, I think he was born in Korea but he moved here at a young age. He calls me almost every night and I always leave that open.

Play was a frequent activity used in her class. Ms. Taylor provided appropriate play materials and encouraged the children to participate and supported their efforts. For instance, the children role played historical events with other children in pairs or small groups, they read important documents, learned new concepts, and wrote down key vocabulary words. Therefore, while playing, the children not only worked on the concepts and skills related to particular play, they had meaningful and authentic learning experiences. She explained:

When I'm teaching especially in social studies, I draw pictures on the board with the words and I do a lot of acting out. Like we do plays and things, which the kids love, like for social studies, we are talking about the Revolutionary War and I will, another important document like Patrick Henry and his famous speeches is right here, so what I do is, from there the kids wear these (hats) and give speeches and then will act out the

war without using props, but they have so much fun. That helps a lot of ESL kids really understand a lot of teaching.

The teacher made extra effort to enhance her ESL children's background knowledge and vocabulary meaning:

The important words that we are studying, well right there are words and then I'll have [child] put them into sentences because sometimes you are so overwhelmed with, you know, new information. I pick a couple of important words out and say, just to have make a sentence with this word and listen. These are English words. That is very overwhelming for [child], what we did in class we did this, we read each one and then we pick out the important words and then our own words. We would write what it meant, just little phrases because social studies is very hard for ESL kids. This helps you know, when you, and we interpret things.

Ms. Taylor also used pictures, not only to make words comprehensible for the ESL children in her class, but also to assess the children's understanding:

I do have a lot of pictures, picture books and things. In the past I've drawn pictures on the tests and quizzes for the ESL children. In fact they have an interactive notebook, let me show you. I'll show you. This helps me understand, this is how I assess the students learning. It's called interactive notebook. I have notes, the important things that they need to know on the right side and on the left side they draw a picture of how they interpret the information, and I put it down here. So it's like that on every page. I can look at that and see that [child] understands by looking at his pictures.

Summary of Teacher interviews

Although all of the activities described by the three mainstream teachers were originally designed for English-speaking children, they believed that interacting with other children in activities played a vital role in inviting their ESL children to engaging in meaningful language learning experiences. They felt their ESL children were just like any other children in their classroom and made sure that their ESL children felt involved in class. They actively kept their ESL children in mind when they designed instruction to assure that they reached their ESL children as well as the other children. The teachers also understood that their ESL children needed some extra support. To make their lessons more comprehensible to their ESL children, all

three teachers adjusted their instruction. All teachers used strategies for enhancing ESL children's comprehension such as using visuals or other aids to help students relate to information. The teachers provided support to the children by building on and clarifying input of students. At the heart of these instructional adjustments is a clear recognition that ESL children face unique learning challenges. The following are recommendations they made for first year teachers in which they provided suggestions for setting up classroom environments conducive to successful learning for ESL students:

I just got one from Brazil, speaks no English at all. What I am doing basically with [child] is a lot of visuals right now and just letting her get a bit comfortable. I just try to get them comfortable in their environment before I start pushing too much academics on them. For a first year teacher, I would say be patient. What I have found out when, like this little girl [child], who is still not speaking any English, now we are doing all pointing to the table and saying 'table,' But not to get discouraged or frustrated because I have found if you don't, these children at this age, I am talking about 5 and 6 years olds they seem to pick it up within a couple months. I would just tell first year students who are teaching now, just treat them like any other students. (Ms. Wood)

Well, you know its hard to say; its hard to say that we are working best, but I mean, I guess I don't mean to say it in this way, but you kind of force them to talk, you know, and part of that is I always go out of my way and make sure I read, say louder and talk to [child]. You just talk to them and you do as much group activity to get involved. And eventually they'll be comfortable enough to do it. [child] is comfortable now to talk to her neighbor, yeah, she'll come and talk to me, you know it's not a problem that she is shy (Mr. Smith).

I create or develop a relationship where [child] understands that anytime he has a question or a problem, he can come and ask, and he does. Last year I had a little boy that was new and he wasn't picking up English language quickly. So, we very frequently went out in a hallway and talked because he did not want to talk out in the classroom. So he and I would go out and we have meetings out in the hallway where he would express to me the problems that he was having in the classroom. It was a lot of work in my first year. There was a lot of work and I recommend that even if you don't know you are doing an ESL child in your classroom, to be prepared, and you have a lot of pictures, and

you have a lot of bolded words in your lesson plans, and every time you are teaching, to have something written up on the board because that helps [child], like if [child] is confused he will look out (Ms. Taylor).

Interview with a Principal

An interview with the principal provided brief information about the school's philosophy and curriculum. According to the principal, the school philosophy was based on the framework proposed by Ernest Boyer in his Basic School. The principal explained that the school adopted four priorities that were considered the essential building blocks of the school to achieve excellence for all: community, curriculum coherence, climate, and character. The principal talked about four priorities briefly. To build a community for learning, the principal stated that staff and students, along with parents work together to promote learning. Especially, parent involvements were encouraged at the Green Hill elementary School. The principal referred the curriculum coherence as "not breaking up pieces." The children learned the various field of knowledge that were integrated, made connections across the disciplines and related what they learn to life. Eight integrative themes (the life cycle, the use of symbols, membership in groups, a sense of time and space, responses to the aesthetic, connections to nature, producing and consuming, and living with purpose) spiral upward from kindergarten to the upper grades. The principal described a climate for learning at Green Hill Elementary as a "fun place to learn." To make learning fun, the principal stated that the school building was designed to provide a good environment for learning and the school provided rich resources and after-school programs. A commitment to character is concerned with the ethical and moral dimensions of a child's life. The principal talked about the school's pledge that emphasized to guide the children.

The principal mentioned a school motto, "Serving a diverse community" According to him, it implied what each child brought to the school was valued. The principal stated that ten to fifteen percent of students were from foreign countries and most of them were children of graduate students at the local university and children of visiting scholars. To help these children, the principle stated that an ESL teacher supported these children and provided suggestions to their mainstream teachers. According to him, there was no formal training program for these children.

Classroom observations

Classroom observations were conducted where the teachers gave permission for observation. Three classroom teachers and one ESL teacher were observed. In one classroom, a student teacher was teaching a lesson and the teacher was helping the student teacher. When observing the ESL class, there was a fire drill and the students had to go out.

Ms. Wood's classroom

The door was decorated with a big poster that said, "WELCOME." Clouds that the children made and colored were hanging on the ceiling. A big tooth-shaped paper was posted on the wall, and the names of the children who had lost their teeth were written there. A calendar and thermometer were hung. Above the white board, the alphabet was posted with examples of a corresponding word with each letter. Numbers that indicated the amount of days the children had been.

The children were doing their "morning work" during which they had to solve math questions using their math journals. The classroom teacher helped each child individually. If a child raised a hand, she checked the finished work for that child. A student teacher stated several times to the children how many minutes were left to finish their work.

After all the children finished their morning work, the student teacher had the children sit in the center of the classroom and asked the children who the weather man was. The boy stood up and came to the student teacher. The student teacher and this child walked to the place where the calendar and thermometer were hung. The child began to read what the day was and what temperature was. The student teacher pointed at the numbers that indicated school days and asked how many school days had passed so far. The children said one hundred forty eight days. The student teacher had the child write the number on the white board and then circled one hundred. The student teacher wrote the number on a kite shaped paper and then gave it to the child to post on the wall.

The student teacher had the children go back to their seats and open their math journals to page 186. There were pictures of pencils, a pair of scissors and a ruler. The student teacher said she had ninety cents and asked the children to raise their hands if they thought she had enough money to buy a pair of scissors. Some children answered the question, and the student teacher told them, "No voices, just hands." The student teacher wrote the prices of a pencil and a pair of

scissors on the white board and asked the children how much money she needed to buy those. Some children answered her question and some children didn't. The student teacher continued adding practice by changing school supplies and prices.

During the practice, two girls were whispering and the student teacher called one of the girls to answer her question. One boy was holding his math journal and lay on his face behind it. The classroom teacher, who was sitting on her chair and reading some paper, came over the boy and put the math journal down on the desk. The classroom teacher walked around and found that one boy was playing with a paper clip, and she told him to put it on her desk. One boy was flipping the pages of the book. One boy put his head on his desk. A girl, who was from Brazil and spoke no English, was drawing something on paper and cutting it. The classroom teacher came over to this girl and talked to her but I wasn't able to hear the conversation. However, the classroom teacher talked about how she helped this girl during the interview:

A little girl that I just got from Brazil speaks no English at all. What I am doing right now, there is website called freetranslation.com. You just go in and you type out what you want to ask her. And then you put her country and it comes up in her native language.

And then she can answer us back by either writing or motioning to us. What I am doing basically with [child] is a lot of visuals right now and just letting her a bit comfortable.

After talking to the girl, the classroom teacher left the classroom. The practice was continued for about forty five minutes. When the student teacher wrapped up the math lesson, she told the children, "It's hard. I know. But this is something you have to know when you buy things." The student teacher asked the children to line up in the hall to move another classroom. All the children lined up and the student teacher went out of the classroom. The girl, who was from Brazil, was still in the classroom, sitting on her chair, cutting the things that she had drawn on paper. The student teacher didn't call her name. The girl looked around the classroom and walked out of the classroom to line up.

Mr. Smith's classroom

The classroom door was decorated with the children's pictures. The front board was divided into a multiplication table, a word wall, and a happy birthday section. On the back wall, the students' science projects were posted along with the teacher's note about science key

questions. The classroom was furnished with one bookshelf, one couch, and four computers. On the top of the bookshelf, a phrase “Celebrating reading with good books” was posted.

The children were doing their morning math homework. The teacher checked everybody’s homework by asking each child and helped when a child couldn’t finish. On the white board, “sharing,” “news” and two children’s names under each heading were written.

After all the children finished their morning homework, the teacher asked them to sit in the center of the classroom. The teacher sat on a chair and the children sat on the floor making a circle. The teacher asked me to say “hi” in Korean and then he said hi in Korean to the girl sitting next to him and at the same time he patted his hands to her back. The girl also patted and said “hi” in Korean to a child sitting next to her. All the children exchanged greetings in Korean. Then, the teacher announced he was going to change seating arrangements because some groups worked well and some didn’t. Several students raised their hands and asked questions to the teacher. Before answering the questions, the teacher reminded them how they should respect other people by listening instead of talking to the each other. The children said that they had to listen while other people were talking.

The teacher looked at the board and announced that two boys were going to “share” that morning and a girl was going to do the “news.” He called on of the boys. The boy looked around at his classmates and talked to the class about how he and his dad researched about phobias. He asked the class what automotophobia was. The children were raising their hands, and the boy called one of the children’s names. The boy asked about several more phobias and the children seemed very interested in guessing the meanings. The other boy shared information about NFL draft with his classmates. Several children asked questions about players. The girl told the news that she lost her baby tooth when she fell off of a sofa. The teacher asked the children who had questions for this girl. Several children raised their hands and asked questions to the girl. The teacher also asked her how many baby teeth she still had.

After sharing information and announcing news, the teacher asked one child to bring index cards and a tape. He explained that he would write a famous person’s name on the index card and put it on a child’s back. The child had to figure out what was written on the index card by listening to clues from the classmates. The teacher asked the children who wanted to be a volunteer and named one of the children who raised their hands. One boy stood up, and the teacher posted an index card on his back. The rest of the children saw what was written on the

index card and then gave one word clues so the boy could guess the famous person. Every child took a turn to provide a word clue to the boy. When the boy figured out the famous person, he called a name from the children who raised hands. The children enjoyed this activity. An ESL child didn't ask questions about the NFL draft and nor did she had any questions for the girl who lost her tooth. But she guessed the meanings of phobias and raised her hand to be a volunteer. The morning meeting lasted about for forty five minutes.

Ms. Taylor's classroom

The teacher was a fourth grade teacher who had the most experience with ESL students, including Korean students. The classroom was filled with reading materials and abundant with environmental print. Words and signs surrounded the learner in this classroom, ranging from signs and labels on objects to a classroom motto, "We are a team of learners" and the teacher's rules, such as "Fourth Graders use polite words." The big stickers of "Thank you," and "Please" were posted around the rules. On the back wall, which was named the "Proud of Parade," there were the children's works: letters, drawings, homework, and quizzes. Weekly, every child had the opportunity to post self-selected examples of their work that they were most proud of most. The teacher described:

What I do, every week they put up something out of their product every week, so has it worked like, he was really proud of this so we put this just up. Every week they change and they put new things. Every child has a chance to shine.

The teacher also decorated the wall outside the classroom with the children's work. The children's understanding of the economy was the topic of the work being observed when I visited teacher one's classroom. Some students drew money, some students wrote essays about their recently acquired knowledge of the economy, and some students glued pictures and newspapers. The class had a new class pet, a rabbit, because their precious class pet, a hamster, had died.

According to the teacher and evidenced during the observation, every morning, the teacher and children gathered together, sat in the center of the classroom, made a big circle and had a "complements hour." The teacher tapped the football twice and said, "I want to complement Amber because she came to me this morning and told me that our pet is from South America. I appreciate her research." She then threw the football to Amber. Amber received the

ball from the teacher and tapped the ball twice and said, “I want to complement Mark because he was such a nice partner in PE yesterday.” Throwing the football was continued until every child got compliments from their classmates. Since Amber found that the class pet was from South America, the teacher gave a research assignment to the children to research South American names for the purpose of naming the rabbit. The class then was going to vote on her name. The teacher brought the pet into the circle and every child took their turn to pet her.

The children went back to their seats. The teacher wrote “Freedom” on the whiteboard and had the children raise their hands if they knew what freedom meant. The teacher called on one child among those who raised their hands and asked the meaning of freedom. The teacher explained that there were five freedoms in the First Amendment on the Bill of the Rights Constitution. Some of the children started naming kinds of freedom, but the teacher asked the class to guess what freedom she was going to act. The teacher first knelt down on her knee, held her hands together, and looked above. The children easily guessed that she had portrayed freedom of religion. After the children successfully guessed all the freedoms from the teacher’s acting, the teacher wrote each name of the freedom on the whiteboard, and the teacher and the children read it together three times.

The teacher told the class that they needed to make groups and asked if they wanted to make a group on their own or have the teacher make the groups. The teacher asked the children to lay their heads on the desks and the children voted on the method of making groups by raising hands. The children voted to form their own groups. On the count of five, the children made their own groups. The teacher brought out five paper bags and explained that each bag contained materials that could represent the different kinds of freedoms they just learned about. If bags didn’t have a lot of material to present, then the group had to come up with an idea how they were going to represent the assigned freedom. Group members had to decide who would be a bag opener, a direction reader, an activity manager, and a note taker in their interactive notebooks.

The children started working and the teacher walked around to see how the children were doing. Once bag openers in each group opened the bag and took out the materials, direction readers read the direction to the group members. Then the group members collaboratively identified the kind of freedom their group had to represent, and they worked together to decide how to represent it using the materials they had in the bag. In a “freedom of the press” bag, there

were two cameras and lyrics. The “freedom of religion” bag had a Bible, a cup, and a cloak. The “freedom of petition” bag had four long sticks, four pieces of paper, markers, and a sign-up sheet. The “freedom of assembly” and “freedom of speech” bags didn’t have any materials, so the children talked about how they were going to represent their assigned freedoms, and the teacher helped them to come up with an idea.

When fifteen minutes had passed, the groups presented their assigned freedom in front of the class. After each group finished their presentation, the teacher asked the class what freedom the group represented, and the class answered. The children represented freedom of press by one child signing a song and two other members taking pictures of him. The children represented freedom of petition by marching around the classroom, holding picket signs on which they had “More recess,” and they were screaming “We want more recess,” and passing around a petition to their classmates. The children represented the freedom of religion by acting out the last supper of Jesus: One child wrapped the cloak and read the Bible and passed the cup to the group members, saying “This is my blood.” The children represented freedom of assembly by gathering on the center of the classroom and saying that they were going to discuss the important issue. One child spoke up on his idea about keeping our environment clean. Another child told him that she agreed with him. The children represented freedom of speech by acting as though they were at a radio station: one child was a DJ and expressed her idea while one child was beat boxing. Two other children were writing something on their paper. To conclude the class session, the teacher came to the front and explained again about the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution. The class read aloud the five freedoms all together once again.

The teacher utilized teaching strategies that supported the development of learning communities that included all learners. The different materials, resources, and activities were utilized to learn the topic. Teacher three offered the children invitations to talk, read, and write around purposeful tasks and within cooperative contexts. As a result, the students worked together on an activity that naturally promoted the use of both oral and written language to question, discuss, inform, negotiate and communicate with others.

Teacher one’s classroom provided an environment that motivated students, gained their attention, and involved them in a variety of interactions. The lesson included opportunities for the children to read, write, and share insights and ideas. Through the lesson, the children learned about the First Amendment of the Constitution and the Bill of the Rights. Furthermore, both the

teacher and the children scaffolded the development of a unique classroom culture: A team of learners.

ESL classroom

According to the ESL teacher, ESL children, depending on the level of English proficiency, received instruction for twenty to thirty minutes, one to three times per week. That was the maximum that she could promise for the ESL children. The teacher had forty five ESL students and had to travel to two more elementary schools during a week to help the ESL children there. The teacher referred her classroom as a closet. It was located in the corner of the school library. The classroom was really small. There was one desk with two chairs. The teacher had one computer but didn't have her own desk. The teacher mentioned that she could not bring more than two children to the classroom because there wasn't simply enough room for three people. The series of English language books were filed on the floor. Before starting a lesson, the teacher went to the children's regular classrooms and brought the children to the classroom. According to the teacher, she usually taught two children who were on the same level.

The observation lasted only for ten minutes because there was a fire drill during the class. The teacher made copies from the level one workbook and gave them to two ESL children. On one paper, there were lists of short sentences such as "draw a picture" and "paint the picture." On the other paper, there were pictures that explained the short sentences. The teacher read the sentence first and the children repeated after her. After reading all sentences, the teacher had the children look at the pictures. The teacher and the children recited the sentences that they just read together by looking at pictures. When the children couldn't say a sentence or didn't know a word, the teacher gave a clue by acting it out. When the teacher began to cut the pictures on paper, the fire drill began, and everybody had to leave the classroom. After five minutes, the fire drill ended, and the ESL children had to go back to their regular classrooms.

The teacher's instructional strategies to help ESL children focused on the children's linguistic areas. The teacher explained:

I do start working from my beginning level workbooks, writing easy sentences. We read easy books and look at the sounds of the language. So, and of course, vocabulary is coming at the same time.

For vocabulary development, she used *Oxford Picture Dictionary* and worksheets that came with the dictionary. She also used the whole series of workbooks that had five levels. ESL and mainstream curricular were not coordinated. The teacher expressed the difficulty under this situation.

I cannot do everything, that's why a lot of it goes to the classroom teacher to do. And some of them are more aware of this than others.

Ms. H considered her role as a resource teacher:

It is very hard for me personally to get enough support. What I am supposed to be basically is a resource teacher. I consult with the classroom teacher to give advice about helping the classroom and what they can expect from their student. But then the classroom teacher is also expected to make some accommodations for the testing and for presentation of materials.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Conclusion

The study of the processes by which children learn a second language is complex due to the fact that language learning is a more an internal process than an external one, and there are a variety of context-based, dynamic, and idiosyncratic characteristics that impact language learning for every individual learner. In this study, a sociocultural perspective served as the foundation for an investigation of five Korean children's perceptions of their English learning experiences. The research questions for this study asked: (a) What are Korean student's perceptions of their own linguistic proficiency associated with constant exposure to an English-speaking community? (b) How has the acquisition of cultural knowledge among the Korean children been affected by exposure to an English-speaking community? and (c) How are the Korean children's attitudes toward learning English affected by extensive exposure to an English-speaking community? The results provide a snapshot of the nature of the processes of learning and development that these children experienced in learning English. The interview with the children revealed that the relationship between what a learning context offered and what an individual brought to the learning situation had a critical impact upon the children's English learning experiences in the U.S. school.

The following points summarize the findings from the interviews with the children.

What are Korean student's perceptions of their own linguistic proficiency associated with constant exposure to an English-speaking community?

- How well do the children perceive that they are able to communicate in English in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing?

Jeewon, Jeewoo, Eunhee, and Namhoo perceived their English proficiency as having improved while they were learning English in the United States. They all stated that they were comfortable with communicating in English. However, they perceived that certain linguistic areas had been improved better compared to other linguistic areas. Jeewoo, Namhoo, and Eunhee perceived that their listening and reading abilities were improved most. Jeewon perceived listening, speaking, and reading were improved most. Only

Minsoo perceived that his English ability had not been changed much since he came to the United States.

- What kinds of experiences do the participants perceive to be the most effective in building their language skills?

Jeewon, Jeewoo, Eunhee, and Namhoo, who perceived their English proficiency as having improved, identified specific tasks and activities that helped them improve speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English. Reading interesting literature (particularly fiction), having opportunities to self-select literature, receiving individual help from teachers and friends in the classroom, participating in meaningful interactions with peers regarding content, participating in fun activities and games, and using concrete manipulatives were examples that the children felt most helpful in learning English.

How has the acquisition of cultural knowledge among the Korean children been affected by extensive exposure to an English-speaking community?

- What are some of the social and cultural opportunities that have been available to the Korean children?

The children reported that they communicated in their native language almost exclusively outside the classroom; thus, the school was the children's greatest opportunity to learn English. Interviews with Korean children offered perspectives on how differing contexts contributed to levels of engagement in the American school. The children's social and cultural opportunities varied based upon the kinds of supports they received in their classrooms and what instructional strategies their teachers used in the classrooms.

- How do the Korean children describe their experiences while enrolled in an elementary school in the United States?

With the exception of one child, Minsoo, the Korean children indicated that they had much appreciation for their schooling experiences in the United States. The children perceived that the instruction they received in the American school was more enjoyable than their Korean schools. American teachers, according to four of the children provided more student choice made use of more authentic concrete learning manipulatives and activities, games, and provided pair/group work than their Korean teachers.

How are the Korean children's attitudes toward learning English affected by extensive exposure to an English-speaking community?

- What are the children's attitudes towards their ESL and regular classes?

Jeewon, Jeewoo, Eunhee, and Namhoo commented that their ESL classes were easy, and sometimes they learned grammar that they already studied in Korea. Minsoo said that he liked his ESL class better than his regular classroom, because his ESL teacher helped him when he couldn't read and write. The children perceived that ESL instruction emphasized on principles and rules. The activities that the children described were mostly fill-in-the-blank and short answer exercises. Based on the children's interviews, the children's teachers played the most critical role in affecting the children's attitudes toward their regular classes. The children in this study, except Minsoo, felt comfortable and welcomed in their regular classrooms. Jeewon, Eunhee, Namhoo, and Jeewoo perceived that their teachers made them comfortable in their classrooms. The teachers that the children described as "nice," "kind," and "helpful" took the children aside during recess to have one-on-one conversations, came by their desks to make sure they understood assignments, and gave them hugs.

- What are the children's attitudes towards learning English?

The experiences the children had in their American school affected how they felt about learning English. Jeewon, Eunhee, Namhoo, and Jeewoo, who built interpersonal relationships with their teachers and classmates, had positive attitudes towards learning English. Minsoo, who felt alienated in his classroom, stated that he didn't like learning English.

The parents in this study were satisfied with the children's school and their teachers. Only Minsoo's mother expressed that she didn't feel comfortable to come over to the school and meet her son's teacher because of her lack of proficiency in English. The parents, except Minsoo's mother, perceived that the children's teachers helped them improve English skills most and contributed positively to the children's learning English. The parents appreciated the teacher's encouragement, especially when they took an interest in their children's success. The parents also commented in the interview that they found that learning in the American school was very different from Korean schools. What they perceived of their children's American

school was that rather than pouring knowledge into the children teachers generally encouraged them to learn by providing activities for their children to be involved.

Interviews with teachers and the principal provided insight to the problems facing ESL children and the teachers who work with them. Each teacher used different activities for their ESL children, and yet their activities had common strategies. The teachers created extended opportunities for students to interact and participate. Predominant activities in their classrooms were interaction-fostering activities such as a whole group meeting, student-led group work, pair work, and a theme-based project. The teachers adjusted their instruction in order to make it comprehensible. Adjustments such as comprehension checks, contextualizing abstract concepts through the use of media such as photos, graphs or graphic organization and using the ESL child's native language were made in their classrooms.

The creation and development of interest in learning is something that many educators undoubtedly seek to support in their classrooms. As discussed earlier, a sociocultural theory views learning and development as culturally, historically, and socially mediated processes (Wesch, 1995). The Korean children's English learning experiences in the United States supports a sociocultural perspective on language learning. To learn English, the children in this study needed opportunities to engage with people, cultural tools and artifacts within the learning environment, so that processes of developing interest and motivation were modeled, negotiated and supported. Further, the Korean children's English learning experiences provide important insights into the factors that produce motivation to learn English. That is, motivation did not take place in the mind of the each child; it was produced in social interaction that the children had with their teachers and classmates. This interaction provided opportunities for the five Korean children to be active meaning makers in constructing their own understanding. They used, tried out, and manipulated English as they made sense and created meaning. For these children, the English language learning experience was highly influenced by interactions and communications with others, and the level and quality of these interactions was affected by the environment and context.

Discussion

The present study provides accounts of how five Korean children learned English, with their introductions to English occurring in Korea followed by early study abroad experiences in the United States. The children in this study differed in terms of linguistic and attitudinal readiness for benefiting from the opportunities provided in the U.S., and their experiences varied based upon the kinds of supports they received in their classrooms. The children discussed their perceptions of their English learning experiences in Korea and in the United States, and they shared their insights about adjustment to the American school, opinions about teachers, and views of instructional activities.

In the children's discussions of their English learning experiences in Korea, the children related a dislike for instructional activities such as grammar drills and textbook exercises on pronunciation, spelling, sentence-making, and translation. They also found the texts in which they were taught English to be boring and of little interest to their own lives. They found learning English in Korea to be difficult and frustrating. Based on the perspectives of these children, English learning experiences in Korea involved little the learner participation in the classroom and low levels of personal confidence about learning English as a second language. Based on the perspectives of these children, English learning experiences in Korea involved little the learner participation in the classroom, little choice in text selection, few concrete contextual examples of how to use the language, and low levels of personal confidence regarding learning English as a second language.

All of the children in this study had taken formal and informal classes of English as a foreign language in Korea; however, they left Korea knowing that their English skills needed much improvement. With the exception of Minsoo, all of the children felt that their English skills had improved since coming to the United States. Based on the children's interview, what they learned in their regular classrooms and how they learned with their teachers and classmates was especially important for the children to view the value of English and to motivate learning.

The Korean children except Minsoo indicated that they had much appreciation for their schooling experiences in the United States. Minsoo did not like learning in his American school because he could not do well in his classroom. Minsoo did not understand English well enough to succeed in class when he began his studying in the American school, he could not communicate with his teacher, he was afraid of his teacher and he had a high level of frustration.

He did not like the study of English when he was in Korea, and he liked it no better in the U.S. There were many differences between Minsoo and the other four Korean students. For instance, Namhoo, who came in the United States in the same month with Minsoo, said that he began to understand most of what was happening in his classroom within four months and he was enjoying the new school life. Minsoo and Namhoo had different teachers in the American school, and Namhoo liked his teacher very much, while Minsoo remained afraid of his teacher and was unable to communicate with her. Further, Namhoo had a friend in his classroom with whom he talked about classroom activities and academic content, whereas Minsoo did not work with a friend in his classroom. Namhoo's mother arranged for him to have English language tutoring outside of school, and Minsoo was not being tutored. Minsoo played with another Korean child and these two used the Korean language exclusively when they were together. Namhoo played with children away from school with whom he spoke English. The differences in Minsoo's and Namhoo's experiences in the U.S. speak to the dynamic, idiosyncratic, and contextual differences that influence perceptions about second language acquisition. Curtin (2005) points out that individual differences such as length of residence in the United States and learners' academic performances in their native countries contribute to second language learning. Individual differences among Korean children in this study had an impact on their engagement in and ability to benefit from living in an English-speaking community.

When explaining their perceived English proficiency in the United States, Jeewon, Jeewoo, Eunhee, and Namhoo attributed much of their success to support from their teachers, their teacher's instructional strategies, and their friends in their regular classrooms. They perceived that being engaged in activities involving interesting literature (particularly fiction), having opportunities to self-select literature, receiving individual help from teachers and friends in the classroom, participating in meaningful interactions with peers regarding content, participating in fun activities and games, and using concrete manipulatives were most helpful to them in learning English. There were numerous positive comments about learning English in the United States that centered on enjoyable classroom activities.

In particular, the children felt that playing games, conducting experiments, solving math problems, writing their own stories, reading interesting self-selected books, and listening to books read aloud helped their English usage skills improve. According to Long (1998), these classroom activities can be considered examples of sociocultural situations. Such situations are

deliberate and utilize the integration of language, content, and thinking processes because each situation has its own traditional knowledge. While engaged in the processes of making sense of academic content and expressing themselves, the children used English as a tool. In turn, their sense of competence and their desire to learn English increased. The children's attention was shifted from learning language per se to learning to use language for the purpose of understanding content and communicating in the classroom.

Some of the classroom activities described by the children as helping them improve in their use of English are consistent with the language experience approach (Allen, 1968; Nichols & Florez, 2002, Weaver, 1994). The language experience approach was designed to support reading instruction and it is a deliberate method of having students learn to read and write stories based upon their own personal experiences. In basic language experience, the students narrate their stories and the teacher writes them down, using the natural language of the students. The students read these stories and learn to associate spoken language with written language. In more advanced language experience, the students write their own stories based on their personal experiences and read them (Allen, 1968). The language experience approach highlights the importance of relating the individual's oral language to written language and of relating reading to writing (Weaver, 1994). Language experience was developed for the purpose of forming a natural bridge between written and spoken language, and it was based upon the assumption that:

What I can think about, I can talk about.

What I can say, I can write.

What I can write, I can read.

I can read what I can write and what other people can write for me to read (Allen, 1968, 53).

Through real explorations and meaningful experiences, learners construct meaning, and speaking, listening, reading, and writing that emerge from experiences are all interrelated. Several children described classroom activities in which they were engaged that combined speaking, writing, and reading related to personal experience. For example, Jeewon described an experience in which she gathered information at home and talked about her family in class, then wrote a book about her family and read it to her peers in class. She pointed to this activity as an example of one that helped her improve her English usage skills. These activities provided

opportunities for the Korean children to connect listening, speaking, reading and writing and to learn and practice English through four language modes.

Participating in a variety of kinds of classroom activities also allowed these Korean children to learn more about the American culture through the students assigned to them as partners/mentors (and who became their best friends) by working together. Not surprisingly, the children's acquired knowledge of American culture was related to features of American houses, birthday parties, popular movies, movies stars, and books. Minsoo, who only reported doing individual seatwork in his U.S. classroom, talked about buildings and cars he saw when asked what he had learned about America.

Interviews with Korean children offered perspectives on how differing contexts contributed to levels of engagement in the American school. The four children who had more positive perceptions about their school experiences indicated that their teachers displayed a genuine interest in them as individuals. Further, these teachers provided multiple opportunities for the students to interact with other children and this helped to establish a motivating learning environment for these learners. This is consistent with research findings by Curtin (2005), who found that ESL students perceived a good teacher to be one who offered help and support to students.

The teachers who were described by the children as "caring" were teachers who provided learning contexts in which the students felt comfortable and safe, and in which the children were able to become better acquainted with English-speaking classmates and the new culture in which they were living. Scholars have argued for the importance of caring in the teacher/student relationship, regardless of the age and ethnicity of the learners (Goldstin & Lake; 2003, Noddings, 1998; Rolon-Dow, 2005). Noddings (1998) contends that the teacher must establish trusting, caring relationships with the learner in order for those learners to be willing to take the risks required to enter the zone of proximal development. In other words, caring teaching-learning relationships can be viewed as a cornerstone of academic achievement. More specifically, the children were motivated by teachers who demonstrated interest in them as individuals, who made accommodations for them in the classroom and who provided opportunities for the children to work with partners. Several of the teachers assigned partners to the Korean children on their first days in their new classrooms, and the children were permitted to speak with their partners whenever they needed assistance. The children soon made friends

with these assigned partners, and the students perceived the establishment of these partnerships as caring and motivating acts on the part of the teachers.

As the children built strong relationships with their teachers and classmates, the children developed a sense of belonging in their new settings. Further, because the children had a sense of belonging, they were willing to take risks in learning to communicate with their teachers and classmates. The interpersonal relationships that were nurtured in these classrooms engendered positive attitudes and interests in learning. Thus, a caring classroom context was beneficial to the Korean children both academically and socially. In a study of caring in the educational experiences of Puerto Rican students, Nieto (1998) stated that, “care or rejections experienced by Puerto Rican students in U.S. schools can have a significant impact on their academic success or failure” (p. 157). The Korean children in this study who perceived their teachers as “warm,” “nice,” “funny,” “helpful,” and “caring” had positive attitudes towards learning English in the United States and expressed that they liked learning in their American school.

The Korean children in this study tended to link teacher caring with teaching style. For instance, immediately after reporting that he worked independently and did not speak with other children, Minsoo said, “If someone is talking, she asks, ‘What are you talking about?’ My teacher is scary.” The other children explained that their teachers gave tasks that allowed them to work with other children and provided them assistance in completing tasks. These four children perceived their teachers as warm, nice, funny, and helpful. Similarly, Certo, Cauley and Chafin (2003) found that students perceived teachers as caring who allowed students to be actively involved in a learning task, allowed opportunities to work together, and showed enthusiasm. These Korean students reported that teachers who cared and who were motivating used a variety of instructional strategies that made classes interesting.

The findings from this study have implications for second language classrooms. Recognizing the conditions that were perceived as supportive by the children and taking into account the differences among the children and their experiences in the United States, there are implications for classroom environments and practices that support second language learners. As numerous studies (Hall & Verplaetse, 2000; Kinginger, 2000; Nichols & Florez, 2002; Nichols, Rupley, Webb-Johnson, & Tlusty, 2000, Takahsi, Austin, & Morimoto, 2000) have indicated, effective practices for both second and foreign language learning are more similar than different;

what is shown to be useful in promoting language learning in second language classrooms is shown to be equally useful in foreign language learning contexts.

First, the Korean children in this study were motivated by the rapport established in the interpersonal relationships that supported them in learning and using English to engage in classroom activities. The social context and more specifically, the caring shown by teachers and the interpersonal relationships formed as part of the context, influenced the process of learning English. This finding is consistent with previous research. Studies have demonstrated that the interpersonal connections developed in classroom interactions can nurture student engagement and provide numerous opportunities for language learners to use and extend their knowledge of a target language (Goldstein & Lake, 2003; Rolon-Dow, 2005; Turner, 1997). As shown in this study, making interpersonal connections and engaging in purposeful discourse with teachers and classmates fostered a sense of community for the Korean children, thereby creating a motivating learning environment. As teacher educators, then, one of our goals should be to create curricula and preparation programs that engender in teachers an understanding of the pedagogical power of caring and a commitment to implementing care-centered teaching practices in their classrooms.

In addition, the findings of the present study provide evidence of particular practices that promoted the development of English, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As teachers of English as either a second or a foreign language, we must understand the inextricable link between our classroom practices and student development (Nichols, Rupley, Webb-Johnson, & Tlusty, 2000). That is, the significant role we play in creating conditions defines both the substance and direction of student development. Teachers need to understand the role of specific practices that support English language learning for students who understand neither English nor American culture, and these findings lead to a number of specific implications for classroom practice.

First, the results of this study support the need for teachers of English learners to incorporate literature that matches student interests, provides scaffolding for the development of new interests, and motivates children to learn English (Nichols, Rupley, Webb-Johnson, & Tlusty, 2000). According to Krashen (2003), literature is an extremely powerful form of comprehensible input. Literature captured the interest of the Korean children in this study. The children experienced reading in English beyond basic comprehension and reading skills. They applied numerous strategies and resources that were available to them to understand interesting

stories that they wanted to read – and the reading of fascinating stories led the students to further literature on the same topics. They were able to read in English while they were still learning English. Moreover, the children were eager to read when they were interested in what they were reading and when they had a personal stake in or connection with what they were reading (Nichols, Rupley, Webb-Johnson, & Tlusty, 2000).

Second, cooperative learning was the preferred mode of learning among the Korean children in this study. Platt and Troudi (1997) contend that cooperation provides scaffolding for children's thinking and talking and promotes language learning. The children in this study expressed that they had to study alone when they were learning in Korean schools. They sat silently in the classrooms while teachers talked and they felt that no one helped when they didn't understand. Jeewon, Namhoo, Eunhee, and Jeewoo preferred cooperative learning in their American school and found out that they were able to understand and complete a task by working and sharing ideas with others. Working with a partner or as a group was perceived as a major difference in learning in American and Korean schools among these children.

Third, the present study confirmed the need for students to be provided with many opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions in using English. Previous research posits view interaction as an important ingredient for second language learning (Gass, 1997; Shrum & Glisan; 2000; Van Lier, 1996). To make the interactions meaningful, support must be available to help learners make prior knowledge connections with the topical content of the interactions. As the children in this study indicated, substantive issues can be introduced in classrooms through literature, personal stories, and interpersonal experiences. We can encourage learners to relate these issues to personal experiences and social relationships that are real and thus significant to them. Motivating learners to make connections promotes their extended engagement in the interactions. This, in turn, can facilitate their development of a new language.

Fourth, the findings of this study support content-rich classroom practices in learning English. There is considerable confidence that the use of subject-matter content can serve as an aid to second language learning, and a range of classroom approaches that integrate content and language have emerged in response to learner's needs and interests (Pica, 2002; Williams, 2001). The children in this study learned concepts, principles, and processes associated with knowledge systems such as science and social studies through listening, reading, talking, and writing. The Korean children in this study believed that they acquired English in the context of learning

subject content while using the medium of English with little expertise at first, and more and more over time. Content area materials, instructional activities, and manipulatives helped the children learn English, increased their motivation, and provided more opportunities for them to acknowledge and explore their own prior knowledge. Moreover, the children were able to establish a reason and purpose for learning. English served as a medium to negotiate knowledge and exchange experiences and thoughts.

Finally, the study provides a description from the perspective of second language learners of conditions that support cross-cultural adjustment, particularly second language development in a school setting. Long (1998) states that the newcomer's learning and adjustment can be scaffolded through guided participation in activities with native cultural members. The children in this study indicated that they benefited from their teachers' accommodations such as arranging one classmate to help them, using pictures to make lessons comprehensible, and creating opportunities to use language interactively across a variety of situations. Thus, it can be recommended that teachers who have English learners in their classrooms should consider these kinds of instructional accommodations to meet the needs of these students.

In sum, the perceptions of these Korean children about learning English in the United States suggest important pedagogical implications for making decisions on how best to modify and employ classroom methods to teach English as a second or a foreign language. In particular, the Korean children's perceptions about their English learning experiences prompt the evaluation of current classroom practices in Korean school in terms of the extent of which students have opportunities and motivation to use English in authentic and meaningful contexts. Thus, to understand learners' English learning, Korean teachers of English and teacher educators need to take into consideration of interconnections between the contexts for language learning and the learners' processes to improve curriculum and instruction in teaching English in Korea. Learning English involves far more than the simple decoding and coding of text and cannot be content-free or context-free. The findings of this study provide the importance of the role that the contexts play in developing language proficiency. The children in this study learned English as they had opportunities to use it in authentic contexts for real purposes. Therefore, rather than teaching isolated language parts, the findings suggest that the role of the teacher is to keep language in meaningful contexts, that is, to provide authentic language events and to ensure that students are working with whole language, not simplified parts.

As international contacts such as watching American movies, surfing the Internet, and being exposed to the World News have increased, English learners have developed the understanding that there is a greater need to listen, speak, read, and write in English for practical purposes. There has been a movement in learning English away from the narrow study of the English language itself and toward a focus on using English as a tool to communicate (Bongratz & Schneider, 2003; Long, 1998; Shrum & Glisan, 2002; Tse, 2000). The findings of this study suggest that the extent to which students have opportunities to engage in purposeful dialogue and are motivated to learn English may be important factors in second language acquisition. However, due to the small sample size, it is recommended that further research be conducted to investigate this proposition.

The Korean children's English learning experiences revealed that focusing on form rather than on meaning did not spark the children's interest and motivation and often created frustration. The children's perspectives on English language learning in this study indicate that perspectives on language learning that equate to the study of grammar and the development of meaning communicated through translation may need to change. The children in this study sought ways of making sense of real content and ways of expressing themselves regardless of the linguistic demands. Based on these findings, it appears that learning English should be active, enjoyable, and realistic, and activities or tasks designed to support English usage need to go beyond the learning of grammar and vocabulary and the translation of passages. Again, further research is needed to investigate this recommendation.

The findings from the present study suggest additional issues for future research agendas. It is assumed that language learners go abroad to learn the language, and learners can "pick up" the language because of the availability of opportunities to interact with native speakers. Previous studies (Bacon, 2002; Pellegrino, 1998; Wilkins, 1998) have led to contradictory findings about this assumption. In this study, the Korean children's perceptions about their learning in the United States revealed how different kinds of experiences in classroom contexts provided the children opportunities to learn English and thus, affected their learning English. The Korean children's different perceptions about learning in the United States highlight the importance of further investigations of second language learning in early study abroad contexts.

In addition, future research needs to examine how different learning contexts impact acquisition of a second language. In this study, there was no assessment of the children's actual

achievement in acquiring English. While four of the children indicated that they had made important gains in learning English, and there was some evidence that the fifth child also made gains, there was no pre-post comparison, and there was no study of gains in specific areas of English knowledge and usage. Further research of second language acquisition in early study abroad contexts is needed.

Research on a variety of second and foreign language learning contexts can provide more robust data on methods for supporting children in acquiring a second language. A full understanding of language learning requires extensive investigation of differing contexts. Further, longitudinal data is needed to examine the actual processes and outcomes of learning as they occur and to provide a more solid base for understanding second language development in elementary classrooms.

In addition, given the significance of caring interpersonal relationships in learning a target language found in the study, further research is needed to examine more closely the various means by which such relationships are established. Findings of this type will help teachers build the kinds of relationships of care and trust that are most effective in supporting second language acquisition.

This research project represents an initial inquiry into second language learning in an early study abroad context from the perspective of elementary children. The study has shown that young children's accounts of their learning processes can make significant contributions to the literature on meaningful approaches to teaching them. While the idea of identifying and meeting the needs of children as unique learners has been widespread in the literature for many years, the assumption has been that educators must assess children's strengths and weaknesses so that they can identify learning goals and create suitable instructional plans for learners (Cook-Sather, 2002). Students' voices have rarely been called for in the educational process (Oldfather, 1995a; Triplett & Barksdale, in press). Over the past ten years, many educators have recommended that educators listen to student voices and utilize the perceptions of children in creating educational approaches and environments that effectively meet the needs of children (Cook-Sather, 2002, 2003; Cook-Sather & Schultz, 2001a, 2001 b; Mitra, 2003; Oldfather, 1995a, 1995b). This study demonstrated that early study abroad Korean second language learners were able to carefully reflect upon their learning experiences in their U.S. school, they were able to articulate their beliefs about what had supported them in acquiring English, and they were able to

describe how experiences in their schools impacted them as learners. These findings lend credence to the notion that the voices of young learners can make significant contributions to the literature on how classroom instruction influences student learning. Further research on children's perceptions of their own learning experiences is recommended.

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Appendix A

Reflective narrative

I believe that one reason why Korean children find learning English in schools difficult is due to the way they are taught. I also believe that why children fail to learn English well in school is related to what it is that they have to learn.

When I was at school, English teachers gave well-prepared demonstrations and explanations of new words, analyzing them and showing the meanings in different contexts. I copied and repeatedly read and wrote characters. The assignment was usually translating text and writing new vocabulary several times. A test made up of multiple-choice and vocabulary items and a writing test included a number of grammar and usage questions. Without any doubt, I believed that I had to know all of the words in the readings in order to understand it. I read in English with the dictionary beside me all the time. I studied English only for homework and for tests. I never read any English readings because I wanted to read them. I scribed translations after reading every word, and wrote grammar notes in margins. I spent long hours laboring over sentence-by-sentence translation. I failed to find the joy of learning English.

It is ironic that I became an English teacher. The good thing was that I soon found myself to love teaching children. In 1995, I started teaching English in a private elementary school and a year later I taught in a middle school. I taught grammar, and vocabulary, and had the students translate English to Korean. I knew exactly what to teach. I had doubts about the way I had been taught and the ways that were being implemented in Korean schools where the classrooms were dominated by a focus on direct learning of language and the instruction consisted of learning words and grammar of the language. Even though I had enormous doubts in my mind, I taught English in the way I had been taught throughout my school days. I knew my students were going to lose their interest in learning English like I did long before, but I tried to ignore that because I was afraid that I might not be able to provide anything else but having them memorizing lots of rules and words and then testing my students so they could remember. One of my students complained to me that English was a subject that had to be memorized a lot. His complaint stuck to my head.

Making a decision to study in the United States, was out of desperation that I really wanted to teach English in a different way. What may motivate my student to learn English?

That was the question I set out to explore when I decided to study in the United States. I believed that there must be a magic method out there. When I packed to leave my country, Korea, I was hoping that I could learn English automatically and throw out all the bad memories of my own English learning experience. As an English teacher, I so badly wanted to speak, read, and write English like a native speaker. I needed to find learning English interesting for myself. Otherwise how could I teach English interestingly for my students?

In 1998, after 14 hours of flying, I landed in a university town where I was going to attend the university there. I can never forget the day I ordered a drink and the day I was trying to order a simple meal at a restaurant. I couldn't understand what the man was asking me. The man couldn't understand what kind of bread I was trying to say to him. I was so embarrassed by saying the drinks I wanted to drink and the bread I wanted to eat over and over again. I felt stupid. I was depressed. It shook me so hard that I wanted to go back to my country. That moment, I thought, English was just not my thing. My love of learning English and teaching it to my students would not win over my poor aptitude of English.

But, I didn't. I didn't go back to my country and give up my studies either. It has been six years since I came to the United States, and I am now completing my doctoral program. There were bumps in the road, and I am still learning English. Today, however, learning English is a joyful adventure for me. I don't blame my poor aptitude any more. There are so many things that motivate me to learn and use English. First, I love to watch favorite TV programs, *Friends* and *Monk*. I turned a caption on while watching these programs because I wanted to learn words that I didn't know before. Second, I love to read books that give ideas how to teach English. Finally, I enjoy exchanging mails in English. Living in the United States and studying in an American university has been a life changing experience for me. It is a priceless experience that I could never have gotten by studying books about how to teach English.

The knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in English helped me to translate English to Korea. However, it is insufficient for me to simply have knowledge of target language forms to communicate with others. Besides, I was unable to transfer positive feelings about learning English by learning discrete points of linguistic parts. I failed to master English while I was studying English in Korea. My English developed when I had varied opportunities to use English in the United States. I learned what was interesting to me and learned from what made sense to me. I was becoming better in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English within a context

that promotes using language for exploring my curiosity and exchanging thoughts. This experience of learning English became crucial to my understanding of teaching English to my students.

Appendix B

Interview Guide for Children

Research question 1

What are Korean students' perceptions of their linguistic proficiency associated with constant exposure to an English speaking community?

1. How well do the children perceive that they are able to communicate in English in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing?
 1. Talk to me about your favorite show on TV.
 2. Is there a book you are reading right now? Tell me about it.
 3. Describe the homework your teacher usually assigns. Tell me about your homework.
 4. Tell me about your friends. How did you and your friends get together and become friends? What do you do when you spend time together?
 5. What language do you usually speak with your friends?
 6. What kinds of activities and instructional exercises did you do when you studied English in Korea? What are some of the things you remember doing in class when you were taking English in Korea? How did you learn to read and write in English? Did you practice talking in English often when you were in Korea?
 7. How are your classes different from Korea here in the United States? What are some of the kinds of activities and exercises do you do in your classroom here? How are you learning to read and write in English here? Do you practice talking in English often?

2. What kinds of experiences do the participants perceive to be the most effective in building their language skills?
 1. Tell me about your typical day.
 2. Let's talk about events/activities you especially like here.

3. Let's talk about events/activities you don't like here.
4. What are the things that you like about learning English here?
6. What would you suggest for someone who is beginning to learn English? What do you think would really help other Korean students learn English here?

Research question 2

How are the Korean children's attitudes toward learning English affected by extensive exposure to an English speaking community?

1. What are the children's attitudes towards their ESL and regular classes?

1. Let's talk about your favorite class. What makes that your favorite class? Did you like that class in your Korean school, too? If not, why?
2. Let's talk about a class you don't like. What makes that your least favorite class? Did you not like that class in your Korean school, too? If not, why?
3. Tell me about things that you like to do in school.
4. What do you do if you don't understand what your teacher or friends are saying to you?

2. What are the children's attitudes towards learning English?

1. Tell me about things that you liked about learning English in Korea?
2. Tell me about things that you didn't like about learning English in Korea?
3. Tell me about things that you like about learning English here?
4. Tell me about things that you don't like about learning English here?
5. Tell me about why you think it is important for you to learn English.
6. What do you predict that your friends back in Korea will think about your ability to speak English? Explain.
7. If you met a Korean child who was preparing to come to the U.S. for the first time, what advice would you offer?

Research question 3.

How has the acquisition of cultural knowledge among the Korean children been affected by extensive exposure to an English speaking community?

1. What are some of the social and resources that have been available to the Korean children?

1. Did you celebrate Halloween here? If so, Tell me about it. What did you know about Halloween when you lived in Korea? Are there other holidays have you celebrated since your arrival to the U.S.? If so, Tell me about them.

2. What Korean celebrations have you observed since you have been here in the United States? Do you share your Korean celebrations with any American friends?

3. How do you usually get information about books, movies sports and other events?

4. What books, movies, or sports events would you want to share with your Korean friends when you go back to Korea? Tell me about that.

5. Let's talk about the field trips that you have taken.

7. Let's talk about club activities that you have joined in after school?

2. How do the Korean children describe their experiences while enrolled in an elementary school in the United States?

1. When you go back to Korea and your Korean friends ask about your experiences in American schools, what do you think you will say to them? What favorite things would you tell them about going to school in the US? What do you think you would tell them you liked least?

2. Tell me about the most surprising thing that you found out about America.

3. If you could take just one thing from America to Korea, what would it be and why?

Appendix C

Students' smiley faces for English learning

1. English learning in your home country

Understanding spoken English



Speaking English



Reading



Writing



Did you like studying English?



2. How would you describe your present state of learning English?

Understanding spoken English



Speaking English



Reading



Writing



Do you like English?



Appendix D
Interview Guide for Parents

Research question 1.

What are parent perceptions of how the Korean children's linguistic proficiency has been affected by constant exposure to an English speaking community?

1. Before you came to the U.S., what did you expect in regards to your child's learning English here? Describe for me how you thought your child would learn English?

2. Tell me about how your child's progress in learning English in the U. S. has been similar to his/her learning experience in Korea. Tell me about how your child's progress in learning English in the U. S. has been different his/her learning experience in Korea.

3. Tell me about your child's typical day here in the U.S.

4. Describe how your child's ability to listen in English has changed in the U. S.

Describe how your child's ability to speak in English has changed in the U. S.

Describe how your child's ability to read in English has changed in the U. S.

Describe how your child's ability to write in English has changed in the U. S.

Describe the impact that living in the U.S. has had on your child's use of Korean in listening.

Describe the impact that living in the U.S. has had on your child's use of Korean in speaking.

Describe the impact that living in the U.S. has had on your child's use of Korean in reading.

Describe the impact that living in the U.S. has had on your child's use of Korean in writing.

(NOTE: These last 4 questions, as stated, do not relate directly to the research question; however, the parent's answers to them are likely to contain information that will relate to the research question.)

5. What are the kinds of activities that you think have had the most impact on your child's English language learning? In what ways do you think that these activities impacted your child's English language learning?

Research question 2.

How have the Korean children's attitudes toward learning English been affected by exposure to an English speaking community?

1. What concerns if any, did you have about your child's learning English in Korea?
2. What concerns do you have regarding your child's learning English here?
3. What concerns do you have about your child's learning English when your family goes back to Korea?
4. Tell me about your child's attitudes about learning English. Are there ways in which your child's attitudes about English have changed since coming to the U.S.? If so, Tell me about those changes.

Research question 3.

How has the Korean children's acquisition of cultural knowledge been affected by extensive exposure to an English speaking community?

1. How often does your child watch TV? Tell me about what programs your child watches, and what you think s/he likes about these programs.
2. How many books does your child read in a week? Tell me about your child's attitudes toward reading. What are the kinds of books your child most enjoys reading?
3. Where have you gotten information to help your child in learning English?
4. What activities or materials do you think you will need to continue English instruction when you go back to Korea? Why is that?

Appendix E

Interview Guide for Principal

1. Tell me about the history of Kipps Elementary School
2. How would you describe the school's philosophy and/or goals?
3. Generally, what population is served by Kipps Elementary?
4. Tell me about how second language learners are supported at Kipps.

Appendix F

Interview Guide for Regular Classroom teachers

1. Tell me about the ways in which you support second language students in your classroom.
2. What books or materials do you recommend for your second language learners?
3. What common difficulties do the second language learners face in your classroom?
4. What recommendations would you make that would most effectively help second language learners learn English? What recommendations would you make for the parents of second language learners?
5. What assessments, evaluation strategies and instruments do you use to gain information about second language learners in your classroom?
6. If you were making recommendations to a first year teacher, what would you suggest to them to help second language to be successful and more on level with children who are native speakers of English?
7. What are some of the kinds of opportunities you provide for second language learners to engage in discussion in your classroom?

Interview Guide for ESL teacher

1. Tell me about the ways in which you support second language students in your classroom.
2. What books or materials do you recommend for your second language learners?
3. What common difficulties do the second language learners face in your classroom?
4. What recommendations would you make that would most effectively help second language learners learn English? What recommendations would you make for the parents of second language learners?
5. What assessments, evaluation strategies and instruments do you use to gain information about second language learners in your classroom?
6. If you were making recommendations to a first year teacher, what would you suggest to them to help second language to be successful and more on level with children who are native speakers of English?

7. What are some of the kinds of opportunities you provide for second language learners to engage in discussion in your classroom?

Working on the farm

Name _____

Some words are wrong. Write the correct words.

1. The rooster is going to milk the cow.

The farmer is going to milk the cow.



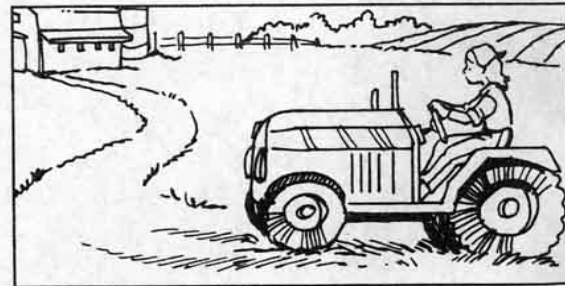
2. The boy will drive the corn to feed the animals.

The boy will pick the corn to feed the animals.



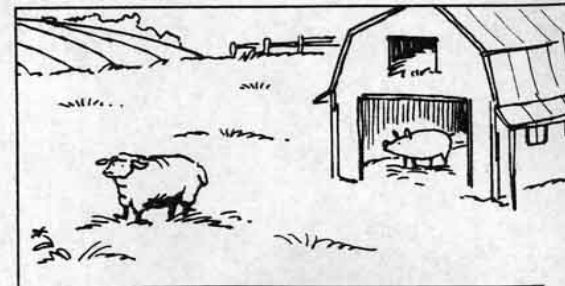
3. The farmer will drive the hen to the cow.

The farmer will drive the tractor to the barn.



4. The hen is in the field and the tractor is in the barn.

The sheep is in the field and the pig is in the barn.



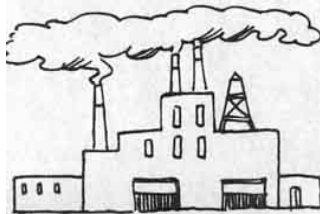
Sunday in the city

Name _____

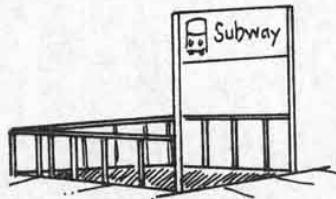
Write.

1. The place where you go to get an airplane.
2. People work here.
3. This comes to take away the garbage. 쓰레기 가져가다, (쓰레기) 버리기하다.
4. Smoke comes out of here.
5. Trains come and go here.
6. People come here to walk and play.
7. Here is a place to sit down and rest.
8. This train goes underground.
9. Many cars go by fast on this road.

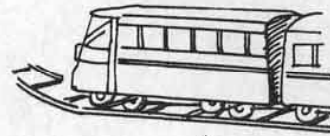
air port
 factory
 garbage truck
 Smokestack
 Railroad
 Park
 bench
 Subway
 highway



factory



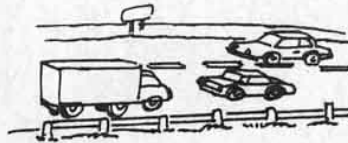
subway



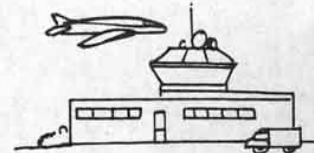
railroad



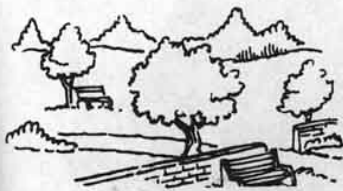
garbage truck



highway



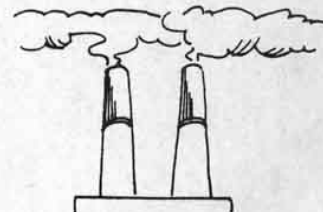
airport



park



bench



smokestack

Appendix H

Jeewoo's favorite activity

Time for school

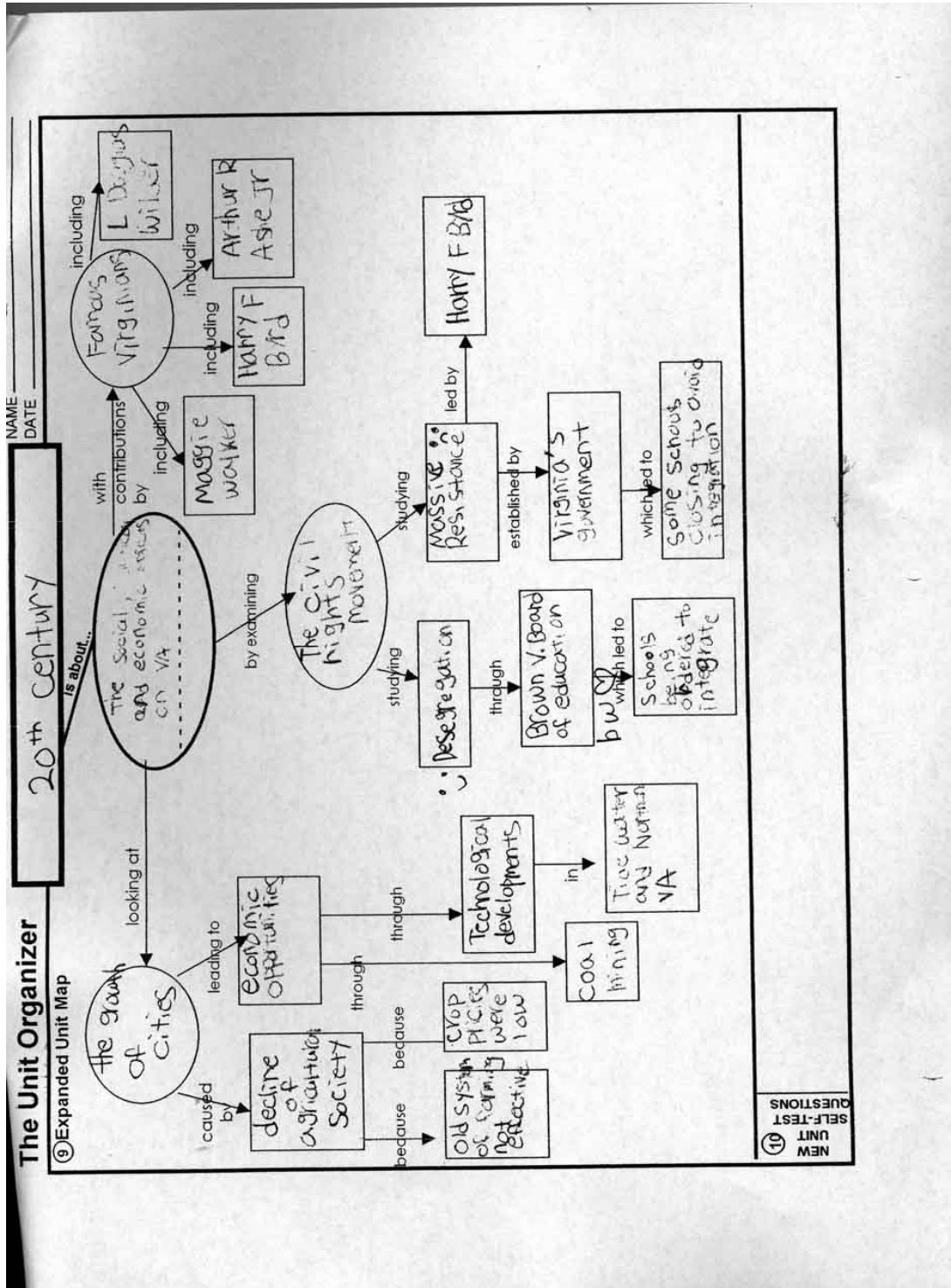
Name _____

Write the names of people in your school.
Then match them to the jobs they do.

1. teacher <u>Mrs. Cousins</u>	I help children when they are sick.
2. principal <u>Mr. Van Rie</u>	I help children find books.
3. student <u>김승민</u>	I help children learn at school.
4. crossing guard <u>safety patrol</u>	I go to school to learn.
5. librarian <u>Ms Austin</u>	I help children cross the street.
6. nurse <u>Mrs Foster</u>	I am in charge of the school.

Appendix I

Eunhee's favorite activity



Appendix J

Jeewon's favorite activity



Chapter 1: At my Jun-Joo's Grandparents

Sometimes on summer vacation, I would pack up and go to my Mom's parents who are in Jun-Joo. We would drive the car to the subway station or train station to Jun-Joo. My Dad would wave his hand to us and we would say good-bye back to him. We would ride until it was night and I would be so excited to see my Grandparents.

Once when I was little, about three or four years old, my Grandma was going back to her home to Jun-Joo. I told my Grandma that I would follow her by myself and sleep there. I think my Grandma took that very seriously because one night my Uncle came. He said he was going to take me to my Jun-Joo's Grandparent's house. I thought he was joking. He wasn't. It was a noisy night. I cried and cried until I got sleepy and slept. We were still on the train, but our stop came. We went to my Grandparent's and went into the gate. My Grandma was very happy to see me. I also saw my Aunt and I was so happy. I went to the bathroom and washed. Then I went to bed sheepishly. In the morning, someone rang the bell and my Grandma got it. It was Mom! I had fun after we got off the train. We would ride a taxi to my Grandparent's house. I would ring the bell and would open the gate and she would greet us happily.

My Grandma survived from cancer. I was so relieved when I heard the news. Well, before my Mom heard the news, she thought Grandma was going to die because my Aunt said she had cancer. She talked with my Aunt on the phone. Mom was crying. I didn't know why she was crying so I cried, but still I didn't know why I was crying. That was long ago.

When I come inside my Grandparent's, my Aunts and Uncle would always greet Steve, Mom, and I. I brushed my teeth and washed after the greeting. I would dress up and sleep. Sometimes at my Grandma's yard, I would go up the building and look down. Somebody would wave at the yard

Appendix K

Namhoo's favorite activities

A

We are survivors!! ~ ~

By:

Introduce Nam and Andrew are best friends. So, they have lots of time to play. We are going to climb Mountain Rocky.

One day, Andrew asked, "Hey!! do you want to go to Rocky Mountains?"

"Of course not," Nam screamed.

"Come on, it's just for fun!!" Andrew said.

"All right, I will go there." Nam whispered.

They went to the Rocky Mountains. They walked along the trail and then they lost their way to go home.

"Nam, I think we lost the way to go home," Andrew whispered.

"You're kidding, right?" Nam asked.

"seriously," Andrew said.

So Andrew and Nam made a big cave then, they hugged each other to make their bodies warm.

"You hugged me!" Andrew said.

"So, did I hurt you?" Nam asked.

"Don't be ridiculous!" Andrew answered.

Then they slept.

On next morning, they needed food for breakfast, so Nam and Andrew made a big plan for hunt animal.

"hey!! I'm so hungry and thirsty." Nam said.

Find examples of decimals in newspapers, in magazines, in books, or on food packages. Ask people in your family for examples.

Write your numbers below or, if an adult says you may, cut them out and tape them on this page. Be sure to write what the numbers mean. For example, the daily temperature of a hibernating dormouse may go down to 65.6°F.

Handwritten notes: $1/2$, $1/4$, $3/4$, $1/10$, $1/100$, $1/1000$

Handwritten notes: 5.95 Price, 10.00 Save

(i.e. received with no error) by the Quantitative algorithm compared to the Strawman algorithm. As expected, when the value of Δ increases, the bandwidth saved by the Quantitative algorithm compared to the Strawman algorithm is larger. E.g. when the locality is 5000 ms. (the middle curve in Figure 8(a)) we reduce the number of transmissions by 20% for $\Delta = 0.005$ and by 35% for $\Delta = 0.025$. However, this reduction in the number of transmissions may affect the number of delivered packets. E.g. for $\Delta = 0$ our algorithm delivers more packets than the Strawman algorithm (see Figure 8(b)), but with $\Delta = 0.025$ it only delivers between 99.2% (for 1000 ms locality) to 99.8% (for 10000 ms locality) of the packets delivered by the Strawman algorithm.

Handwritten notes: 0 , 20% , 35% , 99.2% , 99.8%

Vocabulary

Write the vocabulary word that fits each definition.

1. Ideas: notion
2. Pounding: throbbing
3. Overflowing: bursting
4. Long scarves wrapped around the neck: mufflers
5. Things used to prevent hurt or pain: protectors

Answer the following questions with complete sentences that show you understand the underlined vocabulary words.

6. Why do wool mufflers make good protectors for your neck?
Because it keeps your neck warm.
7. What might cause your head to be throbbing?
Cold weather can give you a pounding headache.
8. Describe one of your notions that you had when you were bursting.
At recess time, I played football. I was so exciting.

VITA
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Personal

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2002 Ed. SP. (Education Specialist) in Literacy, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. May 2002
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Field Project: *Classroom Interaction and Its Effects on Second language Development: Case Studies of Four Preschool Korean Children.*

2000 M. Ed., Major in Teaching English as a Second Language, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. May 2000
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1996 B.S., Major in English, Busan University of Foreign Studies, Busan, Korea. February 1996
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-
- Qualitative data analysis
 - Data collection for research projects
 - Reviewing articles

Intern at English Language Institution at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. 2000

- Taught English language learners as a substitute teacher
- Observed classroom teaching.

Student Aid for 6th graders and adult ESL learners at Burton Technical Center, VA. 1999

- Helped a teacher to prepare class.
- Taught ESL learners for 30 hour credits.
- Observed classroom teaching.

Teacher of English at Wonsong Middle School, Busan, Korea September 1997-December 1997

- Taught English to fresh and senior middle school students as a temporary teacher.

Teacher of English at Haeundae Middle School, Busan, Korea March 1997- May 1997

- Taught English to fresh and junior middle school students as a temporary teacher.

Teacher of English at Daeyoun Elementary School, Busan, Korea September 1996-December 1996

Teacher, Baejeong Elementary School, Busan, Korea. March 1996- June 1996

Honors and Grants

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Academic scholarship, 1992, 15,00000 won.

Presentations

Watson, C. Barksdale, M. A, & Park, E. S. (2005). Student learning through cross-cultural pen pal letters. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association. Sarasota. FL.

Park, E.S. (2002). Classroom Interaction and Its Effects on Second language

Development: Case Studies of Four Preschool Korean Children. Paper presented at the Graduate student symposium. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Publication

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